



Repairs

The Northwards DIY Guide

to looking after your home

Available in large print, Braille and on CD

There are several repairs that many residents can do themselves to keep their home in great condition. Here's a handy guide to help you tackle some of the more common household problems. However, if you don't feel confident in carrying out these repairs, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 03000 123 123.

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Looking After Your Home

Many repairs can be avoided simply by keeping your home in good condition. It doesn't have to be difficult!

Here's a few handy hints to help make sure your house is a home to be proud of.

- Regularly wipe down any windows affected by condensation. If any mould has built up, just clean it off using neat white vinegar or a wash of diluted bleach (1 part bleach to 10 parts water) and a little washing up liquid. Always wear gloves when handling bleach. If the mould has spread to the walls or ceiling then report this to us before it becomes a bigger problem.
- Make sure you know how to turn off your electricity, gas and water supply in an emergency. If you don't, just ask us next time we visit.

- To easily prevent blockages in kitchen sink waste pipes avoid pouring grease down the sink waste and remove food waste from the plug hole.
- Use a descaler to remove any lime scale build up in your bathroom.
- Keep outside gullies free of leaves and other obstacles so water can easily drain away.

Give Winter Worries the Cold Shoulder

Just a little bit of forward-planning can save you a heap of headaches come the colder months. In autumn, check that:

- There are no broken or missing tiles or slates on your roof.
- All your heating controls are set correctly.
- There are no blockages or leaks from gutters and downpipes.

If you spot any problems, just give us a call and we'll pop round and fix them.

Condensation

Too much condensation in your home can lead to a mould problem which not only looks bad, it can also cause health problems, especially for those who already have a chest condition.

You can stop condensation forming by stopping moisture building up in your home. There's always moisture in the air, but day-to-day activities like cooking or boiling water, taking baths and showers or drying clothes inside can cause it to increase.

Condensation occurs when warm, moist air meets a cooler surface – like windows, mirrors and even clothes. The change in temperature causes the air to release its moisture.

If this condensation doesn't dry out, it will cause mould to grow on walls, in cupboards and on windowsills.

To stop condensation forming, you should try to reduce moisture levels. Here's a few hints to help:

- Cover pans and turn down the heat whenever you boil something.
- Dry your clothes outside or in a well ventilated room.
- Avoid using paraffin or bottled gas heaters.
- Ventilate your house to let the moisture out by opening a window to let steam from your bathroom and kitchen escape, or using an extractor fan.
- Keep your house at least moderately warm.
- Wipe down with a dry cloth any surface where moisture has built up.

Pipe Problems

To be on the safe side, make sure you know where to find you're:

- Stopcock (it's usually where the water pipe enters the house or near the kitchen sink).



- Gate valves for your hot and cold water tanks.



Got A Leaking Pipe?

Place a bowl under the leak. Pull back any carpets and soak up the water with towels or sheets of newspaper.

Got A Burst Pipe?

First, turn the water off at the stopcock, as well as any gate valves from the water tank, and switch off any water heaters. Next, turn on all taps to drain the rest of the water.

Some pipes will have their own isolation valve (a gate valve or a service valve). If not, you may be able to isolate the burst by turning off the gate valve on the pipe from the cold water tank.

If electric fittings are wet, don't touch them, and turn off the electricity at the meter.

If any ceilings start to bulge, pierce a small hole to release the water. Remember to put a bucket beneath to catch it!

If You're Pipes Have Frozen...

Turn off the water at the main stopcock and switch on the cold taps to help melt the ice faster. It's best to leave the pipes frozen, but you can try to defrost the pipe using hot water bottles or a hair dryer. Do NOT use a blow torch or open flame – this can cause the pipe to burst, melt or worse. Take care to defrost from one end of the frozen section and not from the middle.

If you go away for a few days in winter, turn down the central heating but leave it on to avoid the risk of frozen pipes.

Bleeding a Radiator

DO NOT bleed the radiator if you have a combination boiler. This type of boiler has either a pressure gauge or a low pressure light on the front of the underside of the boiler, and you will probably not have a hot water cylinder.

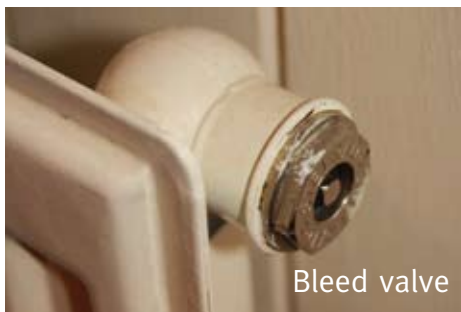
You can tell when your radiator needs bleeding – it will be cold at the top but warm at the bottom. This is caused by trapped air, which can be released by bleeding the radiator with a radiator key. You can buy these from most DIY shops.



If the whole radiator is cold, check that the radiator valve is open. If more than one radiator is cold, the whole heating system may need to be checked by a plumber.

To Bleed the Radiator

- Turn off the heating system before bleeding to avoid more air entering it.
- Place the key over the bleed valve (the small square nut at the top end of the radiator). Hold a cloth around it to catch any water. Gently turn the key anti-clockwise until you hear a hiss – this is the air being released.



- When water starts to come through, turn the key back clockwise to shut the valve off.
- Don't unscrew the valve completely as the plug will come right out.

Loss of Electricity

Your electricity can cut out due to a number of problems, e.g.

- Light bulbs blowing.
- Faulty or misused appliances/leads.
- Too many appliances being used at the same time.
- An overloaded circuit.
- Overfilled kettles.
- Unclean toasters.
- Worn out or cracked cooker rings.
- Faulty immersion heaters.

You can switch the power back on at your electricity consumer unit.



Electricity consumer unit

This is usually next to the meter, and will either contain trip switches or fuses.

Depending on which you have, you will need to either reset a trip switch or change a fuse to restore your electricity.

Resetting a Trip Switch

Modern electric circuits are fitted with a circuit-breaker fuse system, so if a fault occurs, it causes a trip switch to be activated and the circuit to be broken.

To switch your electricity back on again:

- Open the cover of your unit. Check which switches have tripped to the off position and which rooms (circuits) have been affected.
- Flick these switches back on to restore the power.
- If the tripping keeps happening, identify which appliance is causing the problem by unplugging each one on the affected circuit.

Switch the tripped switch to the ON position, and then plug in each appliance one-by-one until the trip goes again.

- Leave this appliance unplugged and get it fixed by a qualified electrician or engineer.

Changing a Fuse

If a fault occurs and your consumer unit contains fuses instead of trip switches, one of the fuses is likely to have blown.

When changing a fuse, always replace a cartridge or fuse wire with one of the correct rating:

- 5 amp for lights.
- 15 amp for immersion heaters.
- 20 amp for immersion heaters.
- 30 amp for sockets and cookers (sometimes the cooker cartridge will be 45 amp).

To change a fuse:

- Switch off the mains switch at the fuse box (consumer unit).
- Unplug all appliances.

- Unscrew the cover and remove each fuse holder to check which has blown.

- If it's a rewirable fuse, loosen the retaining screws at either end, remove any old wire and feed new wire of the correct rating through the holder and around the screws. Tighten up the screws at both ends.

- If it is a cartridge fuse, take out the old cartridge, fit a new one of the same rating into the holding clips and replace the fuse holder.

- Screw the cover back on.

- Switch the mains switch back on and check that all circuits are working.

- Plug in each appliance one-by-one to check if the fuse blows again. If this happens, the appliance is faulty and you should get it repaired by a qualified electrician or service engineer.

- Screw the cover back on.

Clearing a Toilet/ Sink/Bath Blockage

Toilet Blockage

Toilet blockages are often caused by unusual objects, e.g. toilet fresheners, nappies, sanitary towels etc. To try and avoid this problem, check that any fresheners that attach to the rim of the pan are fastened securely. Never use a toilet as a bin! (Never try to flush nappies, sanitary towels or baby wipes down the toilet).

To unblock a toilet:

- If the pan is full, empty some of the water using a suitable container.
- Push the toilet brush or plunger to the bottom of the pan and pump up and down vigorously, about 10 times. This creates pressure which may shift the blockage. Don't use plungers with a metal disk as these can crack the toilet bowl. A traditional mop may also be used for this as long as it has no metal parts, as these can also cause damage.

- Never flush a toilet when it is blocked.
- You may need to repeat the process several times before the toilet flushes normally. If there is no improvement after several attempts, contact us.

Sink/Bath Blockage

Blockages in basins or sinks are often the result of waste building up in the trap, e.g. hair, tea leaves, fat etc. Please remember never to pour fat down the sink and remove any build up of food from the plug hole.

To unblock a sink/bath:

- Empty most of the water using a suitable container.
- Hold a rag firmly over the overflow opening and place a plunger over the drain hole. Pump the plunger up and down rapidly.

If more than one fitting (e.g. bath, basin or sink) is blocked, the problem may be in the soil stack or main drain. This will need to be cleared by us so please get in touch on 03000 123 123.

Controlling Your Central Heating

A clock timer or digital timer automatically turns the heating and hot water on and off at the times you set. You can set the heating to come on once, twice or stay on all the time.



(a comfortable and economic temperature is between 18°C and 22°C).

If you have recently had a new boiler installed you will have thermostatic radiator valves installed which you can use to set the control in each room individually.



There are three switches.

- On – instantly turns the heating and hot water on.
- Off – instantly turns the heating and hot water off.
- Auto/Timer – turns the heating and hot water on and off at the times you set.

A room thermostat is used to control the temperature. To set the thermostat, turn the dial so that the arrow or marker is against the temperature you want



Setting a clock timer

Turn the clock so it is showing the correct time. Next, use the pins or arrows (depending on what type of clock timer it is) to set the heating times:

To Use Pins

- Push them in opposite the times when you want the heating to come on.
- Pull them out opposite the times when you want the heating to go off.

To Use Arrows

- Slide the 'on' arrows (usually red) around to the times you want the heating to come on.
- Slide the 'off' arrows (usually blue) around to the times you want the heating to go off.
- Make sure the switch is set to 'timer' (or auto) to activate the settings.

Setting a digital timer

- Set the clock so that it is showing the correct time (to change the time, put the timer switch to 'clock' and adjust the time using the 'forward' and 'reverse' buttons).
- Set the switch to 'on', and adjust the time to when you wish the heating to come on.
- Set the switch to 'off', and adjust the time to when you wish the heating to turn off.
- Set the timer switch to 'auto' and double check that the settings on display are as you have set.

If you smell gas

If you smell gas please immediately contact National Grid on 0800 111 999. You will be instructed by the operator on how this matter will be dealt with which could include how you can help by turning off the gas meter.

Extra services for customers with reduced hearing or vision

To get this leaflet in Braille, large print or on CD:

Call: 03000 123 123 **E-mail:** info@northwardshousing.co.uk

Fax: 03000 124 123 **Text phone:** 0161 274 0899

Nëse këtë dokument e doni të përkthyer, ju lutemi telefononi numrin më poshtë, ky dokument gjendet edhe në gjuhën braille, në format me germa të mëdha ose në CD.

Albanian

ان كنت تريد ترجمة هذه الوثيقة، يرجى الاتصال بالرقم المذكور أدناه. تتوفر هذه الوثيقة أيضاً بطريقة برايل للمكفوقين وبالحر وف الطباعة الكبيرة أو على قرص مدمج – سي دي.

Arabic

如果您想要一份中文译本，请打下列电话。
这文件也有盲文版、大字体版和 CD 光盘备索。

Chinese

Přejete-li si překlad tohoto dokumentu zavolejte prosím na níže uvedené číslo. Tento dokument je také k dispozici ve slepeckém písmu, ve velkém formátu nebo na CD.

Czech

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French

نه گه ر پښت خوښه ته رجومه ي نه م به لگه نامه به وه رگرښت، تکايه په يوه ندي بکه به نه و ژماره ي خواړه وه. نه م به لگه به هه ر وه ها به شينوازي نوسراوي کوزران، به چاپي گه زره و يان له سه ر سي دي هه په.

Kurdish

Se deseja obter este documento traduzido, por favor contacte o número abaixo, este documento também está disponível em Braille, impressão grande ou CD.

Portuguese

Haddii aad rabto in dukumeentigan lagu turjumo fadlan soo wac lambarka hoose, waxaa dukumeentigan weliba lagu heli karaa farta Braille ee dadka indhaha la', far waaweyn ama cajal (CD).

Somali

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کا ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم نیچے دئے گئے نمبر پر کال کریں، یہ دستاویز بریل، بڑی چھپائی یا سی ڈی کی شکل میں بھی دستیاب ہے۔

Urdu

03000 123 123