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welcome

Welcome to North Devon Homes

We are a non-profit making housing association, owning and managing around 3100 properties throughout North Devon.

We are strictly regulated by The Housing Corporation who oversee every aspect of our organisation; from rent setting and service standards to equal opportunities. As a not-for-profit organisation we have no shareholders, and any money received in rents is invested straight back into the improvement of the homes we provide and the services that we deliver.

Our mission is to provide good quality, affordable homes and services, not only to provide quality of life in North Devon, but quality of living.

In September 2004 the Audit Commission made an inspection of North Devon Homes. We were awarded a two-star status, providing a “good service with promising prospects for improvement.”

On behalf of the Board of Management and all the staff of North Devon Homes, I wish you every happiness in your home.

John Davies

Chief Executive

How to use this Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to give you a step-by-step guide to your tenancy and the services that we provide.

The handbook has been divided into useful sections and has been designed with loose pages so that we can send you new pages from time to time when information needs to be updated.

North Devon Homes’ contact names, addresses and telephone numbers are in the **Contact Us** section of this Handbook. Other useful telephone numbers are listed in the useful information section.

In addition to this handbook, you should refer to your Tenancy Agreement, which is the legal agreement between NDH as your landlord and you as the tenant.

Please keep the handbook safe, and, if you move, please leave it in the property for the new tenant.

If you require this document in an alternative language, in large print or on tape, then please contact the PR and Marketing Co-ordinator.

about us

Board of Management

As a not-for-profit Company, we are governed by a Board of 15 volunteers and regulated by The Housing Corporation. The Board is made up of:

- 5 tenants proposed by the Customer Forum and selected by the Board
- 5 councillors selected by North Devon District Council
- 5 independent local business people selected by the Customer and Council Board members

Each Board member serves a minimum of three years.

Company Membership

Everyone who has an interest in NDH, (including tenants of the Company), is entitled to apply for membership. All applicants must declare that they share the Company's aims and objectives (the furtherance of social housing) and this is their prime motive in applying for membership.

Each application will be considered by the Board of Management and upon admission be classified in the Company's Register of Members.

NDH encourages all tenants to apply for membership.

For more information please contact the Customer Involvement Manager.

Customer Involvement

NDH believes that the involvement of tenants and leaseholders is the key to providing a good quality housing service. It also makes good business sense to involve customers in the development of those services to an agreed standard and quality. NDH is committed to working in partnership with its customers so that they may participate fully in the Company's management, in the development of its policies and strategies and day-to-day service delivery matters. NDH has committed to a formal Agreement between the Company and its tenants setting out the arrangements that will ensure your views are heard, and influence our services.

Running the Company

The **Chief Executive** is responsible for managing the Company on a day-to-day basis, plus:

- performance
- development of new homes
- public relations
- communications
- board members liaison
- governance
- policy formulation and review

The other members of the senior management team are the **Director of Operations** and the **Director of Resources**.

about us

Running the Company

The Director of Operations maintains overall responsibility for: Property Services, Tenancy Services, Community Services and Customer Involvement. Their functions are:

Property Services:

- planned maintenance (major repairs)
- annual maintenance (i.e. gas servicing)
- day to day response repairs
- procurement of works and professional services
- organising contractors and consultants
- Provision of new homes

Tenancy Services:

- estate management
- lettings
- transfers
- anti-social behaviour and harassment
- area care taking service

Community Services:

- Scheme Co-ordinator and mobile-warden services
- Community Alarm services (including Devon Homelink)

Customer Involvement:

- customer involvement and communications
- providing support and advice to the Customer Forum
- ensuring consultation and collaboration of customers in the delivery of services

The Director of Resources maintains overall responsibility for the Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology of the Company:

- financial management
- long-term financial planning
- loan portfolio management and refinancing
- financial controls
- financial information
- production of management information
- rent collection
- maintenance of rent and service charge accounts and statutory notifications
- processing of payments and receipts
- production of budgets
- office and facilities management
- human resources management (personnel)
- information and technology management

about us

Who Regulates Us?

The Housing Corporation

As a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), we are strictly regulated by the Housing Corporation. The Corporation has the power to oversee and influence all aspects of our services to you, the tenants. We have to conform to the Corporation's Housing Performance Standards and provide quarterly and annual reports on our progress across a wide range of issues. It is the Housing Corporation's task to ensure that the rights of tenants are protected and that NDH carries out its business in a professional and efficient way. In turn the Housing Corporation is responsible to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The National Housing Federation

NDH is also a member of the National Housing Federation, the "trade body" that has a code of conduct for members and are pioneers of good practice within social housing. We ensure that we abide by their recommendations and guidance.

The Audit Commission

The Audit Commission is a government body that works in partnership with the Housing Corporation to help improve the performance of all housing associations through audit, inspection and research. In September 2004 the Audit Commission performed a thorough inspection of North Devon Homes' services and performance. They awarded NDH two stars out of a possible three, which means that the services we provide are good, and we have promising prospects for improvement.

customer service standards

Customer Care

We want to ensure that customer care is integral to the planning, management and delivery of our housing services. With this in mind we aim to provide you with the best possible service at all times, and the opportunity to shape future services.

Corporate Customer Care Standards

We will treat your enquiry seriously and will respond promptly and in a professional manner at all times. This means that we make the following service promises:

- Answer all telephone calls within 6 rings
- Reply to letters and faxes within 10 working days
- Reply to emails within 5 working days
- Respond to your telephone messages within 2 working days
- Carry identification badges for when we meet you in person and introduce ourselves when we speak to you on the telephone.
- Treat you with courtesy and respect
- Make appointments and keep them
- Send any forms or information you request within 3 working days

If you consider that we have not met the above promises, we welcome your comments.

Please see the Contact Us section for our address.

Visiting Our Offices & Home Visits

Our offices are clean, warm and friendly and accessible to all customers. When you visit either our Head Office or Town Centre Office you will find our staff to be friendly, helpful and professional.

We always aim to ensure you are not kept waiting for more than 10 minutes even if you do not have a pre-arranged appointment, and you can be seen in a private interview room if you wish. In the rare event that this is not possible we can arrange an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Visiting You

We will gladly arrange to visit you at your home between the hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Telephone or visit either office to book an appointment. We can also make arrangements to visit you outside of our normal opening hours if necessary.

customer service standards

Town Centre Office

Our town centre office is a 'one stop shop' where you can pay rent, report repairs and problems, view property exchange registers, as well as obtain general advice about your tenancy and home. You can also book an appointment to see your Estate Manager or Rents Officer.

The town centre office is located at 116-118 Boutport Street, Barnstaple (to the rear of Green Lanes shopping centre). The office is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm.

For any queries relating to garages, please telephone 01271 346849 or visit our Town Centre Office.

Our Expectations of You

Our service standards and delivery of customer service throughout the Company are designed to provide you with the highest possible quality of service.

We think that it is fair to expect you to play your part in helping us to achieve these standards. If we experience abusive, offensive or racial language, we cannot deliver these standards. We will not accept any abusive or threatening behaviour towards any of our staff.

We think it is reasonable to expect you to:

- Pay rent regularly and on time
- Take reasonable care of your home
- Promptly report any items of repair
- Behave in a responsible manner towards neighbours, visitors and contractors.
- Be polite when speaking to us
- Treat us as you would expect to be treated yourselves
- Honour appointments

complaints

How to Complain

NDH aims to provide you with services that meet your needs and if we get it wrong, we would like to know about it **as soon as possible**. This way we can put the matter right quickly and ensure that we learn from it and improve our service to you.

Everyone who gives feedback on our services will be listened to, whether it is a complaint, comment or a compliment.

A complaint is where we (the Company, a member of staff or a contractor) have not provided you with the necessary level of service that you would expect, or you are unhappy with the manner in which you have been dealt.

As a result, you may wish to let us know that you are not satisfied. In other words, in your opinion:

“We have done something badly or we have failed to do something that we should have done.”

A complaint is not:

- A request for service
- The initial report of a fault or defect
- A query about a Company policy
- A request for information
- Reporting an incident of anti-social behaviour. These incidents should be directed to your Estate Manager
- If you wish to complain about a service charge or obtain access to information about service charges you must go to a Leasehold Valuation Tribunal or the Local Authority
- If you believe that we have failed to put in place policies and practices that will ensure that you have the rights required by the Housing Corporations Performance Standards you may go to the Housing Corporation to complain
- If you believe that the Company has broken the law you may go to the courts

We aim to ensure that all complaints are:

- resolved at an early stage in the process wherever possible
- dealt with promptly, courteously, fairly and in confidence
- investigated fully
- resolved effectively and within set targets
- dealt with to your satisfaction
- properly recorded, monitored and figures published so that you can see how we are performing

Where mistakes have been made, we will not only apologise, but also seek to put you in the position you enjoyed before the mistake was made.

The procedure for making complaints has 3 stages:

- **Stage 1**
speak directly to the Customer Services Co-ordinator who will listen to your complaint
- **Stage 2**
the Housing Manager will carry out a review of your complaint
- **Appeal**
an appeal can be made at a meeting between yourself, three Board Members, (one of whom will be a tenant), and the Chief Executive

complaints

Each stage of your complaint will be completed in no more than ten working days. For more information on making a complaint, please request a complaint leaflet from any member of staff.

Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme

If your complaint cannot be resolved through our procedure, you may contact the Independent Housing Ombudsman who will conduct an investigation.

The Housing Ombudsman is an independent organisation that can investigate complaints from tenants of Registered Social Landlords.

The Ombudsman Scheme **does not** deal with complaints about rent or service charge levels, agreed policies of the company or neighbour disputes (unless the complaint refers to how the company dealt with the problem).

You should be aware that they will not look into your complaint unless you have been through our own Customer Complaints Procedure.

The contact details of the Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme are in the Useful Information Section.

tenancy services

This section outlines the services provided by the Tenancy Services Team and answers some specific questions most frequently asked by our customers.

Moving In

This section is mainly for new tenants. However, some information may be useful to existing tenants.

When should I move into my new home?

You should move on the day the tenancy starts. If you do not move in straight away you may not qualify for Housing Benefit for the time you were not living at the property.

When should I make my first rent payment?

You should pay your first week's rent when you sign for the property.

How long will it take for my rent payment card to arrive?

Once we have ordered your rent payment card it should take about 5 days to arrive. If your card does not arrive within this time please telephone our Rents Team on 01271 312517 or 01271 312518.

Should I fill in a Housing Benefit Form?

If you did not fill in a Housing Benefit form when you signed your Tenancy Agreement and you think that you might qualify you should fill one in. If you need help to do this please ask at any of our offices.

Should I contact the Benefits Agency?

Yes, if:

- you are already receiving any benefits (if you don't tell them your new address you may have to pay full rent)
- you want to apply for any Grants or Loans

Will I get any help with the cost of decorating?

Sometimes we give decoration vouchers to help new tenants decorate some or all of their home. You will have been told about any allowance when you viewed the property.

The decoration allowance is allocated as vouchers per room that requires decorating.

What if repairs need to be done before I move in?

We will do large repairs before your tenancy starts. When you sign for your tenancy we may arrange for some small repairs to be done after you move in. We will normally agree a day and a time with you when the repairs will be completed.

Redirecting your mail

It is possible to have your mail redirected to your new address. Your local Post Office will be able to tell you how to do this.

tenancy services

Your responsibilities

Both tenants and landlords have rights and responsibilities. You can find details of your rights and responsibilities in your Tenancy Agreement.

What is a Tenancy Agreement?

A Tenancy Agreement is an important legal contract, that you should keep safe. It tells you about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant and the rights and responsibilities of your landlord.

What is a joint tenancy?

This is when two or more adults have equal rights and responsibilities for the tenancy. A joint tenancy is created when all the adults involved sign the Tenancy Agreement. All tenants are jointly responsible for making sure all the rules of the tenancy are kept. Any of the joint tenants can end the tenancy. Sometimes this means that everyone must leave the home. You can get more information about this from your Estate Manager.

Can I keep pets in my home?

If you want to keep a pet you should ask our permission first. Generally we will not refuse permission but if your pet causes a nuisance to neighbours we will ask you to find another home for it.

Can I run a business from home?

You are usually only allowed to use your home as a private residence, not as business premises. If you want to run a business or trade from your home you have to get our written permission before you start.

We will give permission if your request is reasonable. We will not give our permission if the business is likely to cause a nuisance to your neighbours. We will judge every case on its individual circumstances, but we would not allow certain types of businesses.

Examples include:

- taxi firms
- vehicle repairs and sales
- dealing scrap and building materials
- any business that involves a lot of people visiting your home
- any business that creates a lot of noise
- any business that does not meet planning regulations

If the business or trade causes a nuisance we will withdraw our permission and you will have to stop running it from your home. This includes nuisance to your neighbours, people who work in your area and other people who visit the area including North Devon Homes employees and representatives.

tenancy services

Tenancy and Estate Management Services

What does estate management include?

- Managing empty properties
- Dealing with complaints like nuisance neighbours
- Estate inspections
- Caretaking services
- Managing communal areas and open spaces on estates
- Community involvement

Managing empty properties

We aim to keep properties empty for as short a period as possible. In the meantime we:

- Remove rubbish from inside and outside of the property
- Charge for any damage caused and for the removal of any items left inside or outside the home after the tenant has moved out
- Make sure that vulnerable empty homes are safe and secure
- Repair all empty homes to our lettable standard
- Inspect work carried out on empty homes
- Carry out gas and electrical safety checks to all new tenancies

Dealing with complaints like nuisance neighbours

Neighbour nuisance and anti social behaviour can cause considerable stress and anxiety to tenants and their families.

We are committed to ensuring that all tenants and leaseholders enjoy their right to peace, quiet and security of their homes. The company will take firm and prompt action, wherever possible, in dealing with disruptive tenants and any other persons causing harassment or a nuisance on estates or in individual dwellings.

There are lots of different types of nuisance including:

- Noise
- Condition of home/use of property
- Behaviour of children and youths
- Cars and vehicles (parking, abandoning and repairing)
- Criminal activities
- Problems with animals
- Threats or harassment
- Domestic violence

If you would like to make a complaint about anti social behaviour or a nuisance neighbour please speak to your Estate Manager.

If you would like to know more about how we tackle anti social behaviour ask your Estate Manager for a copy of our Anti Social Behaviour Strategy.

tenancy services

Estate inspections

Estate inspections are tours of the estate that we carry out 4 times per year. We encourage residents, tenant representatives, councillors and neighbourhood police officers to join in. We note down everything that needs to be done and give the estate a score. This helps us to see how good our customers think their estate is and whether it is improving each time it is inspected.

If you would like to become involved in the Estate Inspection where you live please contact your Estate Manager.

Caretaking services

Our caretakers are an important part of our Estate Management service.

They provide a swift responsive service to issues raised by staff and residents on our estates and:

- help keep estates tidy
- look after empty homes
- remove dumped rubbish
- cut back overgrown areas
- carry out minor repairs

Managing communal areas and open spaces on estates

We have two main contractors who look after our communal areas; one that carries out cleaning of communal areas in blocks of flats and the other that carries out grounds maintenance work, including grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance and hedge trimming. We inspect the quality of the work carried out and also encourage feedback from residents. If you have any complaints or suggestions about how we could improve these services please contact your Estate Manager.

What should I do if I see someone dumping rubbish or dumping a vehicle?

We want estates to be clean and attractive places to live. If you find dumped rubbish in a shared area or you see someone dumping rubbish or a vehicle on your estate please let your Estate Manager know.

What should I do if I see vandalism or graffiti?

Please let your Estate Manager know so that we can investigate and repair or remove it. We will aim to remove any offensive graffiti within 2 working days of it being reported.

Do you provide any grants to help me improve my property?

We provide grants for tenants to improve their properties. The types of grants offered and the amounts offered are subject to change so please contact your Estate Manager for an up to date list of grants available.

tenancy services

Can I alter or improve my property?

We will consider requests from tenants wishing to make alterations or improvements to their homes. We may ask for detailed plans and may need to visit your home to assess the suitability of the proposed works.

Before you carry out any alterations or improvements you will require our written consent and all other necessary approvals (for example, planning permissions or building regulations approval). We will not unreasonably withhold consent but will make it conditional that the work is carried out to a standard acceptable to us. This may mean our consent is subject to you using one of our approved contractors.

Do you rent garages?

We own over 800 garages across North Devon. If you would like to know if we rent garages near you or if you would like to rent a garage please contact our Customer Services Team at our Town Centre Office on 01271 346849.

Finding a new home

There are a number of ways in which we can help you find a new home that suits your needs:

Internal Transfers

North Devon Homes operates a transfer system to enable its existing tenants to move to more suitable accommodation within its own housing stock - as personal and household circumstances and needs of residents change.

If you would like to apply for a transfer please contact your Estate Manager who will arrange a convenient appointment for a home visit to assess your need for alternative accommodation.

Move UK

North Devon Homes is a member of the Move UK scheme which is a national organisation set up to assist tenants of local authorities and housing associations find suitable alternative accommodation elsewhere in the country.

Mutual exchange

A mutual exchange is when you arrange a swap with someone else. You have to be a Council or Housing Association tenant anywhere in Great Britain to apply for a mutual exchange. You must have your landlord's written permission before you swap.

If you would like information about the services of Move UK or how you go about finding a mutual exchange swap please contact your Estate Manager.

you and your rent

Rent Setting

The Government wants all social housing rent levels to be consistent. They have set rent targets for all social housing providers, including all local authorities and registered social landlords. North Devon Homes intends to meet these targets by the Government deadline of 2012. Our rents will be adjusted to meet these targets.

Rent Increases

Rents are reviewed annually. We are only legally allowed to increase rents once a year, this is normally on the first Monday in April. This does not prevent us (subject to your written agreement) from separately increasing the rent as a result of improvements we have carried out to your home.

When and How to Pay Rent

Rent is due every Monday in advance.

There are several ways you can pay:

- by setting up a Standing Order or Direct Debit through your bank
- using a Swipe Card at the Post Office
- by Postal Order or cheque through the post (never send cash through the post). Cheques should be crossed and made payable to North Devon Homes Limited (see the contact us section)
- via a pay point machine
- using internet banking
- using a credit or debit card in the office or over the telephone
- at our town centre office

We will also send you a rent statement each quarter showing every transaction on your rent account.

If you need any further information on these payment methods please contact the Rent Section.

Your Rent Card

When your tenancy begins you will be issued with a plastic rent card (commonly known as a "swipe card"), a rent payment schedule card and a wallet in which to keep both safely together. The wallet also includes a pocket where you can keep your payment receipts. Please keep your receipts safe as these are your proof of payment.

Please take care of your swipe card - it should last for many years. **You will not need a new payment card every year.** Each year we will simply advise you of your new rent payment and you continue using the same card.

We will write to you separately if your rent payment changes at any time. You will be advised of exactly how much you must pay. You must remember this amount when you make payments. You must also inform the Housing Benefit Office of any changes to your rent or income.

If you also rent a garage from us we will issue you with a separate card, which will be clearly identifiable, for garage rent payments.

If you lose your rent payment card please let us know immediately so that we can arrange for a replacement card to be supplied. The Company reserves the right to impose a small charge for replacement cards if you lose it more than once, although any such charge will be no greater than the actual cost of supplying the new card.

you and your rent

Service Charges

In addition to your rent you may have a service charge payable for your home. This usually applies to tenants living in homes with communal areas.

The service charge covers services like: communal lighting, maintenance of communal gardens, and the cleaning of communal areas.

You will be advised of the cost of any service charge when you accept your tenancy.

Housing Benefit

Our staff at either the Town Centre Office or the Rents Section will be able to give you advice and help on how to claim Housing Benefit from North Devon District Council.

Please note that if you are entitled to Housing Benefit, North Devon District Council will make the payment and not NDH.

Even if you receive Housing Benefit you are still responsible for making sure that your rent is paid. You may choose to have Housing Benefit paid direct to us so that we can credit your rent account. Alternatively you may opt to have Housing Benefit paid to yourself, in which case you will be completely responsible for making sure that all rent due is paid on time.

If your circumstances change in any way that might affect your entitlement, you must notify North Devon District Council as soon as possible.

Do not delay in making your claim. You only have one week if it is a new claim, otherwise you may lose benefit. It is important to remember that all benefit renewal forms must be completed on time and forms must include your correct National Insurance Number. You may also be asked for documents to support your claim. You should provide all the required information as quickly as possible; otherwise your Housing Benefit may not be paid.

If you need any help or advice with the claiming of Housing Benefit, we have a dedicated Benefits Coordinator who will be happy to assist you (see the Contact Us section).

you and your rent

Difficulty in Paying Your Rent

Your rent should be your number one priority. You must always pay your rent regularly and by the due date. While we take rent arrears very seriously, we do recognise that many of our customers can have financial problems and we want to help before the problem gets out of hand.

The sooner we become aware of a problem, the quicker it can be sorted out. Contact the rents section as soon as you receive a letter from us so that we can come to an affordable repayment agreement. We may be able to help you check your benefits entitlement and priority debts. We can also put you in touch with other organisations, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, to help you with managing your money.

If the Arrears persist, a Notice of Seeking Possession will be served on you no later than 6 weeks after the arrears first appear. During this time you still have the opportunity to make contact with us and work out a repayment plan. We will continue to seek ways of helping but you will need to help yourself too.

If the arrears still persist, you will receive a Possession Summons giving a date and time for a hearing at the County Court. You will also be liable for the court costs. The District Judge will either grant an Outright Possession Order asking you to leave the property, or suspend possession on the basis that you pay a weekly amount off the arrears in addition to your rent. If you fail to keep to the terms of any Suspended Possession Order we can re-apply to the County Court and ask for a Warrant for your Eviction.

If you leave the property, you are still liable for the debt and North Devon Homes will continue to pursue you until they have been repaid. You may also find you have made yourself intentionally homeless and have difficulty in obtaining re-housing.

Eviction really is a last resort - we want to keep people in their homes, but we do have a duty to all of our tenants to collect rent, provide quality services and keep our costs to a minimum. At each stage you will be given the chance to pay the money you owe and we will help you as much as possible to sort the problem out.

We are here to help, please let us know if you are having difficulties.

The sooner you tell us there's a problem, the quicker we can help you sort it out.

YOU ARE AT RISK OF LOSING YOUR HOME IF YOU DO NOT PAY YOUR RENT

Useful Telephone Numbers:

Rents Section at North Devon Homes	01271 312517 / 312519 / 312520
Housing Benefit	01271 388389/388390
Citizens Advice Bureau	01271 377077
National Debtline	0808 808 4000
Consumer Credit Counselling Service	0800 138 1111

repairing your home

The Repairs and Maintenance Service

Our aim is to achieve a customer-orientated maintenance service and provide value for money. We aim to make sure that your home is well managed and maintained to provide you with a good quality of living and better quality of life. This is done by providing a responsive maintenance service for minor repairs needed ad hoc, and a planned maintenance programme for major improvements.

The response maintenance service responds to those minor repairs that you report to us and that are completed within 1 to 20 working days. Planned maintenance ensures that larger maintenance works are carried out to your road or block of flats in an organised way. Examples include external decoration, new kitchens and bathrooms, re-wiring, re-roofing or renewing doors and windows.

Who is responsible for repairs?

NDH is responsible for maintaining the structure and exterior of your property to a good standard as set out by the Decent Homes Standard (2010). You are responsible for internal decoration and your own fixtures and fittings. The table below gives a full guide as to who is responsible for repairs to various items around your home.

Item	Who Is Responsible?	Exceptions
Asbestos	NDH	If you intend to carry out DIY, contact your Property Services Manager immediately, before you carry out the work. Please refer to the safety section
Back Boiler	NDH	
Banisters (internal and external)	NDH	
Baths	NDH	Where blockage is caused by inappropriate disposal
Bathroom Fittings (towel rails etc)	Tenant	
Bin Shelters	NDH	
Brickwork (inc. air bricks)	NDH	
Ceilings	NDH	
Chimney (inc. pots and cowls)	NDH	
Chimney Sweeping	Tenant	
Clothes Posts	Tenant	Where provided by NDH in communal areas
Coal Bunkers	NDH	Retaining boards (internal coal store)
Cookers	Tenant	
Cooker Connection Point	NDH	Either a gas or an electric cooker point is provided - appropriate cooker to be provided by tenant
Communal Areas to Flats	NDH	
Cupboards	NDH	
Curtain Fixtures	Tenant	
Damp Proof Course	NDH	

repairing your home

Who is responsible for repairs?

Item	Who Is Responsible?	Exceptions
Decoration - Internal	Tenant	
Decoration - External	NDH	
Doorbell	Tenant	Communal door entry systems in blocks of flats
Door Entry Systems (communal)	NDH	
Doors (internal and external)	NDH	
Door Fittings (inc. handle and letterbox)	NDH	
Door Frames	NDH	
Door Locks (internal and external)	NDH	Where tenant has lost or broken key
Door Name Plate	Tenant	
Down Pipe (soil/rain water)	NDH	
Drainage (inc. blockages to main drain)	NDH	Where blockage caused by inappropriate disposal
Driveways	NDH	
Drying Areas	NDH	
Electric Heating	NDH	
Electric Plugs	Tenant	
Electric Wiring (inc. sockets and switches)	NDH	
Electric Tripping	NDH	Where tenant's own appliance is causing the fault - see page 26 to reset power
Emergency Lighting (communal)	NDH	
Estate Footpaths, Walls	NDH	
Fascia Boards/Soffit Boards	NDH	
Fence (boundary onto road or path)	NDH	
Fence (dividing properties)	Tenant	Where neighbour (not NDH owned) owns boundary
Fire Alarms	NDH	
Fire Basket	NDH	
Fire Grates and Surrounds	NDH	
Fireplace Tiles	NDH	
Fire - Gas or Electric	NDH	
Floorboards	NDH	
Floor Tiles	NDH	
Foundations	NDH	
Fuse Box	NDH	

repairing your home

Who is responsible for repairs?

Item	Who Is Responsible?	Exceptions
Fuse Wire/Cartridge	Tenant	
Fuse on Plug	Tenant	
Garden (maintenance of)	Tenant	
Garden Paths (front, rear or side)	NDH	
Gardens Timber Sheds	Tenant	
Gas Heating	NDH	
Gas Water Heater	NDH	
Gas Piping	NDH	
Garages	NDH	Timber garages erected by tenants
Greenhouses	Tenant	
Gates	NDH	
Glass (internal and external)	NDH	NDH renew glass under planned maintenance but do not repair breakages. Where a crime has occurred and a crime reference number has been obtained and verified with the local police force, NDH will repair such breakages.
Guttering	NDH	
Hatch to Loft	NDH	
Handrail (internal and external)	NDH	
Immersion Heater	NDH	
Insulation to Cold Water Tanks and Pipe Work in Loft	NDH	
Keys (replacement)	Tenant	
Kitchen Fittings and Worktops	NDH	Outside of planned maintenance programme
Lifts	NDH	
Light Fittings (ceiling pendants and roses)	NDH	
Light Bulbs and Fluorescent Tube/Starter	Tenant	Communal areas
Lock Ups	NDH	
Outbuildings	Tenant	Where provided by NDH
Overflow Pipes	NDH	
Parking Areas (communal)	NDH	
Pest Control	Tenant	Where rats nest found on NDH property
Pigeon Lofts	Tenant	
Plaster (plasterboard)	NDH	

repairing your home

Who is responsible for repairs?

Item	Who Is Responsible?	Exceptions
Play Areas	NDH	
Plugs and Chains for Sinks, Basins and Baths	Tenant	
Porch	NDH	
Pulley (for clothes line)	NDH	
Pumps	NDH	
Radiators	NDH	
Retaining Walls in Garden	NDH	
Roof (inc. tiles and slates)	NDH	
Roof Light (skylights)	NDH	
Rotary Dryer	Tenant	Where provided by NDH in communal areas
Sheds	Tenant	Where provided by NDH
Shower Unit	Tenant	Where provided by NDH
Sink Base Units and Tops	NDH	Where blockage caused by inappropriate disposal
Skirting	NDH	
Smoke Detectors	NDH	
Soft Furnishings	Tenant	
Solid Fuel Central Heating	NDH	
Spin/Tumble Dryers (communal)	NDH	
Stairs	NDH	
Stair Lighting (communal)	NDH	
Steps	NDH	
Taps	NDH	
Toilet Pan and Cistern	NDH	When WC is blocked due to inappropriate disposal
Toilet Seat and Seat Fittings	Tenant	
TV Aerial	Tenant	Where communal aerial provided by NDH in flats
Ventilators	NDH	
Wash Hand Basin	NDH	When waste pipe blocked due to inappropriate disposal
Washers on Taps and Ball Valves	NDH	
Washing Machine (communal)	NDH	
Washing Machine Connection Point	NDH	
Water Heating	NDH	

repairing your home

Who is responsible for repairs?

Item	Who Is Responsible?	Exceptions
Water Supply (hot and cold storage tanks and pipes)	NDH	Total loss of water from mains (SWW)
Window Frames and Sills	NDH	
Window Fittings	NDH	
Window Sash Cord	NDH	

THE MAIN EXCEPTION TO ALL OF THE ABOVE IS WHERE INSTALLED/FITTED OR DAMAGED BY THE TENANT

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES OR ARE UNSURE ABOUT ANYTHING, PLEASE CALL OUR RESPONSE MAINTENANCE TEAM FOR HELP AND ADVICE.

ALL OF THE ABOVE BECOME THE TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITY WHEN:

- 1. THE TENANT HAS FITTED THEMSELVES**
- 2. A REPAIR BECOMES NECESSARY THROUGH DAMAGE OR NEGLECT.**

IN SUCH INSTANCES, NDH WILL NORMALLY CONDUCT THE REPAIR AND RECHARGE THE TENANT FOR THE COST. IF THE TENANT ALREADY HAS OUTSTANDING RECHARGES OR RENT ARREARS, NDH MAY REFUSE THIS SERVICE.

repairing your home

Reporting Repairs

You are responsible for reporting repairs that need to be carried out to your home and where applicable, to the communal and/or external areas surrounding your home.

You can contact the Response Maintenance Team to report a repair by:

- telephoning
- writing
- e-mailing
- faxing
- visiting our offices
- visiting your website

For further details please see the Contact Us Section.

If you live in sheltered accommodation you may also inform your scheme coordinator, who will report the repair to the Response Maintenance Team on your behalf.

When you report a repair we will need to know:

- your name, address and telephone number
- what the problem is (be as specific as you can)
- where the problem is (in the lounge, on the roof, in the communal corridor, etc)
- how serious the problem is
- when we can call on you

You will be told the priority that your repair will have and an indication as to how quickly the repair will be carried out. The company operates an appointment system for most internal repairs, so you will be offered an appointment on a specific date. NDH does not normally make appointments for external repairs, repairs to communal areas, repairs requiring specialist parts or for repairs requiring a specialist contractor. If you wish to know when these repairs are to be done, however, you can request that you are telephoned prior to the commencement of the repair.

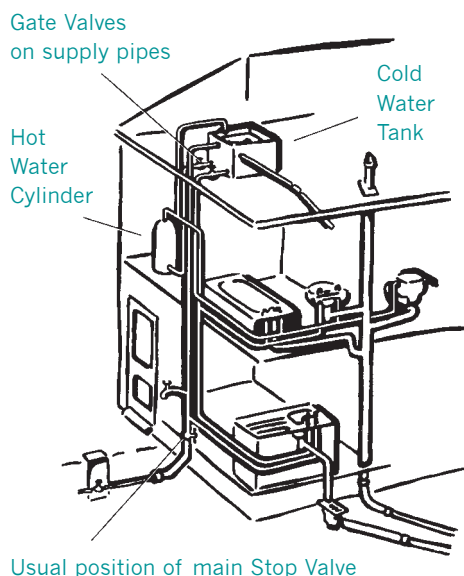
Details of the repair will be passed onto our contractor who will visit you to conduct the work within the agreed time scale. For about 10% of all repairs, it is necessary for a NDH surveyor to visit your property prior to the repair being carried out, to assess the best course of action. The surveyor will then pass the repair directly to a contractor to deal with.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES EXPLAIN SOME OF THE EQUIPMENT FITTED IN YOUR HOME AND WILL HELP YOU TO IDENTIFY REPAIR PROBLEMS.

THESE DIAGRAMS ARE TO HELP YOU REPORT YOUR REPAIRS AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE, NOT TO SHOW YOU HOW TO DO THEM.

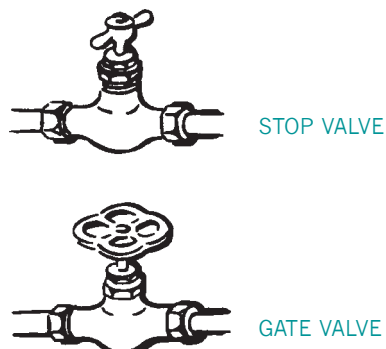
repairing your home

Water Services



It may be necessary to turn off your main Stop Valve. You should know where it is situated and should test it twice a year.

To do this, first shut it off and then open it fully. Then, close it slightly by turning it back towards off by a half turn.

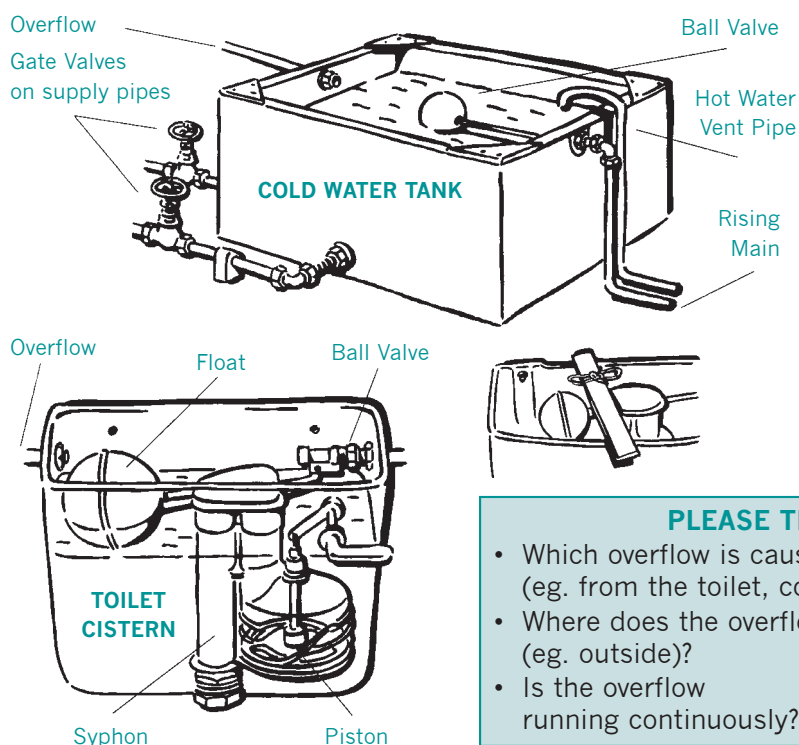


Some items of equipment may have their own **Isolation Valves**, so that the water supply can be turned off without affecting the rest of the supply. If this is the case, you may be able to turn the relevant supply pipe off at the **Gate Valves** on the pipes coming out of the cold water tank. This will leave you with some services, even though it might only be cold water to the kitchen tap.

PLEASE TELL US

- If you have a leak, Can you see where it is, (supply or waste) and which item of equipment is affected?
- How serious is the leak and is it the hot or cold supply?
- Are your electrics affected?
- If your water supply has been shut off it may be important to turn off your heating appliances

Overflows



You can take temporary action whilst waiting for your overflow to be repaired by tying the **Float** in the up position, thus closing the **Ball Valve**. This will shut off the water supply to the **Cistern**.

PLEASE TELL US

- Which overflow is causing the problem (eg. from the toilet, cold water tank etc)?
- Where does the overflow discharge (eg. outside)?
- Is the overflow running continuously?

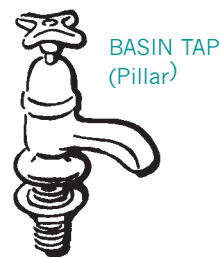
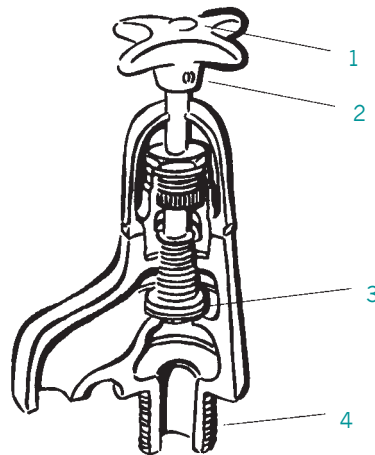
repairing your home

Taps

The **Tap Head** or **Handle** (1) might be loose, perhaps because the **Retaining Screw** (2) is missing.

Sometimes a tap will not turn off properly because of a worn **Washer** (3).

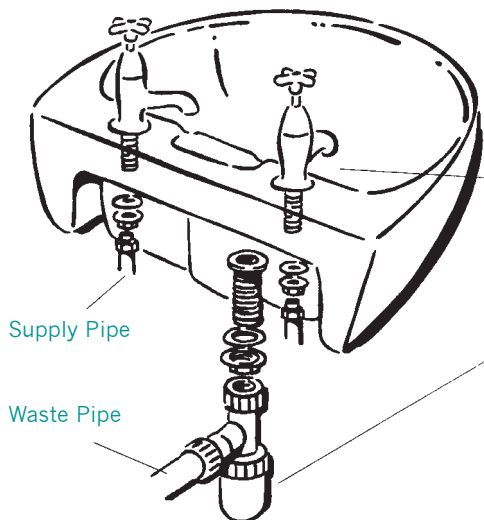
A tap can also be loose or leaking at the **Base** (4).



PLEASE TELL US

- What type of tap is it?
- What appliance is served by the tap (eg. bath, sink, wash basin)?
- What is the exact problem (eg. loose tap head, dripping tap etc)?
- You should find out where the stop valve is in case you need to turn it off.

Sinks and Wash Basins



Various problems can occur with Taps (eg. a slow dripping indicates the possible need for a new washer).

All wash basins are fitted with a Trap. Many have a Bottle Trap like this one which can easily be cleaned if a blockage occurs.

PLEASE TELL US

- Is the problem with the sink (in the kitchen) or a wash basin (in the toilet or bathroom)?
- What exactly is the nature of the problem (eg. a blockage, leak, crack etc)?
- If there is a leak on a supply pipe, is it the hot or cold one?
- If the sink is blocked, what type of trap is it and have you made any attempts to clear it?
- How did the damage occur?
- If there is a problem with the tap, what type is it?

To clean a bottle trap, unscrew the base cap by hand and clean it out. Before unscrewing it make sure both taps are off and a bucket or similar receptacle is placed underneath to catch the water and debris. When replacing the cap, make sure it is tightly fitted.

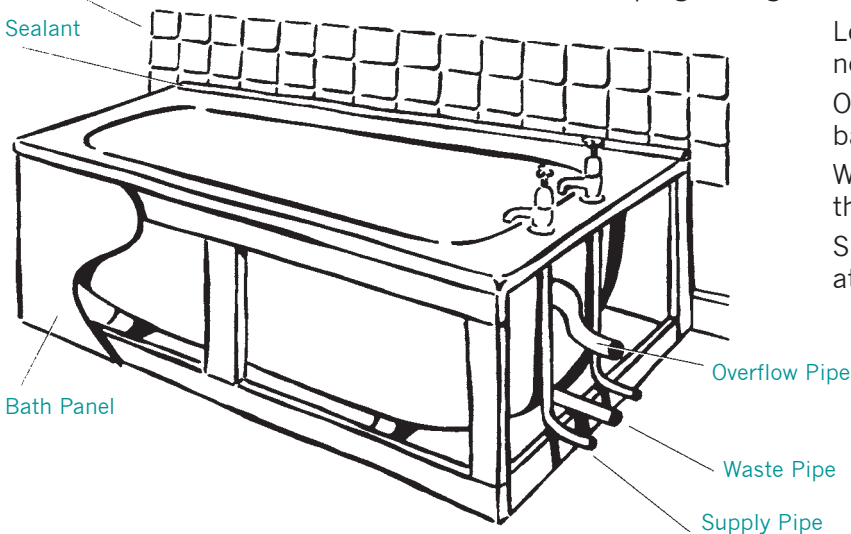
repairing your home

Baths

Splashback Tiles

Sealant

Bath Panel



Damaged **Sealant** between the bath and the splashback tiles will need attention to prevent water seeping through.

Leaks will be noticeable from the:
Overflow - if the bath is overfilled
Waste Pipe - when the bath is emptied
Supply Pipes - at all times

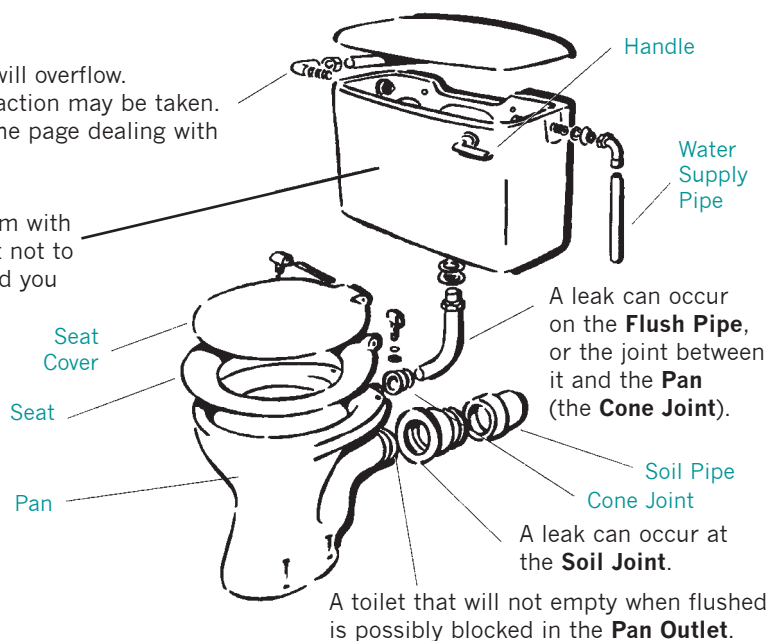
PLEASE TELL US

- If there is a leak, which pipe is it on?
- If the leak is on a supply pipe, is it the hot or cold one?
- If there is a problem with an overflow pipe, where does it discharge?
- If the splashback tiles are broken, how many tiles are affected and what are their colour and pattern?
- If the bath panel is damaged, what colour and material is it?
- Has the leak caused any damage to your home?

Toilets

Sometimes a cistern will overflow. If it does, temporary action may be taken. This is described on the page dealing with **Overflows**.

There can be a problem with the **Cistern**, causing it not to fill up. If you lift the lid you may be able to see if this is the case.

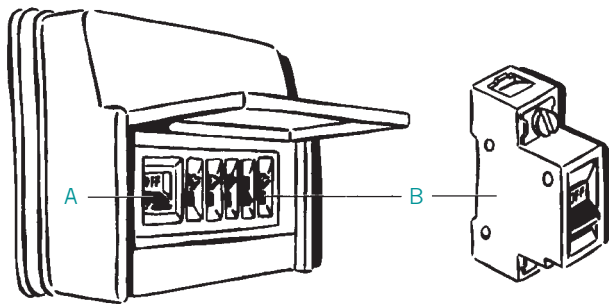


PLEASE TELL US

- Is the pan cracked, or are there any pipes or joints leaking?
- Does the toilet only leak when it is flushed?
- If the toilet will not flush, are there any broken parts which you have noticed from looking inside the cistern?
- Has the water supply been turned off?
- How did the damage occur?
- Do you have a second toilet in your home?
- Are there any obvious problems, such as a broken pan?

repairing your home

Power Failure Fault Finding



Miniature Circuit Breakers switch off automatically if there is a fault on the circuit.

A. Residual Current Circuit Breaker (RCCB)

Your main electric switch may now incorporate an automatic switch off device called a **Residual Current Circuit Breaker (RCCB)**.

If a situation arises which creates a potential shock or fire risk, the RCCB will switch off automatically.

If the reason for this is not clear then you should:

1. Switch off all MCB's (marked B in the drawing)
2. Return the RCCB switch to the ON position (marked A in the drawing)
3. Switch on each MCB in turn until the RCCB automatically switches off
4. Switch off and unplug any appliance connected to that circuit. If there is more than one, try to switch the RCCB to the ON position after disconnecting each appliance. In this way, the faulty appliance can be identified.

B. Miniature Circuit Breaker (MCB)

There might also be smaller switches which replace fuses. These are called **Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCB's)**.

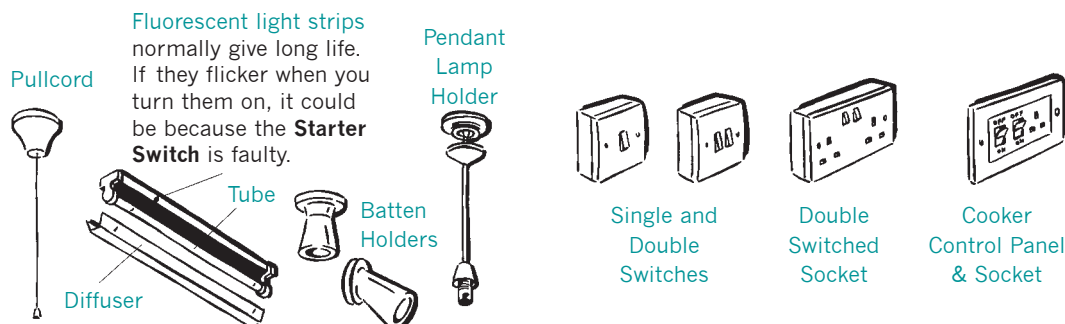
If a circuit is overloaded, or a fault occurs, the MCB protecting that circuit will switch off automatically.

If the reason for this is not clear then you should:

1. Put the MCB switch back to the original position. If it will not stay on then:
2. Switch off and unplug any appliance on that circuit. If there is more than one, try to return the MCB switch to the ON position after disconnecting each appliance, so that the one causing the fault can be identified.

Should either the RCCB or the MCB switch not return to the ON position, a fault could exist in your circuit, which you should report to us.

Electrical Fittings



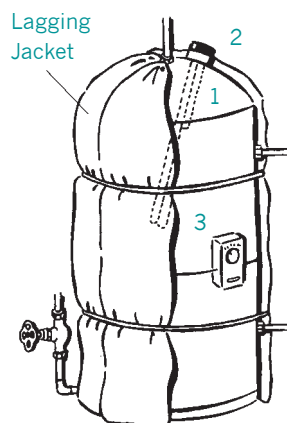
Please remember, care should always be taken with electrical equipment and fittings. Problems such as flickering lights and overheating sockets should be reported without delay.

PLEASE TELL US

- What is the exact nature of the problem (eg. sockets and/or lights not working, lights flickering, broken switch etc)?
- Have you, in the case of light failure, checked the bulb?
- Does the problem affect one room? If so, which one?
- Were you using a particular appliance at the time of the power failure and, if so, have you checked the plug fuse?
- Is your appliance at fault?

repairing your home

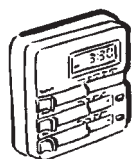
Water Heaters



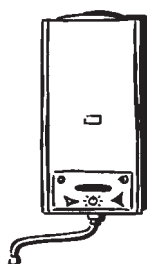
It is common for homes to have a **Hot Water Cylinder**. Water may be heated by an **Immersion Rod (1)**.

It is also common for hot water to be fed to the cylinder from a boiler, either independent of, or part of, a central heating system.

There will often be a **Temperature Control Switch (2)** at the top of the immersion rod, or alternatively, a **Cylinder Thermostat (3)** might be fixed to the outside of the cylinder.



Where an immersion heater is fitted, there will be a nearby **Power Switch** and perhaps a **Timer**.



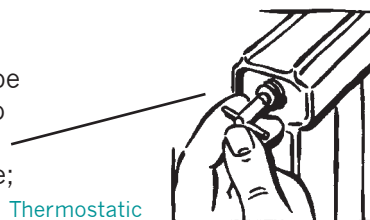
You may have other types of heater in your home, such as a gas fired **Instantaneous Water Heater**.

PLEASE TELL US

- What type of heating system do you have and do you know the makers name (it may be marked on it)?
- Do you have hot water at any time or not at all?
- Is the water cylinder hot, even when hot water is not coming through the taps?
- Do you have alternative methods of heating water in your home?
- Do you have other water supply problems?

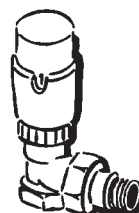
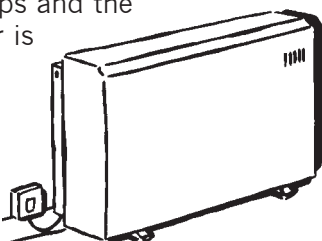
Heating Systems

If radiators are not heating up sufficiently, it might be because air is trapped in them and you should try to **Bleed** them. This is easily done with a **Radiator Key**. Gently loosen the valve until you hear a hissing noise; this is the air escaping from the radiator. When the hissing noise stops and the water appears, the radiator is free of air and the valve should be tightly closed. This may make a mess, you should protect your floor coverings.

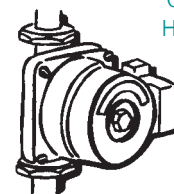


Thermostatic Valve

Storage Heater



Central Heating Pump



WITH CENTRAL HEATING PROBLEMS

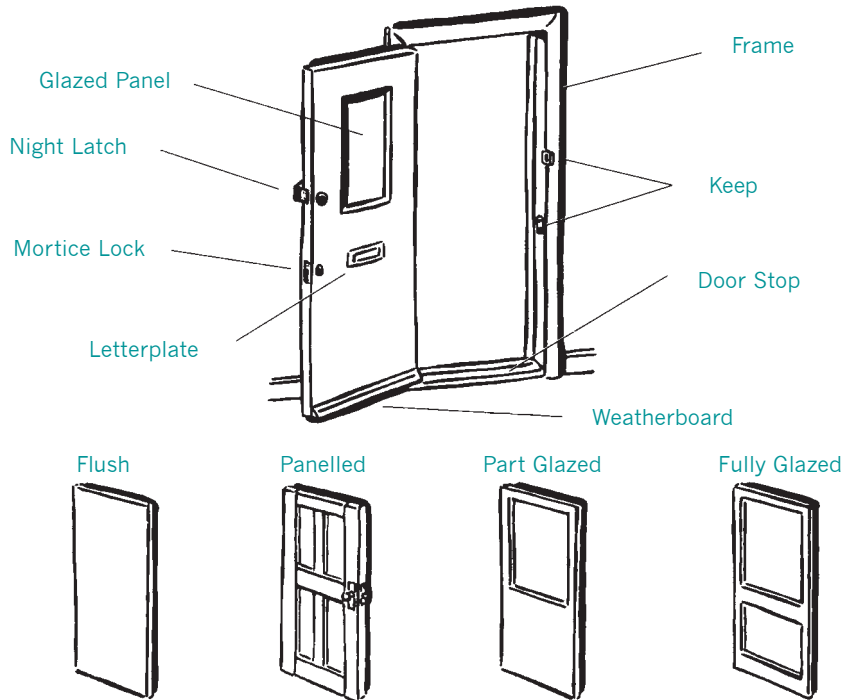
- What type of heating system do you have and do you know the makers name and model number (it may be marked on it)?
- What type of fuel does the system use (eg. gas, electricity, solid fuel or oil)?
- Have you tried to bleed the radiators?
- Does your heating system also provide hot water? If so, are you without both services?
- Have you checked the thermostat, timer or fuses?

WITH ALL HEATING PROBLEMS

- Have you any alternative means of heating (or, if the water heating is also affected, of obtaining hot water)?
- Are there any persons with medical needs, or very young or elderly people within the household?
- For more information on how to use different heating systems please refer to the Energy Efficiency section.

repairing your home

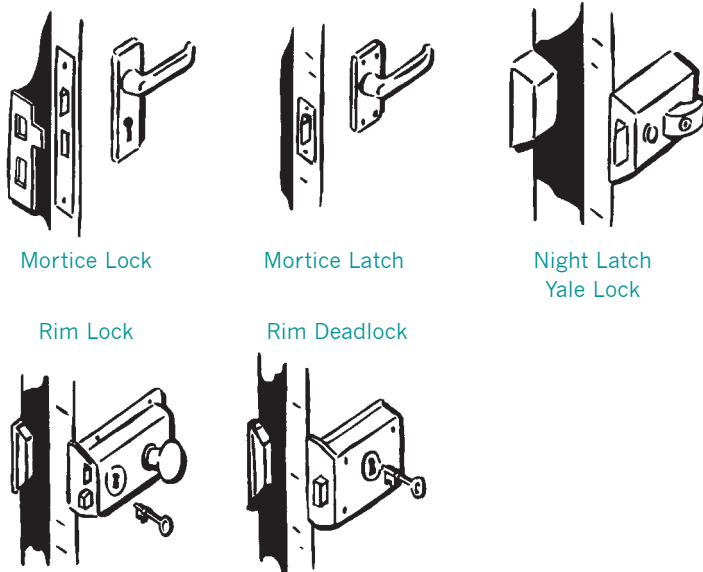
Doors



PLEASE TELL US

- What is the door made of (wood, plastic etc)?
- Which door is affected (internal or external)?
- Have you a security system?
- Was the damage the result of a forced entry?
- If the door will not close properly, has it been recently painted or does it show signs of warping?
- Is there any damage to the frame, locks or door furniture?
- If a glazed panel is broken, what is the type of glass and how was it broken?

Locks



The **Striking Plate** or **Keep** should be fixed to the door frame.

If the **Lock** is sticking, you might try lightly oiling it through the keyhole.

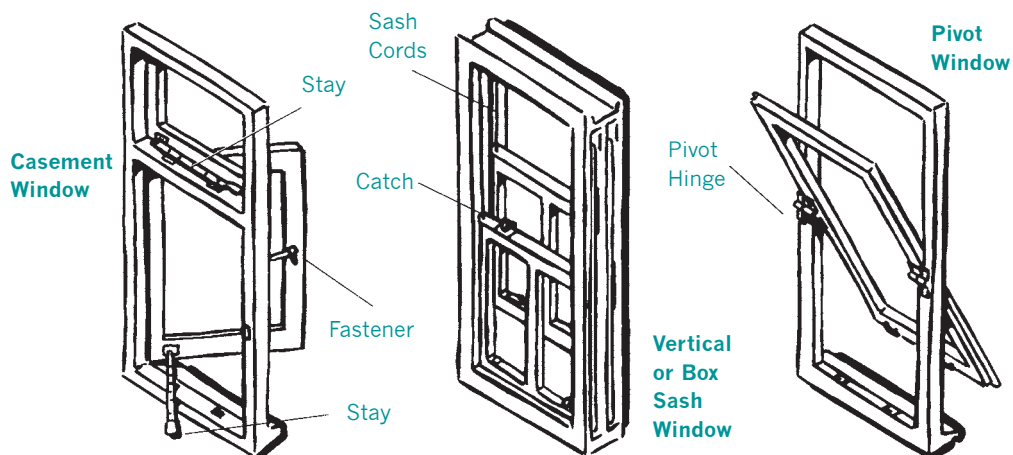
If you have lost or broken your **Key**, we may be able to gain entry and change part of the **Lock**.

PLEASE TELL US

- Which lock is affected and is there a second lock to the door?
- What type of lock is it (this may be shown on the key)?
- Has the door been forced open?
- If the lock needs refixing, what is the door made of (wood, plastic, metal etc)?
- Do you have a security problem?

repairing your home

Windows



IF IT IS THE GLASS THAT IS BROKEN

- Is the window single or double glazed?
- Is it clear or obscure glass?
- How did the damage occur?

IF IT IS A PROBLEM WITH THE WINDOW

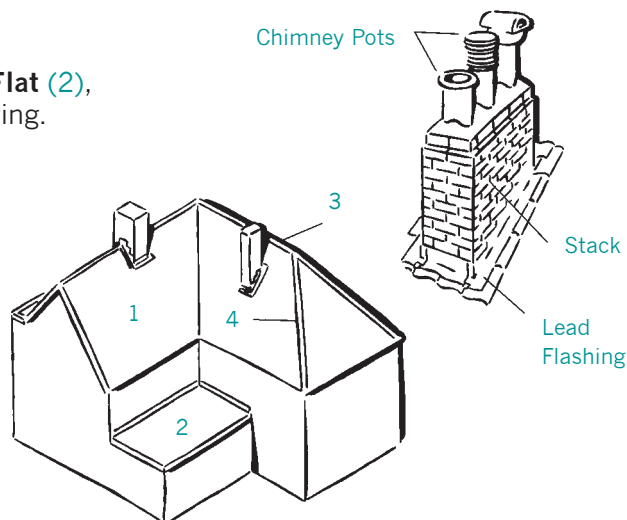
- What type of window is it and what is it made of (wood, metal, plastic etc.)?
- Which floor is it on and which room is it in?
- Are there any apparent problems, such as visible cracks in the sealing between the frame and brickwork, loose or missing putty, rot in the frame, missing/broken stays or fasteners, sash cords which do not work, etc?
- If a tiled sill is damaged, how many tiles are broken or missing and what type are they?
- If you have a problem closing the window, has it recently been painted or does it show signs of warping?

Roofs

Your roof will be **Pitched (1)** or **Flat (2)**, like those illustrated in this drawing.

The roof covering will be either **Tile** or **Slates**, some of which may be loose or missing.

Ridge Tiles (3) or **Hip Tiles (4)** can also become dislodged.

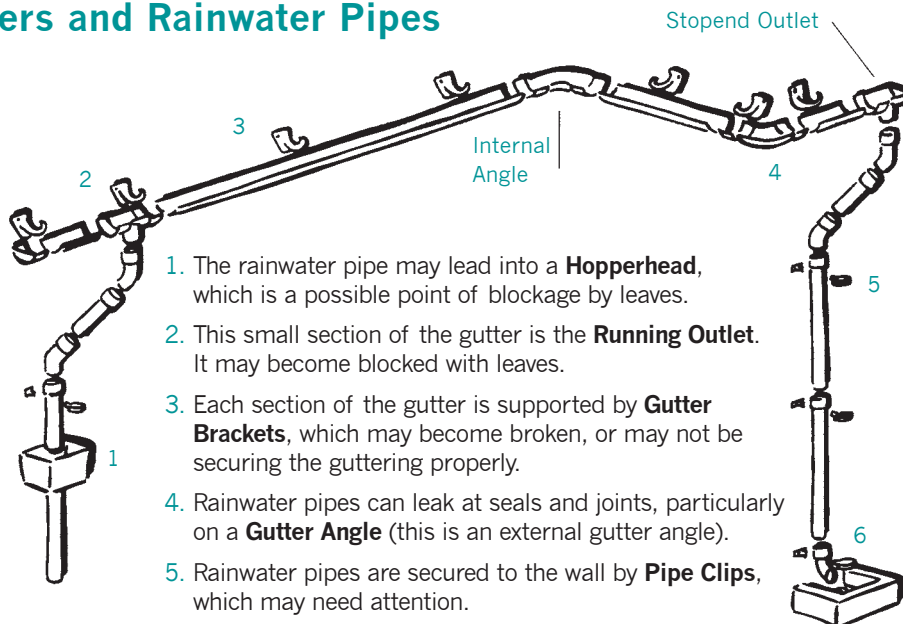


PLEASE TELL US

- Do you have a pitched or flat roof?
- How many storeys high is the roof?
- Are any tiles or slates missing? From which area (front, back etc)?
- Is water coming in through the ceiling?
If so, in which rooms and is it happening all the time?
- Does anyone live above you? If so, when will they be in?
- Are your electrics affected? If they are, switch the power OFF at the mains as soon as possible, remembering to take care.

repairing your home

Gutters and Rainwater Pipes



1. The rainwater pipe may lead into a **Hopperhead**, which is a possible point of blockage by leaves.
2. This small section of the gutter is the **Running Outlet**. It may become blocked with leaves.
3. Each section of the gutter is supported by **Gutter Brackets**, which may become broken, or may not be securing the guttering properly.
4. Rainwater pipes can leak at seals and joints, particularly on a **Gutter Angle** (this is an external gutter angle).
5. Rainwater pipes are secured to the wall by **Pipe Clips**, which may need attention.
6. The **Shoe** of the rainwater pipe discharges into a **Gulley**, where leaves and other debris may cause blockages.

PLEASE TELL US

- Is the gutter blocked? If so, can you see where?
- Do you know what material the damaged part is made of (eg. iron or plastic)?
- Is there a leak on either the gutter or rainwater pipe? If so, where is it (eg. on a joint)?
- If guttering is broken, how many sections are involved?

Drains

The Vent Pipe is the continuation of the **Soil Stack** above the roof.

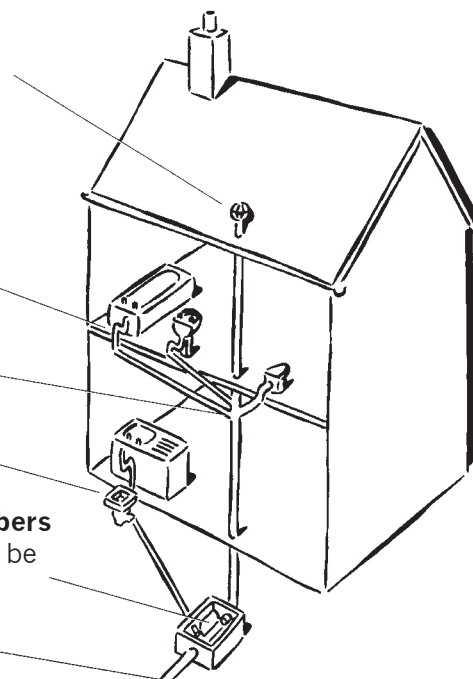
Baths, sinks and wash basins have **Waste Traps** which can become blocked. With some traps, such as a **Bottle Trap**, it may be possible to unscrew the cap and clean it.

Toilets will discharge directing into a **Soil Pipe**.

Gulley

Occasionally, **Inspection Chambers** get blocked. Usually, these can be inspected by lifting the cover.

To **Public Sewer** or **Septic Tank**



PLEASE TELL US

- Do you have a problem with soiled water backing up, perhaps in your toilet?
- Is the waste trap to your bath, sink or wash basin blocked? If so, have you tried to clear it?
- Is there any flooding from an inspection chamber?
- Is there any damage to your home?

repairing your home

Walls and Ceilings

Types of Damp

- Damp patches on ceilings may be caused by leaking plumbing equipment or rainwater penetration.
- Damp penetrating from outside walls will appear only on external walls. Penetration may be apparent near windows or close to gutters or rainwater pipes.
- Try to establish whether the damp appears only when it rains or all the time.
- Rising damp is caused by water from the ground penetrating damp courses. Signs include peeling wallpaper, lifting floor tiles and discoloured patches on lower walls.
- Mould on walls can often be wiped clean but should be reported if it becomes serious.
- Condensation is caused by water from the air coming into contact with a colder surface. It is recognisable by water drops on windows, mirrors, etc., and sometimes mould patches on walls and ceilings.

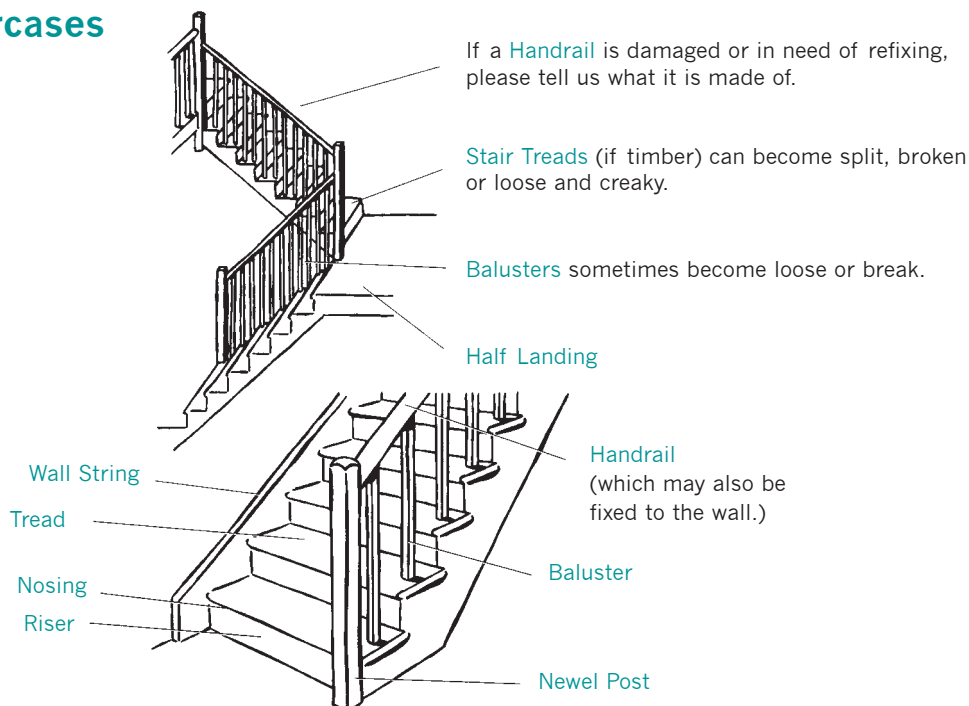
Plaster Problems

- A bulging ceiling may need early attention and should be reported as soon as possible.
- Plaster flaking off walls and/or ceilings could have several causes. Usually, an inspection will be necessary to find the cause and best remedy.
- Many buildings experience some minor movement which can cause plaster cracks. In reporting these, try to be specific on such things as location and the extent of the cracks.
- Cracked or fallen rendering on external walls should be reported, giving as much detail as possible.
- If you are reporting loose, broken or missing tiles, such as in bathrooms, tell us how many are missing or need refixing, their size and colour.

SOME WAYS TO REDUCE CONDENSATION

- Heat rooms well (but not with oil or calor gas heaters, which produce moisture)
- Open windows when washing or cooking
- Do not block air vents

Staircases

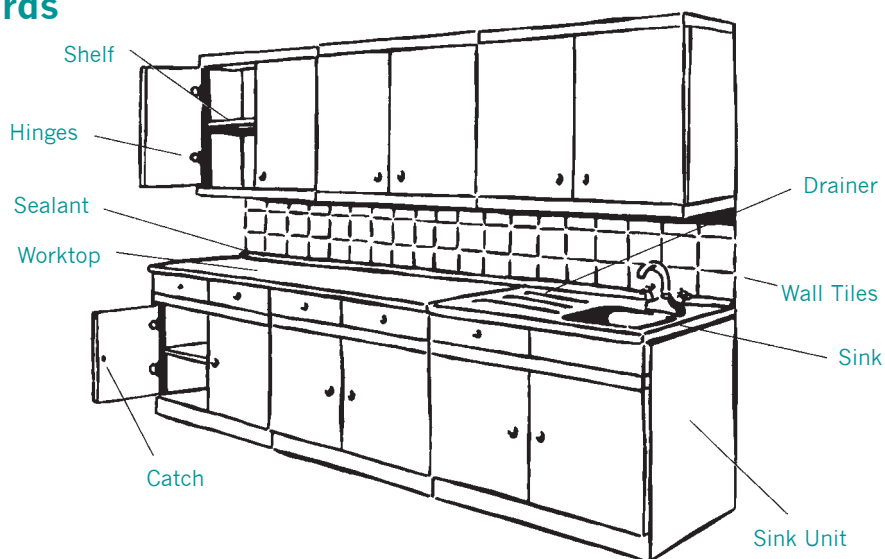


PLEASE TELL US

- Is the staircase internal or external?
- Do you know what material the damaged part is made of (eg. wood, metal, concrete)?

repairing your home

Cupboards

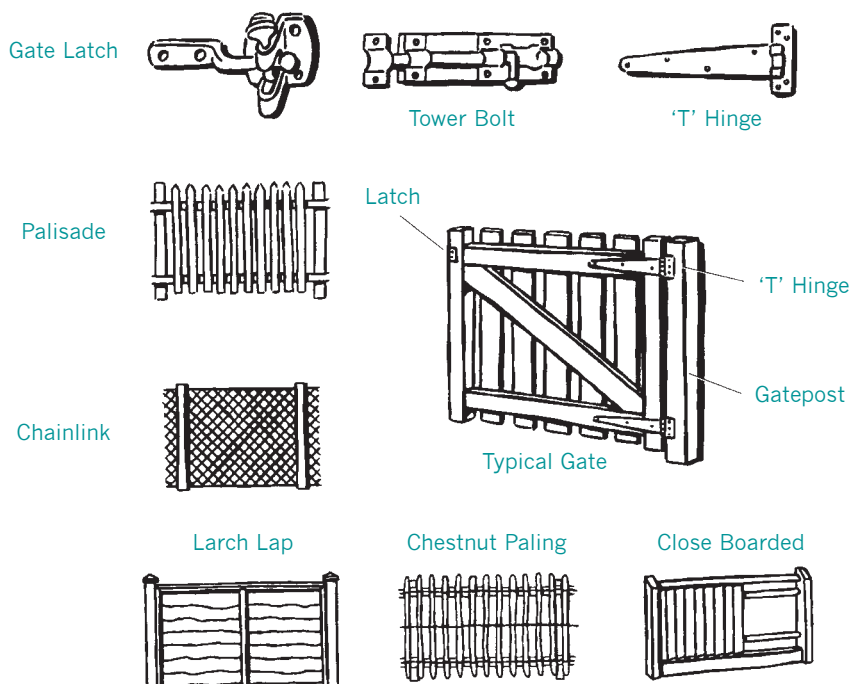


For ease of reference we have shown typical units. There are, of course, various styles and sizes, such as tall larder cupboards, but they nearly all share the same parts as shown here.

PLEASE TELL US

- Which item needs repairing?
- Which room is the unit or cupboard in?
- What is the colour of the broken part?
- If handles are broken, what type are they?
- How did the damage occur?

Fences and Gates



PLEASE TELL US

- If the latch or lock is broken, can you describe it?
- If your fence is broken, what type is it and where is it?
- Is there any danger to passers-by, or any other type of risk, as a result of a broken fence?

repairing your home

Priorities for repairs

NDH uses a system of priority codes to determine the length of time in which the work should be carried out. We assess the priority of the repair according to:

- the nature of the fault
- the possible risk to the health and safety of the people living in your home
- other conditions (such as the weather)

The table below shows the priority codes and the target time scales for completing the repairs plus some examples of each type of repair:

PRIORITY CODE	TARGET COMPLETION DATE	EXAMPLES OF TYPE OF REPAIR
Priority A Emergency works where there is significant risk of injury to people or serious damage to property	Within 24 hours, but normally the same day	Burst pipes, complete electrical failure, serious main sewer blockages, failure of all smoke alarms, non-securable properties
Priority B Urgent work	Within 5 working days	Partial loss of power, heating failure, door entry defects, containable water leaks, failure of one smoke alarm
Priority C Routine work	Within 10 working days	non-dangerous collapsed walls, overflow repairs, faulty fans, faulty taps, window and door adjustments
Priority D Long term routine work	Within 20 working days	Ordering parts for work such as new garden gates. Leaking guttering. Other external works, or major works

When the contractor calls

All of our staff, contractors and workers carry identification cards - never be afraid to ask to see them - it is always better to be safe than sorry. Contractors will be required to treat customers and their homes with respect.

They will:

- not enter any home unless invited
- provide identification cards to all staff and sub-contractors
- not smoke inside properties
- move and protect furniture and carpets from dust and dirt, where necessary
- ask permission to use kitchen and bathroom facilities
- adhere to our diversity policy

The contractor will employ competent, appropriately qualified trade persons and will ensure they are provided with best quality, appropriate parts and materials. The contractor will take away and properly dispose of any rubbish or waste materials which arise from work carried out.

If a contractor or surveyor calls at your home and you are out they will leave a card to say that they have called. **It is essential that you respond to this card, as no further action will take place until we have heard from you.**

Monitoring the Repairs Service

From time to time, we may ask you for more information about how your repair was carried out. We may phone or call on you, or ask you to complete a questionnaire. This is to ensure that we are providing a quality repairs service.

repairing your home

What Happens if Repairs are not carried out on time?

Our aim is to complete all repairs within the time targets that we have set. However, delays can occur because:

- NDH or our contractor is having difficulty in obtaining parts
- the weather has been too bad to carry out the work
- the work is of a specialist nature
- the contractor has not been given reasonable access to allow the work to be carried out
- the repair will be carried out as part of planned maintenance
- bad weather has resulted in a large demand for emergency works which take priority over other repairs

In an Emergency

If an urgent repair problem occurs outside of normal working hours, over the weekend or on a Public Holiday you can call the out of hours emergency number, which is 0800 9170619.

One of our officers will be available to help and will be able to contact a standby contractor to visit you and make an emergency repair; usually the complete repair will take place on the next available working day.

Please note that the out of hours emergency telephone number is for emergencies only and is designed to cover items such as major electrical faults, burst pipes, etc. If you use it when it is not an emergency you will be advised to call the Response Maintenance Team on the next working day. You may also be preventing someone who is in real need from getting through.

For your information we have also placed the emergency numbers for the Gas, Electricity and Water companies in the Useful Information Section.

Water

If the water to your kitchen cold tap stops flowing or does not run clear, you must call the local water company for advice as this tap is the only one in your home that is fed straight from the mains.

Rechargeable Repairs

You will be expected to pay for repairs caused by damage, neglect or misuse as a result of your actions or those of anyone living with, or visiting you.

The following list shows the type of repairs that are rechargeable:

- repairs due to deliberate damage or neglect or inappropriate use of fixtures, fittings, and the external and internal fabric of the building and its walls/fences (e.g. damaged internal doors, kitchen units, glass, sanitary fixtures etc)
- reinstatement of missing fixtures, fittings, walls and fences provided by NDH (e.g. doors, heaters, kitchen units, etc)
- repairs due to unauthorised/unsafe tenant 'improvements' (e.g. the removal or making safe of electrical/gas appliances fitted by tenant, making safe structural alterations, etc)
- changing of locks and providing new keys where lost or not handed in on termination of tenancy
- clearance of rubbish from an empty property or garden
- reinstatement or cultivation of an unkempt or untended garden on empty properties (e.g. grass cutting, hedge trimming etc)
- cleaning of an empty property
- removal of sheds/outhouses not approved or provided by the Company
- unblocking WCs, sinks, wash hand basins or baths through inappropriate use for disposal

repairing your home

- Electrical repairs where tenant's own appliance at fault.
- Replacing broken glass

Some of these rechargeable repairs would be covered on your household insurance policy. NDH strongly advises all its' tenants to take out insurance. Please contact any member of staff for a Housing Association Insurance leaflet.

Maintaining and Improving Your Home

In addition to the response repairs that are carried out to your home when you contact us, NDH has a programme of planned maintenance and improvements.

North Devon Homes has successfully completed its programme of works for the first five years following transfer of stock from the district council and a new programme of improvement works has been put in place. Such improvements planned include:

- renewal of kitchens and bathrooms
- installation of double glazing
- re-roofing where needed
- re-wiring where needed
- renewing heating systems

Before your home is affected by any of these programmes, we will consult you fully on your preferences and the choices available to you.

Pre-Cast Reinforced Concrete Homes (PRCs)

When you accepted your tenancy, you would have been informed whether the property is a PRC home (that means a home built from concrete slabs and not from traditional bricks). These homes will be refurbished within the first

10 years after transfer from North Devon District Council. As this involves a large amount of work, all tenants in PRCs will be fully involved and consulted before works are programmed. For further information contact the PRC Officer.

Compensation

If we carry out certain types of major works to your home, you may be entitled to compensation. The surveyor who visits you about major works will be able to tell you more on whether you are eligible.

Tenants' Improvement Grants

Grants are available to tenants for the improvement of their property. Full written permission is required from NDH before you start any work or alterations. Grants are not available if your rent account is in arrears, or if you have a Right to Buy/Acquire application outstanding.

If you are interested in applying for a grant please contact your Estate Manager.

Help for People with Disabilities

If you or a member of your family has a disability which makes it difficult to get around the house, we can carry out adaptations to your home to make life easier. You should contact Social Services at Devon County Council to arrange an appointment with an Occupational Therapist (see useful numbers at the back of the handbook) and they will contact us to arrange for work to be carried out.

Funding for these adaptations can sometimes be limited so it may be possible to apply to North Devon District Council for a Disabled Facilities Grant. These grants are usually for work that is more complex or costly, such as a stair lift or a level access shower.

If you are in any doubt as to how to apply for an adaptation, please contact your Estate Manager who will be able to give you some advice.

repairing your home

There may be circumstances where it is not possible to meet your needs by carrying out alterations to your home and it may be more appropriate to arrange a transfer to accommodation that more closely meets your needs.

All options available will be discussed with you before any action is taken.

customer involvement and consultation

North Devon Homes is fully committed to involving you in the management of your home. We want to encourage all customers to become more involved in the housing service at whatever level each individual feels most comfortable. We are seeking to provide a wide range of opportunities for you to participate. We also recognise that customer involvement is a process that will evolve and develop along with the company.

Keeping you informed

Information and consultation are vital if we are to provide you with the service that you want. We use a number of methods of consultation:

- writing to all tenants and allowing time for responses
- home visits to individual tenants
- sending regular newsletters and magazines to all households
- arranging regular tenant meetings and conferences to discuss particular issues of concern
- a wide range of policies are available for all tenants to see at our offices
- customer surveys are carried out to measure how we are performing and so that you can tell us what we are doing right, what we are doing wrong and how you think our service might be improved
- focus groups when appropriate, to target specific issues as well as telephone and postal survey groups.

Becoming a Member of North Devon Homes

Everyone who has an interest in NDH is entitled to apply to become a member of the Company. The Company wishes to invite all tenants to apply for membership.

Becoming a member of NDH will not cost you any money nor will it mean that you have to attend regular meetings to make decisions. Members are allowed to vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company and receive copies of the Annual Report and the accounts.

As well as tenants, members of NDH will consist of North Devon District Council and independent people representing the local community. The voting rights at General Meetings will be one third for each group: tenants, North Devon District Council and independent members.

If you are interested in becoming a member of NDH please contact the Customer Involvement Manager (see number in the Contact Us Section).

Tenants' and Residents' Associations

We are keen to encourage more Tenants and Residents' Associations. We will provide advice and practical assistance - including financial help - to support existing and new Residents' Associations. The principal purpose of the Tenants' and Residents' Association is to represent the views and interests of people living in a particular neighbourhood or estate. Different tenants' associations have different aims. An association meets regularly and you can invite specific staff from the Company, or from other organisations such as the Police, to attend meetings to help solve particular problems or develop new initiatives to improve your area. Some associations arrange social events such as barbecues, street parties and outings.

If you would like to know whether a residents' association currently operates in your area or you would like to know more about setting up an association, please contact the Customer Involvement Manager.

customer involvement and consultation

Customer Involvement Agreement

We have worked with the Customer Forum to develop a formal Customer Involvement Agreement between the Company and its tenants with the objective of enabling tenants' to participate in the management and maintenance of their homes and community development in their areas, bearing in mind that the ultimate responsibility for the management and maintenance of the housing stock will rest with North Devon Homes.

The Agreement provides a framework for customer involvement, which is designed to be accessible to everyone.

Customer Forum

NDH Customer Forum consists of up to 12 tenant members of NDH, which may include up to 5 tenant Board members. The tenant members of the Forum are not necessarily representative of the geographical nature of our housing stock, but are able to provide a tenant perspective irrespective of their individual locations.

The Forum's aims are:

- to promote the security and interests on NDH tenants
- to promote tenants' rights and raise issues with the Board of Management of NDH
- to involve tenants in the management and maintenance of their homes
- to assist in any plans for community development
- to consider and collect information on any proposed policy changes for consideration by the Board
- to ensure, as far as possible, that the views of the Customer Forum represent the views of the tenants of NDH
- to consider and review the policies and procedures of NDH that directly affect tenants

The forum meets monthly to discuss the policies and participate in the management of your homes.

If you want to contact a Customer Forum member or Customer Board member please contact the Customer Involvement Manager.

The Customer Forum and Customer Board members are there to pass forward all tenants' views to the Board of Management for consideration. They are not staff so if you have a problem relating to your tenancy or your property, please contact the appropriate member of staff.

All tenants of NDH are entitled to attend Forum meetings as observers, but voting rights are restricted to the democratically elected tenants on the Forum.

The 5 Customer Board members also sit on the Customer Forum so will be aware of the views of the Forum members. The Forum can also put forward any item or recommendation for the Board's consideration.

Further details about the conduct of business and Standing Orders for General Meetings are set out in the Customer Involvement Agreement. For a copy, or for more information please contact the Customer Involvement Manager.

customer involvement and consultation

Joining the Forum

All tenants are encouraged to attend the Forum meetings as observers, but if you wish to consider becoming a member of the Customer Forum you can stand for membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). You will need to have a tenant proposer and a tenant seconder, who are not Customer Board members.

If more than the allotted numbers of tenants for a particular area wish to serve, then an election will be held in the relevant area.

Every member of the Forum should be a tenant member of NDH or have applied to become a tenant member. This enables them to vote at any General Meeting of the Company.

Members of the Forum must seek to actively represent the various needs of the area, and must not discriminate on the grounds of a person's race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.

Customer Board Members

5 tenant members of the Company can become Board Members and sit on the Board of Management of NDH. If you wish to become a Customer Board Member you will have to have been a Customer Forum member for at least 12 months and have attended at least 75% of meetings. Customer Board Members will serve a minimum of 3 years on the Board subject to one third standing down each year and elections being held for the vacant position(s).

Customer Involvement Compacts

Customer Involvement Compacts are formal agreements between NDH and its customers on the standard of services provided. The compacts can also include services provided by the North Devon District Council, Police Force or Social Services. NDH is committed to working with customers to develop Customer Involvement Compacts on an area and local basis. For more information please contact the Customer Involvement Manager

Value for Money

Value for Money is about achieving continuous improvements in the cost and quality of services, which meet the needs and aspirations of local people. Achieving Value for Money will require a change in thinking about the way local services should be delivered, ensuring that they are responsive to local community needs and aspirations.

Customer involvement is central to the process of Value for Money; together we have to:

- carry out comprehensive service reviews
- produce service statements which set out the objectives, type and level of service to be provided
- produce performance plans which set out revised targets, changes to practice to meet these and targets for year on year performance
- prepare an annual performance report on past and current performance and comparing actual performance with targets set
- we will be looking to the Customer Forum and beyond for involvement in the Value for Money process