

Repairs and Improvements

The majority of our properties meet the 'Decent Homes Standard' which means that they:

- are in good repair,
- have adequate kitchen and bathroom facilities,
- have adequate facilities for space heating, and
- are well insulated.

We are continuing to invest in our housing to ensure that these standards are maintained, and improved.

Your tenancy agreement explains which repairs we are responsible for, and which are your responsibility. Some of the repairs we undertake are:

- repairs to the structure and exterior of the building, for example the roof, walls and floor,
- the upkeep of gutters, pipes and drains,
- the repair of baths, toilets, sinks and basins, and
- electrical wiring, gas piping, fitted heaters, radiators and water heaters.

You must inform us promptly of any defects to the property that are our responsibility.

You are responsible for the cost of repairs that are the result of neglect or misuse, or deliberate, malicious, criminal or accidental damage by you, people living in your home or people visiting your home.



We reserve the right to repair any damage that compromises the security or safety of the property that would otherwise be your responsibility, if it is not put right within an agreed period of time. We will recover our costs from you.

Where a mutual exchange has taken place, you take on responsibility for any fixtures and fittings put in by the previous tenant unless we have agreed otherwise.

How to report a repair

You can report a repair by:

- Telephoning: **01395 517458** (working hours)
01395 516854 (emergency out of hours)
- Emailing: repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk
- Writing to: Housing Services Manager,
East Devon District Council,
Knowle, Sidmouth, EX10 8HL

To help us provide you with the best possible service, please provide the following information when you report a repair:

- your name,
- your address,
- a daytime telephone number,
- as much information as you can provide about the repair, and
- times it is convenient for workmen to call.



When repairs are reported to us, we categorise them according to their urgency. The five categories of repairs we use are listed below.

Category	Response Within	Examples
Immediate	1 day	Immediate work (where there is danger to life/limb or serious danger to property) Water supply failure (burst pipe or tank) Blocked drain with serious leak of sewage Dangerous fault or electrical supply failure
Emergency	3 days	A blocked sink, bath or basin Faulty heating system and/or hot water supply
Urgent	7 days	Leaking roof Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen not working
Priority	3 weeks	Refit chimney pot or cowl Repair or ease external and internal doors
Non Urgent	6 weeks	Defective plaster Repairs to fire surround or back

Decorations

You are responsible for the internal decoration of your home, which should be maintained to a reasonable standard.

We are responsible for decorating the outside of your home and communal areas of flats and maisonettes.

Chimney sweeping

You must ensure that chimneys and flues are kept free from obstruction and that chimneys, where in use, are swept at least once a year, or more frequently if necessary.

It is also your responsibility to ensure that the correct fuel is used for the type of heater provided, so that the risk of fumes and soot problems are kept to a minimum.

Repairs to central heating

Before reporting a faulty central heating system please check:

- the time control clock is set correctly – especially when clocks are put forward or back at the beginning and end of summertime,
- pilot lights on gas boilers are working – see appliance instructions, and
- there is sufficient money inserted if you have a coin or card prepayment meter for gas or electricity.

We reserve the right to recharge tenants where a visit is made for faulty central heating and one of the above is found to be the cause.

Right to repair

In certain circumstances you have the right to require us to get a second contractor to do certain small urgent repairs which might affect your health, safety or security. This only applies to repairs that are our responsibility and which we have not completed within a prescribed time. Please contact us for further details.

Planned maintenance

To keep our housing in good condition, we carry out a programme of planned maintenance. This programme is reviewed every year to take into account priority maintenance and tenants' views.

Planned maintenance includes servicing and upgrading:

- central heating systems
- electrical services
- new roofs
- replacement windows
- kitchens and bathrooms
- replacement of external doors

If we plan to carry out any work in your home we will contact you first.

To find out more about planned maintenance contact the Housing Services team on **01395 517458**.



Aids and adaptations

If you are having difficulty managing at home because of a disability, we may be able to help. In 2006/07, we completed 399 aids and adaptations. The types of aids and adaptations that are available include:

- hand and grab rails,
- lever taps,
- stairlifts,
- level entry showers,
- access ramps, and
- alterations to doorways.

If you think you could benefit from this service, you will need to contact Social Services at Care Direct, Devon County Council on **01392 385800**. Care Direct will be able to put you in contact with the referral co-ordinator for your area.

Before we can carry out any work, your needs will be assessed by an Occupational Therapist.

Once we receive the requests for aids and adaptations from an Occupational Therapist, we will consider them within 15 working days. We will inform you of the outcome and the time when we expect the work to be done.



Alterations and improvements

You can carry out alterations or improvements to your home but you must get our written consent first. You need to do this because your tenancy agreement does not allow you to make some alterations. For example, you must not artex the internal walls of the property or fix polystyrene tiles to ceilings. Other alterations may need planning permission or building regulations approval. We are happy to advise you on the required approvals.

All such improvements must be carried out to our satisfaction and will normally become our property when the tenancy is ended. Alternatively we may request that you remove structures at the end of your tenancy at your own expense.

We are not responsible for repairs which are necessary because of faulty improvements, sub-standard workmanship or defective materials.

We have introduced a tenant improvement voucher scheme. This means that you may be able to apply for money towards the cost of some improvement works. See Leaflet 4 for more information.

Right to compensation for improvements

At the end of your tenancy, you have the right to claim compensation from us for improvements you have made to your home with our consent. Evidence of your costs will help us assess the level of compensation you may be entitled to. You can only apply for compensation for certain kinds of improvement that started on or after 1 April 1994. Please contact us if you would like any more information.

You can contact us by:

Writing to: Housing Services
East Devon District Council,
Knowle, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 8HL

Telephoning: **01395 517458**

Email: repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk