



Housing repairs guide



Introduction

This guide sets out the council's primary repairs and maintenance responsibilities toward homes directly managed by the council. It is based on the council's legal obligations as your landlord and as set out in your Tenancy Conditions.

This guide only covers routine repairs and regular safety checks of equipment located in or around your home. We call these responsive repairs.

Larger planned programmes of improvement work which the council carries out from time to time to its housing estates, for example replacement of windows on a whole estate, are not covered by this guide. Information on such works is available on the council website: www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/major-works

If you need to report a routine repair in your home you can do this online at: www.islington.gov.uk/housing

Emergency repairs in your home should be reported by calling **0800 369 3344**.

Deaf residents reporting an emergency repair can do so by emailing deafemergencyrepairs@islington.gov.uk

Information for disabled residents needing to access council services is available on the council website at:

www.islington.gov.uk/accessibility

Council leaseholders

Most of this guide is relevant only to council tenants. Rights and responsibilities for council leaseholders are set out in the indicated sections of this guide.

Partners for Improvement in Islington (Partners)

Most council flats in converted houses in Islington are managed by Partners. All repairs to these properties are carried out by Partners. You can check if your home is managed by Partners on the council website:

www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/contact-housing-services

Repairs to homes managed by Partners should be reported to them through their website:

www.partnersislington.net

Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)

Tenants and leaseholders whose home is on an estate that is managed by a TMO/Board/Co-operative should first contact their TMO Office about their repair. Contact details for TMO offices are available on the council website:

www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/repairs/partners-for-improvement-tmo-and-tmc-repairs

In some cases there are certain types of repair to properties on these estates that remain the responsibility of the council and these are outlined in your TMO handbook which is produced by the TMO. You may report these repairs via your TMO office or directly to Housing Direct.

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Islington Council Repairs Team

The council's Repairs Team delivers hundreds of individual repairs and gas appliance safety checks to council homes across Islington every week. Many repairs can be raised online. Alternatively, our Housing Direct call centre can advise on all repair calls. The majority of the repairs we do are done by our directly employed tradespersons. The Repairs Team also works with a number of specialist contractors to deliver its service.

Our service standards

- 1.1 The repairs and gas service aims to:
- Maintain council directly managed homes to a reasonable standard
 - Complete work safely for residents and our staff and contractors
 - Provide a value for money repairs and maintenance service
 - Deliver levels of service which meet the council Customer Care Standards and comply with our Dignity for All policy
 - Consider the impact our service has on the environment
 - Consult residents on significant service changes
- 1.2 To achieve our aim the repairs and gas service and its contractors will:
- Complete repairs in one visit, whenever possible
 - Arrange and keep appointments to inspect or carry out routine works
 - Set high standards for the quality of work carried out
 - Keep mess, dust and disturbance to a minimum and tidy up afterwards
 - Provide an enhanced service to vulnerable residents less able to maintain their home
 - Provide interpretation services and translation of documents on request
 - When we get things wrong get them sorted quickly

How you can help us:

- 1.3 Ask to see the identification card of anyone who calls at your home and claims to work for the council or one of its contractors. All our staff and contractors carry identification cards with them and expect to show them to you. If you are unsure of their identity don't let them in, ask them to wait outside. Contact the council to confirm their identity.
- 1.4 Make appropriate arrangements for someone to let us in when we call to do a repair. Our staff and contractors are told not to enter a property if there is no adult present – either the tenant or a person who is at least 18 years old. If we are concerned about the safety of child left at home alone we will report this to the relevant authorities.
- 1.5 Please keep children and pets out of the area in which we need to work as there may be a risk of them being injured.
- 1.6 Please move items in your home that are fragile or at risk of being damaged away from the areas in which our operatives need to work in your home. Our operatives and contractors will offer assistance to older or disabled residents unable to do this.

Repair responsibilities of the council

1.7 As set out in your tenancy agreement, Islington Council is responsible for keeping the structure and outside of the property in repair, including:

- External walls, external doors, external window frames and sills;
- Drains, gutters, external pipes;
- Access paths and steps to individual properties;
- The roof and chimney (but not sweeping);
- The internal structure; and
- External decoration

Keeping in repair and proper working order:

- Installations for supplying water (including drainage), gas and electricity. The service up to and including your gas and electrical meters is the responsibility of your utility provider, unless the mains supply outside your home is owned by the Council;
- Installations for room and water heating fitted by the council; and
- Lifts, rubbish chutes, shared lighting, communal door entry and communal security camera systems, communal television systems serving the building or estate of which your home forms part.
- Boundary walls, fences and gates which are confirmed to be the council's responsibility to maintain.

1.8 Without prejudice to its repair responsibilities, where there is a potential trip hazard, the council may repair floor tiling or covering that it has installed in kitchens, bathrooms and toilets.

1.9 In order to help the council comply with its repair responsibilities, as set out in your tenancy conditions, you must tell us as soon as possible about any maintenance problem in your home or in communal areas in your block or on your estate that the council is responsible for fixing. Details of how to report a repair to the council are shown at the beginning of this guide.

2.0 Repairs to communal areas and equipment

- 2.1 The council is also responsible for carrying out repairs and maintenance to parts of the external fabric of our housing blocks and estates; including communal equipment and areas you share with your neighbours like shared fire protection measures, shared staircases, balconies and walkways and other shared services like lifts and door entry systems.
- 2.2 Dependent on the cost of the repair, by law, the council has a duty to consult in advance with leaseholders who own a property in a block or estate that will be affected by these types of repairs. In certain emergency situations the council has the authority to proceed with works prior to consulting in advance with leaseholders.

3.0 Inspecting a problem before organising a repair job (Surveying)

- 3.1 Due to the complexity of some types of repair on occasion it may be necessary for a council Diagnostic Surveyor/Gas Quality Assurance Inspector to visit your home.
- 3.2 During the visit they will either:
- Carry out a survey to diagnose the cause of a defect or problem and raise the necessary works to rectify the issue or
 - Complete a post inspection following works done by the council
- 3.3 You will be advised when a survey is needed and the council will attempt to complete the survey within 10 working days. Post inspections may be carried out up to 20 working days following our completion of repairs or servicing works.

4.0 Preparing surfaces for redecoration (Making Good)

- 4.1 'Making good' means that after completing a repair the council will prepare the surfaces in the area around the repair so they are ready to be redecorated. Usually this is done after there has been a leak.
- 4.2 For more extensive damaged caused to a wall or ceiling in a room or if the current surface of the affected area is damaged to such an extent that making good is not possible, the council will prepare the affected walls or ceilings ready for redecoration and repaint with emulsion paint. You will be offered a choice between two standard colours of emulsion paint to complete the redecoration of the affected areas. In some circumstances the council may, as an alternative, offer you a decoration pack enabling you to redecorate the affected room in your own choice of paint colour.
- 4.3 The council is not able to match your existing decorations or fittings e.g. paint colours, wallpaper patterns, matching your own tiles, or flooring when making good surfaces or redecorating affected areas following a repair. The council may be able to consider using spare materials e.g. wall tiles which you have and can provide to complete a job. However, this decision will be made at the sole discretion of the council following consideration of issues including the quantity and current condition of these materials and any health and safety concerns linked to their use.
- 4.4 The council will not be able to 'make good' access panels, hatches, ducts or ducting affected by the repair if you have covered these previously with wallpaper, tiles, carpet, wood, laminate or other finishes as these need to be left accessible. The council will not re-cover this equipment.

- 4.5 Where damage to your decorations has occurred and this is not the fault of the council or its contractors you should claim against your home contents insurance policy to cover your costs to redecorate the affected area.

5.0 Repairs service for new tenants

- 5.1 For the first 8 weeks after a tenant has moved into their new home the council's Voids Team will retain responsibility for completing any outstanding works or repairs linked to the property. If you are a new tenant who has lived in your home for less than 8 weeks you should report any repairs to your Area Housing Office. After the first 8 weeks of the new tenancy have passed the repairs service will take over responsibility for maintaining the property as set out in this guide. You will be informed in writing by the council when this change takes place.

6.0 Refixing a repair we have recently carried out (Recall job)

- 6.1 If the same maintenance problem reoccurs within 12 months of us carrying out a repair which was to fix the problem, we will treat this as a recall to the original repair job. We will aim to visit you and refix the problem within 5 working days of being informed about it. We will not consider the job a recall if we believe the problem to be unrelated to the original repair.

Repair responsibilities of the council

7.0 Guarantees and warranties

- 7.1 Contractors we work with give us guarantees and warranties for particular types of works they carry out for us, examples of types of work which are likely to come with a guarantee or warranty include installation of new roof coverings, windows or fire doors. The guarantees or warranties apply for a period after the new equipment has been fitted as set out in the contract we have with the contractor.
- 7.2 If a defect or problem with the equipment or works that are covered by the guarantee or warranty happens before the guarantee or warranty expires, the council will ask the contractor or supplier to fix the problem under the guarantee or warranty.
- 7.3 The conditions and timeframes for the contractor to respond to us will often be different to our standard repairs priorities and response times listed later in this guide. This can mean it takes longer to get the problem fixed under a guarantee or warranty.

8.0 Repairs required to works done by a contractor (Defects liability period)

- 8.1 All works carried out as part of a planned improvement or new build property are covered by a defects liability period. This will start from the date of completion. The defects liability period is normally but not exclusively:
 - 12 months for building repairs
 - 12 months for electrical or mechanical works
- 8.2 During the defects liability period any repairs covered by it will be the responsibility of the original contractor. The council will monitor the contractor for completion of any repairs reported to them during the defects liability period.
- 8.3 The conditions and timeframes for the contractor to respond to us during the defects liability period will often be different to our standard repairs priorities and response times listed later in this guide. This can mean it takes longer to get the problem fixed during the defects liability period.

Repair responsibilities of the tenant

8.4 In accordance with your tenancy conditions, you are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the following inside your home (some of these items may be repaired by the council under the discretionary repairs service):

- Internal doors and catches, including cupboards
- Internal glazing
- Internal fittings including: skirting boards, internal door and window frames (known as architraves), bath panels, toilet seats, plugs and chains to sinks and baths, curtain rails and pelmets
- Internal decorations and finishes
- Repairs to doors and drawers of kitchen units
- Letter boxes (you should seek advice from the council if your letter box is damaged or before changing or repairing your letter box as changes may affect the fire or smoke resistance of your front door)
- Items you, your family or visitors have damaged
- Repairs to your own improvements
- Replacing tap washers
- Plumbing to washing machines, dishwashers and so on, unless these have been fitted by the Council
- Replacing light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
- Lock changes and replacing keys/fobs

8.5 Tenants are also responsible for maintaining and repairing elements to the outside of the property including:

- Your own equipment, such as your own TV aerials, satellite dishes and electrical sockets (unless they were provided by the Council)
- Repairs to sheds
- Back garden paths

8.6 If you fail to carry out any of the above repairs which are your responsibility as the tenant, the council may choose to carry out these repairs on your behalf. If this happens the council will charge you for the cost of doing this work. See the rechargeable repairs section below for more information.

8.7 As set out in your tenancy conditions, you must tell us as soon as possible about any maintenance problem in your home or in communal areas in your block or on your estate that the council is responsible for fixing. Details of how to report a repair to the council are shown at the beginning of this guide.

9.0 Allowing the Repairs Team access to your home

9.1 You have a duty as stated in your tenancy agreement to give the council reasonable access to your home (including your garden) to allow the council to carry out its landlord repair responsibilities. If we have reasonable grounds to believe a problem, for example water leaking in your home is affecting neighbouring properties or the structure of the building, we will need you to let us into your home to check if this is the case and rectify the problem.

9.2 Council staff and contractors will not enter a property when only a child is at home. We will only enter your home if there is an adult present, either the tenant or someone who is at least 18 years old.

9.3 The council will always attempt to give you sufficient notice of its need to gain access to carry out surveys, repairs or other safety checks (at least 24 hours' notice). If on request from the council you fail to provide the council with access to your home, it may ask a magistrates or county court to grant permission to the council to access your home. Any costs associated with this court action will be charged to you.

Repair responsibilities of the tenant

- 9.4 In emergency situations, if you cannot be contacted or do not provide immediate access to your home, the council has the right under your tenancy agreement to force entry to your home to make an emergency situation safe and if necessary carry out reasonable repairs.

10.0 Avoiding missed appointments

- 10.1 Prior to arriving at your home our repair staff or contractors will attempt to contact you to advise when they expect to arrive. If on arrival you are not at home before leaving the property the repair staff member or contractor will:
- attempt to telephone you
 - ask a colleague at the office to contact you
 - take a photograph of the front entrance door of your property
 - leave a missed appointment card at your property
- 10.2 Routine repair appointments missed by a tenant will then be cancelled and closed down without further contact with you. Only in the following cases will further attempts to access the property be pursued:
- where it is essential to gain access for Health and Safety reasons e.g. gas safety check
 - where a defect in the property is affecting other homes e.g. a leak between one property and another
 - where failure to rectify the problem will continue to damage the fabric of the building
- 10.3 If the council misses an appointment without any prior contact, an apology will be provided and an appointment will be booked which is convenient for you within the standard operating hours of the service.

11.0 Protecting your belongings (Home Contents Insurance)

- 11.1 You are responsible for insuring yourself against any loss or damage to the contents of your home due to theft, flooding or accidental damage.
- 11.2 The council strongly advises you to take out your own home contents insurance cover to protect your belongings, for example:
- Furniture and fittings
 - Electrical equipment
 - Clothes
 - Food and drink
 - Jewellery and other valuables and personal belongings
 - Rented equipment
- 11.3 This insurance may also cover your liabilities to other people including your neighbours, for any damage caused to their property or belongings by you, for example as a result of flooding in your home which damages the decorations and furniture in your neighbour's flat.
- 11.4 The council provides its own home contents insurance scheme which provides adequate cover at an affordable cost to local residents. You are free to make your own insurance arrangements which we recommended should, as a minimum, match the cover provided by the council's scheme. More information about the council scheme is available on the council website:
www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/your-tenancy

12.0 Minimising damage to your belongings in the event of an incident

- 12.1 You have a responsibility to make reasonable efforts to minimise or avoid unnecessary loss you may suffer as a result of any outstanding repair problem, for example if you are suffering from a water leak or dampness in your home you are expected to:
- Report the problem immediately to the council
 - Make all reasonable efforts to move your furniture and/or possessions away from the affected areas so they do not get damaged

13.0 Making your own alterations and improvements to your home

- 13.1 A secure tenant has a legal right to make alterations and improvements to their home provided they obtain written permission from their local Area Housing Office before they carry out any works. You may also have to get permission from the council's Planning and Building Control departments before the Area Housing Office can consider your request.
- 13.2 The council will not unreasonably withhold consent when you make a request to carry out alterations or improvements to your home. However, the following points must be given careful consideration:
- 13.3 If you commission alteration or improvement works involving gas installations these must be undertaken by a registered Gas Safe contractor and work to electrical installations by a Competent Person registered and assessed by a UKAS accredited Certification Body. You must provide the council with the original certificate(s) issued by the contractor(s) on completion of their work.
- 13.4 You should not cover over existing access panels, hatches, ducts or ducting present in your home as part of any alteration or improvement without providing free access to them so they can continue to be used for inspections, repairs or servicing activities.
- 13.5 Where any proposed alterations involve penetrating through fire compartments, these must be suitably 'fire-stopped' to prevent the spread of smoke/fire. An alteration which reduces the structural fire protection of your home has a detrimental impact on the overall fire safety of your home and those living around you. An example of such an alteration may be the creation of an open plan living space. Such alterations must be carefully considered by the council prior to any such alteration being permitted.
- 13.6 You will be responsible for any costs associated with asbestos testing, identification or removal works needed as part of your alteration or improvement project.
- 13.7 The council is not liable for any loss or damage of any improvements or alterations carried out by a tenant with or without the permission of the council to proceed with the works.
- 13.8 You will be responsible for any repairs, maintenance or replacement of the improvement or alteration that may be necessary. To complete a repair the council may have to remove or damage your improvement to gain access to an area behind your alteration. The council will not be liable for replacing your improvement or alteration as a result of this work.
- 13.9 At the end of your tenancy you may claim compensation for eligible improvements carried out with the council's consent.
- 13.10 At the end of the tenancy if unauthorised improvements are identified in your home you may be liable for the costs to the council of works needed to reinstate the property to its original condition.
- 13.11 For more information and guidance please refer to your Tenancy Conditions and always speak to your local Area Housing Office before starting any alteration or improvement works.

Repair responsibilities of the tenant

14.0 Your responsibility for improvements made by a previous tenant (Inherited Improvement)

- 14.1 We use the term ‘inherited improvement’ to describe an alteration or improvement that was made in your home by a previous tenant which you, as the current tenant of the property, signed to accept responsibility for when you moved into your home or took over the tenancy.
- 14.2 By signing to accept the alteration or improvement you become responsible for all repairs and maintenance related to the alteration or improvement or for its replacement if it is beyond repair. Without confirmation in writing the inherited improvement will be deemed the tenant’s responsibility by the council.

15.0 Paying for repairs that are your responsibility (Rechargeable Repairs)

- 15.1 Rechargeable repairs are repairs that you have to pay the council to complete. The council charges tenants for repairs that do not fall under our obligations as a landlord, according to law and the tenancy conditions. If the council did not charge for repairs that are not its responsibility, the cost of these works would be unfairly shared by all tenants.
- 15.2 The council charges for repairs in the following circumstances:
- the work is needed because of damage in your home or to other council or neighbouring properties caused by you, members of your household or your visitors
 - the council has to force entry to your home due to your negligence, for instance, if you lose your front door keys or the council has to enter your home by force to carry out an emergency repair that is your responsibility
 - when you move out the council has to repair damage resulting from your negligence, or remove rubbish or belongings you have left behind
 - if you have falsely told us you are eligible for a discretionary or Handyperson service repair
 - if you provide us with a false or unrelated crime reference number for a repair you reported is the result of a crime
 - lock changes and removal of rubbish or belongings from garages / sheds when you give them up
 - the council needs to correct front entrance doors that have been replaced or altered by you without permission from the council or the council has to carry out a repair to your letter box in order to maintain the fire and smoke resistance.

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- if we need to force entry to carry out statutory duties such as gas safety checks
 - where the council has to carry out repairs which should have been the responsibility of a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), the council will recharge the costs of these works to the TMO.
- 15.3 A tenant may decide to complete a rechargeable repair themselves, or employ and pay a competent contractor to complete the work.
- 15.4 Works involving gas installations must be undertaken by a Gas Safe contractor and work to electrical installations by a Competent Person registered and assessed by a UKAS accredited Certification Body. The council must be provided with the original certificate(s) issued by your contractor(s).
- 15.5 If you make your own arrangements to complete rechargeable works, depending on the nature of the repair, the council may ask to inspect the work afterwards.
- 15.6 If you fail to complete the repair to an acceptable standard, the council will complete the necessary works. The council will recharge you for any of its costs associated with completing this work for you.
- 15.7 The council will agree to carry out some minor routine and emergency repairs which are not our responsibility, where the tenant has asked us to do the repair on their behalf and agrees to pay for the works to be done.
- 15.8 For routine repairs which are your responsibility but which the council agrees to complete for you, you will need to pay the council in full and in advance the cost for completing the job.
- 15.9 If the work which is your responsibility to complete is considered by the council to be an emergency or urgent repair, the council will complete the repair and then ask you for payment.

16.0 Safety checks to your gas appliances

- 16.1 By law every year the council must ensure all gas appliances and flues in its tenants' homes are maintained in a safe condition by carrying out an annual safety check. These checks are recorded and you will be given a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Certificate.
- 16.2 The annual check involves:
- A full safety check of gas pipe work and gas appliances e.g. boilers that are the responsibility of the council.
 - A visual inspection of your own gas appliances e.g. cooker
- 16.3 If any appliance is found to be unsafe it will be disconnected from the supply and a warning notice will be served. Arrangements will be made by the council to either repair or replace the defective appliance as required. During the heating season (1st October to 30th April), the council will provide you with an electric heater sufficient to maintain a temperature of 18 degrees in your living room to provide temporary heating until the fault with your gas appliance is rectified. You are responsible for the fuel costs of this temporary heating.
- 16.4 The council will arrange works to repair gas pipe work and appliances which are its responsibility to maintain. If you have installed your own gas appliance e.g. a gas hob or your own boiler in your home you are responsible for repairing or replacing these at your own cost. Any repairs you arrange to be carried out to your own gas appliance must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- 16.5 As stated in your tenancy conditions, you must give access to our gas engineers to carry out your annual gas safety check. Failure to provide the council with access will result in court action being taken against you and will ultimately lead to the council forcing entry to your home to carry out this essential safety check. You will be liable for the council's costs of any legal action or additional work needed in the event we have to force entry to your home to carry out these safety checks.
- 16.6 If you have failed to provide access to the council to complete your gas safety check you may have a service interval timer fitted to your gas appliance. This device acts as a reminder for you when your safety check is due each year by temporarily interrupting the operation of your gas boiler until our gas engineer has completed their annual safety check.
- 16.7 If a tenant replaces the gas boiler provided by the council with their own boiler, the council remains legally responsible for carrying out annual safety checks of this gas installation.
- 16.8 If defects are identified in a gas appliance which has been installed by you the council will inform you of the list of defects it has identified. The council will give you a reasonable timeframe for the defects to be rectified by a qualified Gas Safe engineer you choose to commission to do the works. The council will require for its records a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Certificate you are given by your gas engineer following completion of their work. Failure to carry out these works to the satisfaction of the council will result in the council completing the required works for you and recharging you its costs related to the works.

17.0 Fire safety

- 17.1 The council has a responsibility to ensure that any common parts of blocks of flats or converted houses have an up to date Fire Risk Assessment.
- 17.2 To help reduce fire risk, our properties will be fitted with suitable front doors which resist the travel of smoke and fire for specific periods of time. For this reason front doors must not be replaced without prior approval from the council in order to ensure the fire safety of the block is maintained. If you are interested in changing your front door you must follow the tenant alterations process prior to starting any works.
- 17.3 The letter boxes in these front doors are specially designed as part of the door to resist the travel of smoke and fire. Any damage or alterations made to these letter boxes may reduce the level of resistance. For this reason, residents should ensure any damaged or fault affecting the letter box is repaired quickly. The council can advise how repairs should be carried out to retain the smoke and fire resistance level in the door. If necessary, the council can carry out a repair to the letter box on behalf of the resident for which a charge may be applicable.
- Many front entrance doors will also have been fitted with a self-action closing devices which is designed to limit smoke in the event of a fire. It is essential to maintain the fire safety of a block that you do not remove these devices and they operate correctly. The council will repair these devices if they are broken.
- 17.4 Whilst the council appreciates the security concerns of residents, under the conditions of your tenancy or leasehold agreement you are not permitted to install security gates or grills without permission from the council. If you can demonstrate that a proposed installation is safe i.e. it will not unduly delay an escape in the event of a fire and complies with current building regulations, then the council may decide to grant permission. If you install security gates or grills without permission from the council and we feel it risks delaying the safe escape of people from your or another property or communal area in the event of a fire or other emergency, it is likely to be removed immediately by the council. You will be charged the council's costs for this work.
- 17.5 Smoke alarms connected to the mains electricity also have a long life battery in case of power failure. The life of such batteries is designed to exceed 10 years, but they will ultimately require replacement. The council will be responsible for the replacement of such smoke alarm batteries located in your home.
- 17.6 Some blocks of flats and converted street properties will be fitted with interlinked heat detectors in each flat in order to support a simultaneous evacuation strategy in the event of a fire. The council needs to carry out periodic safety tests and maintenance of these systems. You must also report any identified faults so these can be rectified as soon as possible. Access to your home may be required from time to time to carry out tests or repairs to these systems.
- 17.7 If your flat forms part of a block where there is no caretaker service provided for your own safety and those of your neighbours it is particularly important that you report any defects affecting facilities in communal areas, for example, broken lights in communal stairways and corridors.
- 17.8 You are advised to test your smoke/heat detectors weekly and Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms on a monthly basis.
- 17.9 You are reminded it is a condition of your tenancy that you must keep clear and available for use at all times all alternative means of escape routes in or through your home or communal areas that could be used by you. This includes any alternative means of escape which will be used by any other people during a fire or other emergency incident.

17.10 It is also a condition of your tenancy agreement that you should not remove or interfere with any fire door or route in any way. If you are aware of any defects to equipment linked to means of escape routes, for example inoperable thumb turn locks/push bars on exit doors, you should report these immediately to the council and it will ensure these repairs are completed.

18.0 Asbestos

- 18.1 Asbestos is a naturally occurring material that was added to some building materials in the past. When building materials containing asbestos are in good condition and not damaged there are no risks to health. There may be a risk to health when these materials are disturbed or damaged in such a way as to release asbestos fibres into the air. Do not tamper with or touch any materials in your home which could contain asbestos. Always refer to your tenancy conditions before carrying out any improvements, repairs or DIY - you may need to get permission from us first.
- Don't drill, sand or scrape anything you think may contain asbestos when you are carrying out any home improvements or DIY
 - Always soak wallpaper before removing and then gently peel away the paper before redecorating
 - Don't try to remove textured coatings from ceilings. Wash any areas of flaking paint before repainting
 - Don't try to remove old floor tiles or linoleum. Leave them in place and lay new floor coverings over them
- 18.2 What to do if you think you have found or damaged materials containing asbestos
- Report this immediately to the repairs team
 - Do not attempt to clean it up or repair it yourself
 - Do not brush or vacuum any dust as this risks spreading the fibres into the air
 - You can find out more about asbestos safety in your home on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/member-of-public.htm

19.0 Flooding

- 19.1 Should a council tenant's home be flooded, the council will carry out works to restore the property to a condition it can be lived in. If you should suffer a flood in your home, dependent on the extent of the damage caused by the flood, the council may provide you with temporary lighting, heating and cooking facilities. In severe flooding situations the council may need to rehouse you and your family on a temporary basis. Due to the scarcity of available accommodation in London, your choice of emergency temporary accommodation will be limited.
- 19.2 If the electrics in your home have to be disconnected for safety reasons as a result of flooding, the council will reconnect them, once it is safe to do so. Leaseholders will need to arrange such reinstatement work themselves, potentially through their building or contents insurer.
- 19.3 If the flood involves foul water or sewage, the council will disinfect your affected flooring and where feasible apply a deodoriser.
- 19.4 You can help reduce the risk of flooding incidents by:
- Not disposing of food, cooking fat or other inappropriate waste materials in drains or toilets
 - Keeping balcony gullies and drains clear to allow rain water to drain freely

20.0 Damp and mould

- 20.1 Sometimes damp problems in the home are the result of a leak or water penetration from outside the property, for example a blocked gutter causes overflowing rain water to make an internal wall damp and mouldy. The council is responsible for repairing water leaks and water penetration issues affecting your home.
- 20.2 Many cases of mould or dampness in the home are the result of condensation not water penetration. Condensation occurs when moist air produced by ordinary household activities such as cooking and bathing hits a cold surface e.g. a cold wall or window. You can usually manage condensation by making some simple changes to the way you do simple things around your home. There is information available on the council website: www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/home-safety
- 20.3 Where the council or its contractors identify that condensation is the cause of reported dampness or mould the tenant will be given advice on how to manage condensation including a copy of the Tips for tackling damp and mould problems leaflet.
- 20.4 One of the most effective ways to help manage condensation is to ensure your home is heated adequately during the colder, winter months. You are advised to set the thermostat on your central heating controls to no lower 18 degrees centigrade during the heating season (October to March). If you have concerns related to the cost of your energy bills you can seek advice and guidance from the council's SHINE service: www.islington.gov.uk/environment/energy-services/affordable_warmth

21.0 Tips on safety checks and basic maintenance

- 21.1 The council encourages all residents to have a basic understanding of key elements of their home, for example the location of the water stopcock or electricity distribution board. Knowing where these are located and having a basic understanding of how they work can help reduce damage caused by a water leak or help to identify why an electricity trip switch has activated until a full repair or inspection can be carried out by one of our repair team.
- 21.2 We recommend you check your smoke alarm is working every week.
- 21.3 The council recommends that you set the thermostat on your individual heating system to 18 degrees. If you wish to control the level of heating in rooms in your home you can normally do this by adjusting the controls on radiators in each room.
- 21.4 You are reminded of the need to ensure you have credit on any pre-payment gas or electricity meter when the council visits to carry out your annual gas safety check or repairs. If there is no gas available the council will have no alternative but to shut down the appliance until gas is available again in your home. If there is no electricity available we are unlikely to be able to complete your repair.
- 21.5 If you live in a flat above the ground floor, consider the risks to members of your household from falling from windows and balconies. If you have window restrictors fitted to your windows check them regularly. If they are faulty report them for repair. If you believe you need window restrictors fitted, please contact Housing Direct on 0800 694 3344. Lower the risks to children by moving furniture and other items which they could climb onto away from windows and balcony railings.
- 21.6 From time to time the council may offer resident training sessions on basic DIY skills covering topics that will help you to resolve minor maintenance issues around your home. We will publish details of these courses on the council website and also through the resident newsletter.

Key repairs priorities and response times

21.7 The following repair priorities are used to decide how urgent a repair is and how long it can take to fix. These priorities comply with Right to Repair regulations⁴ :

⁴ The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994: www.legislation.gov.uk/cy/uksi/1994/133/made

Repair priority	Repair code	Description	Response time
Lift	E.5	When someone is trapped in a lift during working hours	Within 30 minutes
	E01	When someone is trapped in a lift outside of working hours	Within 1 hour
Emergency	E02	Used when there is an immediate danger to a person or risk of serious ongoing damage to the property. Service will respond and make the area or appliance safe. If they can fix the problem they will but if they can't (e.g. they need parts) they will make an appointment to visit again to complete the repair.	Within 2 hours
Urgent	U24	Used for repairs that affect a tenant's day-to-day living including no heating or hot water.	Within 24 hours
Recall	R5	This category is assigned to any works which are believed to be a recall job. A recall is raised for work that needs to be repeated due to a problem with the work done originally or a failure of a part used. See Recalls section	Within 5 working days
Routine	R20	This category covers non-urgent repairs e.g. minor repairs to plasterwork or resealing around a bath. The service will attend on the next available appointment. Some jobs will need an inspection first.	Within 20 working days
Planned	R60	This category is used for high value repair jobs which are often complicated to complete. Examples include works linked to a legal case or works requiring leaseholder consultation	Within 60 working days
Adaptations	A10	The target time for urgent installation to a property of simple equipment to be used by a disabled person e.g. grab rails, specialist window locks and restrictors	Within 10 working days, 24hrs for Window restrictors
	A20	The target time for installation to a property of simple equipment to be used by a disabled person when additional safety checks, inspections or other works need to be done first.	Within 20 working days
	A40	The target time for the installation in a property of more complex equipment to be used by a disabled person e.g. fitting a new level access shower.	Within 40 working days

22.0 Adaptations to properties

- 22.1 Any council tenant requiring an assessment for adaptations in their home due to a disability or for a disabled member of their household should contact the council's Occupational Therapy service. More information about this service is available on the council website: www.islington.gov.uk/social-care-health/disabled-people/disabled-adults/occupational-therapy
- 22.2 The council will carry out repairs to any adaptations that have been fitted by the Council. If it has not been possible to repair the adaptation its renewal may be necessary.
- 22.3 If the person for whom the adaptation was originally fitted no longer lives at the property, or the adaptation is no longer required, the council reserves the right to remove the adaptation.

23.0 Additional repair service for older and disabled residents (Discretionary Repairs)

- 23.1 The council recognises that some tenants may need extra assistance with certain types of repairs that under the terms of the tenancy agreement are the tenant's responsibility to complete. The council calls this service discretionary repairs. These discretionary repairs will be completed at no cost to the tenant.
- 23.2 The list of possible discretionary repairs are:
- Repairing internal doors
 - Repairing internal glazing
 - Repairs to kitchen unit doors and drawers
 - Replacing tap washers
 - Repairing toilet seats
 - Up to two lock changes per year

- Replacement of fluorescent light bulb in circular or strip light fitting to kitchen or bathroom
- 23.3 To qualify for discretionary repairs you must be;
- aged 70 years or older, or
 - currently in receipt of the medium or higher rate of the care component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA), or the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, and/or
 - Currently in receipt of the enhanced rate of the mobility component or enhanced rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and/or
 - Attendance Allowance, and/or
 - War Disablement Pension, and/or
 - A registered care package from Islington Council
- 23.4 The council will only complete a discretionary repair for you if you are living alone or every member of your household meets one or more of the above eligibility criteria. Carers or children (under the age of 18) are not required to meet any of the eligibility criteria.
- 23.5 If you believe you meet the above criteria and should be able to receive discretionary repairs from the council, speak to your local Area Housing Office who will confirm your eligibility.

24.0 Redecorating service for older and disabled tenants (Assisted Decorations Scheme)

- 24.1 The assisted decorations scheme is offered to tenants who for reasons of age or disability find it difficult to keep their home in good decorative order.
- 24.2 The qualifying criteria for this scheme are the same as those for Discretionary Repairs, as shown above. In addition the council should not have carried out any internal decorations to your home in the previous 7 years.
- 24.3 The council will redecorate up to two rooms of your choice, within an allocated budget.
- 24.4 There is a waiting list for the scheme. Application forms to apply to join the waiting list for the scheme are available on request from your local Area Housing Office.

25.0 Handyperson service for Islington residents

- 25.1 The council provides a Handyperson service which is available to all older or disabled residents in Islington or carers registered with the Islington Carers Hub regardless of your landlord and even if you own your home. There is a small charge for the use of this service. Many different types of small repair and improvement jobs around the home can be provided through the service, for example: repairing an electric light, fitting a curtain rail, assembling flat pack furniture, fitting minor security improvements etc. More information about the service and details of the eligibility criteria and charges are available on the council website: www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/home-safety/additional-repairs-for-older-people

26.0 Home shelter

- 26.1 The Home shelter scheme is provided to residents suffering domestic violence regardless of their landlord or if they own their own home. As part of this scheme the council provides survivors of domestic violence with additional security measures and repairs which are related to incidents of domestic violence.
- 26.2 If you or someone you know needs to access the Home shelter scheme you should contact the **Housing Aid Centre** or Islington council tenants and leaseholders can access the scheme through their **Area Housing Office**. More information about support available for victims of domestic violence is available on the council website: www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/housing-abuse

27.0 Repairs required as a result of criminal damage

- 27.1 If you are experiencing domestic violence and abuse, antisocial behaviour or harassment please do not hesitate to contact **Homes and Communities** by email at homesandcommunities@islington.gov.uk or by phone on **020 7527 5300** for advice and support.
- 27.2 If your home has been damaged as a result of domestic violence and abuse, antisocial behaviour or harassment please report this to Housing Direct by email at repairs@islington.gov.uk or by phone on **020 7527 5400**.
- 27.3 Our primary role is to protect the safety of all our residents. Our repairs team will ask how the damage was caused and arrange for the repair to be carried out. It is important we assess risks and ensure we are doing all we can to safeguarding our tenants. Any sensitive information you provide will be noted and we will share this securely with our Tenancy Services Team to ensure we can provide the supportive response required to assist you. Any cases where vulnerability or abusive behaviour towards a resident is identified will be investigated sensitively. Where criminal damage has been identified as the cause of the damage to your property you will not be recharged for the cost of the repair. If you have a crime reference number please pass this onto our repairs team.
- 27.4 More information about the support available to residents experiencing domestic violence and abuse, antisocial behaviour or harassment is available on the council website.

www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/housing-abuse www.islington.gov.uk/community-safety/anti-social-behaviour

28.0 Repairs service to properties managed by Islington Lettings

- 28.1 Leaseholders should refer to their lease for details of their repairs and maintenance responsibilities.
- 28.2 The council is responsible for the maintenance of communal pipework and utilities servicing the block or estate which may run through a leaseholder's property, such as above ground drainage, communal ventilation systems, water pipes or cabling. Such items are often in ducts provided with access panels. Where internal improvements are carried out by the leaseholder, it is essential that free access to such panels is maintained.
- 28.3 From time to time the council may need to carry out works to communal pipework or utilities running through the leaseholder's property or when trying to trace and resolve a suspected water leak from pipework in the leaseholder's property which is affecting neighbouring properties. In these circumstances the council will ask the leaseholder to sign a leaseholder indemnity form. This confirms the leaseholder understands that, although the council will make reasonable efforts not to damage decorations or fixtures in the leaseholder's property when carrying out its work, this cannot be guaranteed.
- 28.4 Under the terms of your lease you should provide the council with access to your property (including your garden) when the council provides you with reasonable notice of its need for access to carry out repairs or maintenance works. The council will always attempt to give leaseholders sufficient notice of its need to gain access to carry out works. However, in emergency situations when the leaseholder cannot be contacted, the council has the right under the lease agreement to force entry to your property to make an emergency situation safe.

- 28.5 Prior to carrying out any improvements or alterations in your property you must seek approval from the Homeownership Section. If as part of approved works you or your contractors need to take any action which is likely to affect other neighbouring council homes e.g. shut down water or electricity to your block, you must notify the council in advance.
- 28.6 Leaseholders living in blocks are strongly encouraged to ensure the front entrance door to their property meets current fire safety regulations. Failure to do so may compromise the fire safety of the block in which the property forms part and the Fire Brigade may take action to force the leaseholder to comply with the regulations.
- 28.7 Leaseholders are responsible for repairing any damage to property belonging to the council or other third parties as a result of neglect or carelessness caused by them, a member of their family, tenant or visitor.
- 28.8 Should the council have to complete any repair works to rectify damage caused that is the fault of a leaseholder or a member of their household, tenant or visitors the council will recharge the leaseholder for its costs associated with these works.

29.0 Repairs service to properties managed by Islington Lettings

- 29.1 The council offers elements of the repairs service to private landlords that let their property through Islington Lettings, the council's social lettings agency. Landlords are charged for this service. More information about the repairs service offered is available on the council website:
www.islington.gov.uk/housing/landlords

30.0 Complaints and feedback

- 30.1 When things go wrong the repairs service aims to get them sorted quickly. If you are unhappy with the service you have received you can make a complaint by following the council complaints process. Information about the process is available on the council website: www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-and-complaints-info
- 30.2 We also like to hear when things go well. If you wish to make a compliment about the service you receive or wish to make any other comments about our service you can also do this through the above page on the council's website.
- 30.3 The council uses learning from complaints, compliments and other feedback received from residents to improve its service.

31.0 Use of personal information

- 31.1 The council will store and use personal information securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. More information about how the council complies with data protection regulations is available on the council website: www.islington.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-governance
- 31.2 The repairs service stores and uses information it receives from residents to help make its service accessible to everyone for example:
- How residents prefer us to communicate with them for example, telephone, email and text message
 - Details of any translation or interpretation needs a resident may have including Braille and Large Print
 - Things we need to be aware of when we need to access a property to complete a repair, for example if the resident is disabled due to mobility or sensory difficulties
- 31.3 We also carry out surveys with residents to ask what you think about our repairs service and what improvements you would like to see.

Explanation of key terms

Appointment - The service offers appointment slots during standard working hours during which we will attend to complete a routine repair. When you ask us to complete a routine repair we will offer you the next appointment slot we have available. For some repair jobs we need to join a number of appointment slots together because some jobs take longer to complete, for example installing a new bath. When we have to do this we are unable to provide much choice in the appointment slots we can offer you.

Call agent – are the council staff that take the details of your initial report of repair problem. You can help them to diagnose the problem by explaining clearly what is broken or defective and where in your home the problem is located.

Contractor – We work in partnership with a number of companies to deliver our service. Some contractors carry out specialist maintenance which our service cannot do itself, for example repairs to specialist equipment installed for disabled residents. Other contractors provide general back up for our service for example when we have high levels of demand.

Cyclical maintenance - is used to describe maintenance jobs and safety checks we carry out as part of a set programme, for example annual inspections of communal water tanks or lightening conductors attached to blocks of flats.

Emergency repairs - are repairs needed when there is a significant risk to the safety of residents or severe damage is being caused to the building due to an ongoing maintenance problem, for example a resident is trapped in a lift or there is a serious water leak.

First time fix – we aim to visit your home and fix your repair problem in one visit. We call this first time fix. We know this won't always be possible to achieve because repairs aren't always straightforward.

Make Safe – this means when we can only complete a temporary fix to an emergency problem on our first visit e.g. board up a broken window; turn off the water supply to a leaking pipe. When we can only make safe, we will arrange an appointment to return and fully complete the job at a later time.

Out of hours - refers to the service the repairs and gas service provides outside of our standard working hours. During out of hours we provide an emergency repairs service only. For emergency repairs reported out of hours we will attend and “make safe”. If we are unable to fix the problem on the first visit we will arrange an appointment to return to fully complete the job during our standard working hours.

Planned maintenance - This is work that does not need to be carried out straight away, but which is beneficial for the long term upkeep of our buildings. Our ability to carry out this work is dependent on whether we have funding available. Examples of this type of maintenance is an external redecoration or gutter clearance programme.

Repair operative/Gas engineer – are the council staff that will visit you to complete a repair job or servicing appointment.

Responsive repairs - is a term used to describe day-to-day repairs made to or around council housing properties.

Routine repairs – are repair jobs which are considered non-urgent as they do not pose a risk to health and safety. These repairs will be completed by appointment. We aim to complete these repairs on the first visit. There may be some circumstances when this is not possible.

Scheduler planner - are the council's staff that help to co-ordinate how the service responds to your repair problem.

Standard working hours – for the repairs and gas service are 8am-8pm Monday-Friday, 8am-12pm Saturdays (excluding bank holidays).

Surveyor/Gas quality assurance officer – these council staff may have to visit your home to complete a survey before we can start a repair job when the cause of the problem is not clear or to check work which has been done.

Urgent repairs – are raised for problems that have a significant impact on a resident's day-to-day living, for example no heating or hot water or total loss of drinking water.

Void – this is used to describe a council property which is currently empty and awaiting a new tenant. Our Voids Team are responsible for carrying out repair work to these properties to bring them up to our agreed voids standard so the property can be re-let. For the first 8 weeks following the start of a new tenancy the voids team and their contractors are responsible for any repairs to the property.

If you would like this document in large print or Braille, audiotape or in another language, please contact 020 7527 2000.

Portuguese

Se pretender esta informação na sua língua por favor contacte 020 7527 2000.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই তথ্য গুলো আপনার নিজ ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে 020 7527 2000 নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Greek

Εάν θέλετε αυτές τις πληροφορίες στη δική σας γλώσσα παρακαλώ τηλεφωνήστε στο 020 7527 2000.

Turkish

Buradaki bilgilerin Türkçesini istiyorsanız, lütfen 020 7527 2000 numaraya telefon edin.

Somali

Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd macluumaadkan oo ku qoran luqadaada fadlan la xidhiidh 020 7527 2000.

Spanish

Si desea esta información en su idioma, llame al 020 7527 2000.



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If you would like more information please contact:

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