

Repairs & Maintenance





REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

The Association aims to provide a quick and efficient repair service. We aim to do all necessary repairs to your home quickly and, whenever possible, complete the repairs in one visit.

We are responsible for keeping the structure, exterior of the property and any communal parts in a good state of repair, including the water supply and sanitation facilities and installations for heating, hot water, gas and electricity.

You are responsible for minor work and repairs like decorating the inside of your home, changing light bulbs, unblocking sinks etc. A more detailed list of responsibilities is included later in this section.

RESPONSE REPAIRS

Response Repairs that are the responsibility of Ark Housing Association are broadly categorised as either Emergency, Urgent or Routine.

EMERGENCY: A response and repair will be carried out within 24 hours

These are defects and repairs which may endanger the health, safety and welfare of tenants or the public or could cause serious damage to the fabric of the building.

URGENT: A response and repair will be carried out in 4 working days

These are repairs which affect the comfort and convenience of tenants. Examples include partial loss of electrical power, a minor leak, insecure external window or communal door lock.

ROUTINE: A response and repair will be carried out in 20 working days

These are repairs which do not cause major inconvenience to tenants or staff or damage to the fabric of the building.



REPORTING REPAIRS

There are several ways in which repairs can be reported:

Telephone:

Property Services Team
028 90 752310

Email:

repairs@arkhousing.co.uk

On-line:

www.arkhousing.co.uk/report-a-repair

Write to us:

Property Services Team,
Ark Housing Association
Hawthorn Office Park,
Unit 1, 43 Stockmans Way,
Belfast BT9 7ET.

REPAIRS SERVICE

It is recommended that you should contact Head Office by telephone if you require an emergency repair to ensure that the repair is actioned as soon as possible.

What Happens Next?

This will depend on the nature and severity of your repair. If the repair is obvious and straightforward to remedy, the job will be recorded on the computer system and a works order issued to the contractor.

Where the repair is more difficult or extensive to rectify, it may be necessary for a member of staff to visit the property to assess the problem to confirm what work needs to be carried out.

Once this has been done, the work will be recorded on the computer system and a works order issued to the contractor. At the same time as the order is issued to the contractor, confirmation will be sent to you.

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Timescales

How long a repair will take will depend on the urgency of the repair. You will be advised of the priority of your repair when you report it. We will endeavour to meet our obligatory target times for all repairs.

However, due to many factors and, in exceptional circumstances, it will not always be possible that repair response times will be met. For example, particularly unseasonable weather, holiday periods, contractor and material availability, may result in a reduction of service. However, the Association strives to ensure our service levels are maintained.

Tenant Access & Availability

For the Association to meet the target times for repairs, it is essential that access for repairs is granted. You must ensure that you are available at pre-arranged times to ensure that an efficient repair service is carried out.

Aborted calls or restricted access may result in unnecessary charges to Ark Housing which will be payable by you.

If more than 2 access requests are denied or ignored and Ark Housing needs to perform essential inspection or servicing works, e.g. gas boiler servicing, the Association may seek access by way of legal action.

It is important that you update Ark Housing of any change in contact details as the contractor will phone ahead to arrange access for any repair of maintenance.

It is essential that you have an adequate supply of gas or oil within the heating system to ensure that testing can take place following a breakdown or service.

If contractors attend a breakdown and you do not have any gas or oil, then you may be recharged. It is also important that you do not prop up your oil tank as this can cause oil leaks. Any damage caused by the action may be recharged.

Rechargeable Repairs

The rent you pay each week covers the cost of repairs unless they are due to damage or neglect by you, your family, visitors or pets. If the repair is the result of neglect or damage, we may do the work and charge you for it.



OUT-OF-HOURS REPAIRS SERVICE

Out-of-Hours or during bank holidays, please ring 0800 7313081 to report an emergency repair. In the event of an emergency repair, provide as much detail as possible about the repair as well as a contact telephone number. Please note that Emergency Repairs may only 'make safe' the problem and the final repair may then be completed during normal working hours. If the contractor has only made safe, contact the office as soon as it opens to ensure staff are aware of the issue so it can be followed up with the contractor as soon as possible.

For Out-of Hours Emergency Repairs, ring 0800 7313081

Other Emergency Contact Numbers

In case of any emergency, you can dial **999** or **112** from mobile or landline to speak to the operator who will then connect you to the requested service.

- ★ **GAS** If you smell gas call Phoenix Natural Gas directly on:
FREEPHONE - 0800 002 001
- ★ **Water Service**
0845 440 088
- ★ **National Gas Emergencies**
0800 111 999
- ★ **Northern Ireland Electricity**
03457 643 643
- ★ **Flooding Incident Line**
0300 2000 100

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RIGHT TO REPAIR SCHEME

The government's Right to Repair Scheme gives tenants with a secure tenancy, additional rights when requesting repairs to their home.

The scheme covers small urgent repairs, costing up to £250, that are likely to put a tenant's health, safety or security at risk. If qualifying repairs are not carried out within the specified timescale, compensation may be payable. A list of qualifying repairs can be supplied on request.

How does it work?

A tenant reports a repair; if the repair has not been completed within the target time stated the tenant can ask the Association to appoint a second contractor to complete the repair.

What happens then?

The second contractor has the same amount of time to complete the repair as the first contractor. If the second contractor fails to complete the repair within the time limit, the tenant is entitled to compensation of £10, plus £2 a day until the repair is carried out. The most compensation you can get for any one job is £50. We will pay you compensation unless you already owe the Association some money, for example, if you are in rent arrears. If you do owe money to Ark Housing, we will take away the amount you owe from your compensation.

How do I know when the repair should be completed?

Under the Right to Repair scheme, housing associations are required to notify tenants of the appointed contractor and the target time when a qualifying repair is reported.



REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Repair	Description	Responsibility
Bath	Bath unit	Ark Housing
	Bath wastes including blockages	Ark Housing
	Bath taps excluding washers	Ark Housing
	Bath tap washers	Tenant
	Plug and chain	Tenant
Bathroom Fixture & Fittings	Not including: towel rails, toilet roll holders etc	Ark Housing
Chimneys		Ark Housing
Chimney Sweeping		Tenant
Communal Areas		Ark Housing
Decoration	External (excluding gardens)	Ark Housing
	Internal	Tenant
Domestic Appliances	E.g. cookers (including servicing of gas cookers) washing machines, dishwashers, fridges	Tenant
Doors	Internal & External	Ark Housing
	Including frames, hinges, locks, door jambs, thresholds and handles	Ark Housing

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REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES		
Repair	Description	Responsibility
Doors (continued)	Adjusting doors after new floor covering installed	Tenant
Downspouts		Ark Housing
Draught Proofing		Tenant
External Stores		Tenant
Floor Boards		Tenant
Floor Covering	Including adapting doors to accommodate carpets	Tenant
Fences & Gates		Ark Housing
Fire & Grate Surrounding		Ark Housing
Fixture & Fittings	E.g. coat hooks, curtains, curtain rails	Tenant
Fuel Supply	Run out of oil or gas	Tenant
Fuses		Tenant
Garages	Including doors (but only after inspection)	Ark Housing
Garden Maintenance	Including dustbins & the supply of replacement dustbins and refuse areas	Tenant
	Maintaining Trees/Hedges Clearing paths of moss and algae	Tenant



REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES		
Repair	Description	Responsibility
Gas	Leak - Phone Phoenix Gas if there is a suspected leak	Ark Housing / Phoenix Gas
Glazing	Re-glazing is a tenant's responsibility In an emergency, Ark Housing will board up damaged windows pending replacements. This may be reviewed in exceptional circumstances	Tenant
Guttering	Cleaned every 3 years	Ark Housing
Handrails	Where fitted by Ark Housing	Ark Housing
Heating	Including storage heaters and fitted electric fires	Ark Housing
	Bleeding Radiators	Tenant
Hot Water Cylinders	Including cylinder insulation	Ark Housing
Internal Plastering	Minor Plaster crack on walls including ceilings	Tenant
Immersion Heaters		Ark Housing
Kitchens	Wall cupboards, re-secure	Ark Housing
	Wall cupboards, refit doors (only after inspection)	Ark Housing
	Worktops including burns, scratches, chipped melamine	Tenant

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REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES		
Repair	Description	Responsibility
Kitchens	Base unit doors (only after inspection)	Ark Housing
	Base Unit (only after inspection)	Ark Housing
	Drawers (only after inspection)	Ark Housing
	Extractor fan (excluding filter)	Ark Housing
	Shelves to units	Ark Housing
Letter Boxes		Tenant
Light Fittings	Except light bulbs, dimmer switches, fluorescent tubes and starters band, non-starter light fittings fitted by the tenant	Ark Housing
Locks	External doors. Note: Ark Housing will only make good defective locks	Ark Housing
Loss of Keys	External/internal doors to dwelling	Tenant
	Including repairs to force entry if you get locked out and including broken keys in lock	Tenant
Outbuildings	Only if provided by Ark Housing	Ark Housing
Over Bath Showers	If fitted by tenant (having first sought permission from Ark Housing)	Tenant



REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES		
Repair	Description	Responsibility
Paths - Communal Footpaths	Including steps, footpaths and ramps	Ark Housing
Paths - In curtilage paths, driveways and hard surface areas	Garden paths & hard surfaces and driveways within Tenants Property. Tenants responsibility to ensure the garden is free from moss and algae. If not treated/cleaned tenants or visitors could potentially slip on the path. In the event that a person is injured due to this, Ark housing will not be held liable for any insurance claims	Tenant
Plastering	External (only after inspection)	Ark Housing
Plumbing Repairs and Leaks	Except for washing machines, dishwashers and radiators	Ark Housing
Porches		Ark Housing
Rain Water Gullies		Tenant
Re-lighting gas pilot lights	Including resetting of any heating controls or programmes	Tenant
Roofs		Ark Housing
Showers	Shower units and trays (where fitted by Ark)	Ark Housing
	Shower wastes	Ark Housing
	Shower curtain including fittings and rail	Tenant
	Shower Doors (where fitted by Ark Housing)	Ark Housing

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REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES		
Repair	Description	Responsibility
Showers (continued)	Shower Grab Rails	Ark Housing
Sinks	Sink unit (only after inspection)	Ark Housing
	Blockages	Tenant
	Sink taps excluding washers	Ark Housing
	Sink tap washer	Tenant
	Plug and chain	Tenant
Skirting Boards		Ark Housing
Smoke/Carbon Monoxide detectors		Ark Housing
Smoke/Heat Alarms	Replacement of Battery	Tenant
Stairs		Ark Housing
Sweeping of Chimneys (due to fire risk)		Tenant
Switches & Sockets	Except dimmer switches and non-standard fitted by tenant	Ark Housing
Telephone Points		Tenant
Tiling	Only after inspection and, if provided, by Ark Housing	Ark Housing

**REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Repair	Description	Responsibility
TV Aerial	Unless communal	Tenant
TV Sockets	Except non-standard fitted by tenant	Ark Housing
Wash-hand Basins	Wash-hand basin unit (only after inspection)	Ark Housing
	Blockages	Tenant
	Taps excluding washers	Ark Housing
	Tap Washers	Tenant
	Plug and chain	Tenant
Washing Lines		Tenant
WC, Cistern and Seat	WC and cistern (only after inspection)	Ark Housing
	Blockages to WC and waste pipe (dependent on cause)	Ark Housing
	WC seat	Tenant
Windows	Including window sills, catches, sash, cords & frames (only after inspection)	Ark Housing

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PLANNED AND CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

In addition to response repairs, the Association undertakes a comprehensive Planned and Cyclical Maintenance Programme to maintain the quality of its homes. Replacement works are scheduled when a building element, such as windows, wiring, boilers, bathrooms or kitchens, has reached the end of its life expectancy.

Works that become necessary because of legislative change are also included in the annual programme of planned maintenance, when required.

Health and Safety Testing /Inspections

Whilst we want you to be able to enjoy your home, we also want your home to be a safe place for you and your family to live. As a landlord, we are required by law to carry out certain inspections and servicing. You will be contacted in advance to make a convenient appointment for our inspectors or contractors to visit. You must comply with any request to inspect, test or service as these are legal requirements and are there for your safety. Failure to allow access on or before the service due date will result in the Association acting through the courts to gain immediate access to your

home which will involve either an Injunction Order or a Court Warrant. Any costs incurred by Ark Housing in gaining access will be recharged to you.

Gas

As a landlord, we are required by law to carry out an annual gas safety inspection to ensure gas heating appliances in your property are working correctly. We also carry out a service to these appliances to ensure they run efficiently and are cost effective. It is your responsibility to ensure you provide access for our contractor. If repeated access is denied, the Association may take legal action as per the Tenancy Agreement due to the Health & Safety risk this poses.

Electrical Test and Inspection

As a landlord we are required by law to carry out, on a regular basis, electrical testing and inspection of our properties to ensure the electrical system remains safe. A full test will be carried out every 5 years and again it is vital that you provide access to our contractor to allow this test to be undertaken. It is your responsibility to ensure you provide access for our contractor. If repeated access is denied, the Association may take legal action as per the Tenancy Agreement due to the Health & Safety risk this poses.



Oil Fired and Air Source Heating Appliances

It is our policy to have all oil fired and air source heating appliances inspected and serviced annually to ensure they are safe and efficient. It is your responsibility to ensure you provide access for our contractor.

Solid Fuel Safety

All solid fuel heating appliances will be serviced annually, which will include sweeping the flue servicing the appliance. Sweeping of individual flues not serving a solid fuel appliance is the responsibility of the tenant. Every room containing a solid fuel appliance will have a carbon monoxide alarm in it. If you think there may be a problem with the alarm, please contact us as a matter of urgency.

- ★ Do not use petrol, paraffin or any oil to ignite a solid fuel appliance. If you have an enclosed room heater or boiler follow the manufacturer's instructions and brush the smoke outlet every month;
- ★ Burn only the recommended fuels;
- ★ Ensure there is adequate ventilation and do not block or obstruct fresh air ventilators;
- ★ Draught proofing helps cut fuel bills but do not seal off the air supply to the room in which the fire is

located. Fumes may build up and cause you to become ill or, in extreme cases, can be fatal.

DISABILITY ADAPTATIONS

The need for minor adaptations, such as grab rails or stair rails may initially be identified to the Association in a number of ways, including the tenant, a tenant's relative or representative, or through Health and Social Services sources. Where the adaptation required is more complex - i.e., where the estimated works costs are likely to exceed £1,000 e.g. level access shower installation - specialist advice from an Occupational Therapist (OT) attached to the relevant Health & Social Care Trust must be obtained.

Recommended works can range from grab rails to level access showers and stairlifts. Major works would include extensions to properties, where feasible. All OT recommendations are subject to Adaptation Pre-Conditions and eligibility criteria.

Tenants would be required to be referred to an OT either via their Doctor or local hospital and the OT is required to visit the property to carry out an

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assessment prior to sending their recommendation to Ark Housing. Applications for adaptations will not be approved if you are currently on the waiting list for a transfer to other accommodation.

TENANT-LED IMPROVEMENTS

As a tenant you have the right to make reasonable improvements to your home, but you must first ask and receive written permission from the Housing Association to do so.

The Association will assess each request on merit. Any alterations that would make your home less safe or would reduce its value will not be approved.

Improvements which may require written permission include:

- ★ Any additions or alteration to the Association's fixtures and fittings or to do with the services provided, e.g. putting in a new kitchen
- ★ Erecting TV, Radio Antenna, satellite receivers

- ★ Carry out external redecoration, laying a patio, erecting sheds or extensions, changing windows or heating system
- ★ Removing internal walls
- ★ Erection of railings
- ★ External decoration
- ★ Changes to electrical fittings
- ★ Hard landscaping

The Association will not unreasonably refuse permission to make improvements but may require that certain conditions are met. For example, that the work is carried out by a competent contractor to a proper standard, is supervised and that all statutory approvals such as Building Control and Planning Permission are obtained. Permission will not be given where alterations are deemed to make the dwelling unsafe, decrease the value of the dwelling or increase the cost of maintenance.

Where a tenant replaces items or carries out alterations, it will become the tenant's responsibility to maintain such items.



Right to Compensation for Tenant Improvements and Other Circumstances

Compensation may be provided if you have completed improvements to the property but leave before you have gained the benefit of the improvements.

Qualifying Improvements

The qualifying improvement must be on the list of eligible works which can be supplied by the Association, on request. Improvements must materially add value to the property and excludes security measures.

Tenants will not be eligible for compensation if:

- ★ The tenant is purchasing the property as the improvement will be excluded from the valuation;
- ★ The tenancy is terminated because of:
 - A Notice Seeking Possession
 - A Court Order for Possession
 - An Abandonment Notice

To qualify for compensation, the improvement must have the prior written approval of the Association.

In considering an application for compensation, the Association may set conditions on the approval such as:

- ★ Design, materials and quality of construction
- ★ Use of Contractors
- ★ Adequate Notice of Commencement works
- ★ The provision of invoices for the improvement work which itemises materials, cost and labour, provided by you to the Association.

Breach of any condition may render the application ineligible for funding.

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Procedure for Claiming

Qualifying tenants may claim compensation whenever their secure tenancy ends. Compensation is not payable for professional fees, statutory approvals or the Tenant's own labour and will reduce over the lifetime of the improvement.

If you believe you may be entitled to a payment under the qualifying improvements scheme, please contact us for information.

OTHER PAYMENTS TO TENANTS

Home Loss Payments

This is a statutory payment made to tenants who lose their home because of renovation, redevelopment or demolition.

If you must move because improvements are being made to your home, this payment may also be available. You must fulfil certain statutory criteria before a payment can be made.

Decant Payments

Tenants who are moved temporarily to another house/mobile home or to family members may receive a payment for moving.

Redecoration Allowance

The Association may make payments to tenants whose decoration has been disturbed as part of a works scheme within their home. The payments are based on the number and type of rooms affected.