

Information on all things repairs including how to report a repair, completion timescales and repair responsibilities

Reporting repairs

These are the numbers you need to call to report repairs:

During office hours

- Non-gas repairs: 01229 876578 or email housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
- Gas-only repairs ie no heating or hot water or boiler problems: 0800 031 6578 freephone or 0151 728 5739

Out-of-office emergency repairs

- Non-gas repairs: 01229 833311
- Gas-only repairs ie no heating or hot water or boiler problems: 01229 833311

Please note, our emergency repair service is for attending to incidents that threaten the safety of the occupants - for example, severe flooding, major electrical failure or if the property is insecure. If when attended to it is found not to be a genuine emergency, you may be charged for the service.

Please also note: No heating or hot water will only be carried out as an emergency during weekends and bank holiday periods.

Alternatively, you can report repairs by emailing: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk or writing to Housing Service, Town Hall, Duke Street, Barrow-in-Furness LA14 2LD

It is essential you report a repair as soon as a fault is noticed before the problem worsens.

You must give the following information when reporting a repair:

- Your name, address and contact telephone number
- Time someone is at home to enable the repair to be either inspected or carried out
- As much detailed information about the repair as possible

Routine Repairs - What happens next?

Once a repair has been issued to the Contractor you will automatically receive a repair receipt, indicating the nature of the work, the date of completion and the reference number of the job ticket. The receipt also indicates whether the repair qualifies under the 1994 Right to Repair legislation.

For more complex repairs the Council employs a simple appointment system allowing for a morning or afternoon visit to take place by the Surveyor. You will be

given an appointment card from the receptionist indicating the date allocated for the inspection.

What do I do if I smell gas?

Make sure you know where the gas tap is so that you can turn it off in an emergency. If you smell gas, turn off the supply and telephone 0800 111 999. This is a 24-hour emergency line for gas escapes. They will stop an escape in the home or in the street free of charge.

How long will it take to carry out a repair?

This will depend on what the repair is. The Council has different timescales for completing repairs according to their urgency. These are given below.

Response within two hours

- Severe flooding
- Total power failure
- Insecure property

Response within 24 hours

- Follow on work from two hour work
- Unsafe power or lighting socket
- Total loss of water supply
- Partial loss of gas supply
- Blocked flue to fire/boiler
- Total loss of heating/hot water October to May
- Major blockages to drains/soil pipes call United Utilities on 0845 746 2200
- WC not working (if there is only one in the property)
- Major leak from heating/water system
- Insecure window or door lock
- Temporary boarding of windows & doors
- Faulty smoke alarms

Response within seven working days

- Partial loss of electricity
- Partial loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of heating April to November
- Single glazing repairs
- Minor leaks from taps, pipes etc.
- Repairs to extractor fans

- Roof repairs
- Loose banister or hand rail
- Rotten timber flooring or stair tread
- Door entry phone not working
- Overflow repairs
- Faulty taps or water supplies
- Blocked to sinks, baths basin or gullies

Response within 30 working days

- Plastering repairs
- Bricklaying or chimney repairs
- Double glazing repairs
- Fencing repairs
- Repairs to windows, catches, easing
- Repairs to doors, draught proofing, etc.
- Repairs to guttering
- Tiling and sealant
- Bath and WC replacements
- Kitchen unit replacements
- Floor and skirting repairs

Out of office hours within two hours – evenings, weekends and holidays

- Severe flooding
- Major electrical failure
- Property insecure

What happens if the workman calls to my home and I am out?

If the job is classified as a seven or 30 working day response time, the visiting operative will leave you a card with a contact telephone number on. You must then telephone within two working days to re-arrange access for a seven day repair and within seven working days for a 30 day repair.

If the job is a two or 24 hour emergency it will automatically be cancelled. It is therefore essential in these circumstances that you ensure access is always available as you may be charged for an abortive call.

What should I do if my repair is not completed on time?

In the event that this does happen, you should make contact us as soon as the completion date has expired. Please remember, completion dates take into account weekends and bank holidays.

- For gas-only repairs: Call Sure Group on 0151 728 5739 or freephone 0800 031 6578
- For non-gas repairs call Hughes Brothers on 01229 389088
- email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Right to Repair

The Council has a legal duty to carry out some repairs within a certain time after you have told us what needs to be done; these are called Qualifying Repairs.

If the repair is not completed within the time scale without a satisfactory reason, then you may be entitled to claim the Right to Repair and request a second contractor to complete the work. If the second contractor also fails to complete the repair within the given time-scale then you may be entitled to compensation. Not all repairs qualify under the legislation; however, those which do are listed on the repair receipt along with the relevant time-scales for completion.

Rechargeable Repairs

The Council will seek to recover the cost of repair work from those tenants who abuse or mistreat their property. Wilful damage may include holes in doors, damage to plaster, light/power sockets or any other repair or improvement caused by tenant neglect.

This may include restoring DIY repairs or correcting unauthorised improvement work.

Decoration Allowances

The Council may provide tenants with a range of vouchers towards the cost of redecoration following improvement work, or when moving into a property.

In addition, tenants receiving new bathrooms and kitchens will be able to apply for a flooring voucher to help repair or replace carpets/flooring following improvement.

For further details tel. (01229) 876578 or email housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Repair Responsibilities

Which repairs are the Council responsible for?

- The structure and external fabric of your home
- The internal fittings and services provided by the Council

Provided the repair has arisen through fair wear and tear, the list of Council responsibilities includes:

- Roofs, chimneys, flashings, and rainwater goods
- External wall decoration, finishes, rendering and pointing
- External windows and doors
- Paths, steps and other means of access
- Drainage

- Garages
- Internal floor construction (excluding coverings)
- Repairs to internal walls and ceilings (excluding decoration)
- Kitchen units, work tops and tiling
- Glazing
- Baths, wash hand basins and fittings
- Toilets, cisterns, seat and covers
- Internal doors, furniture, architraves, skirtings

In addition, the Council has a duty to maintain the following services and installations:

- Heating appliances and associated pipework for example ducting
- Electrical wiring, sockets, lighting
- Waste pipes and internal plumbing (excluding tenant's own appliances)

Please note if any of these items are damaged by you, your family or guests, or because you have misused them or not looked after them properly, then we may hold you responsible for the repair

Which repairs am I responsible for?

- Repairs that are needed as a result of damage caused by you, your family or your visitors
- Repairs to for example appliances, fittings which have been installed by you and are additional to those appliances fitted by the Council
- Repairs to internal decoration

Other tenant responsibilities include:

- Internal decoration, including filling of normal plaster cracks
- All keys
- Fittings such as curtains rails, hat and coat hooks
- Servicing and maintenance of all additional appliances fitted by the tenant.
- Light bulbs plug tops, fuses
- Blockages to kitchen or bathroom wastes, traps or gullies (unless the blockage occurs in the main drainage system and beyond the control of the tenant)
- Sweeping the flues
- Floor coverings
- Gardens and general upkeep of the property

Quality Control

The Council is keen to ensure that repairs are cost effective and carried out to a high standard. Methods used include:

- A customer satisfaction survey (forms part of repair receipt).
- A comprehensive post inspection system (Client based).
- A random post inspection system (Contractor based).
- A detailed audit of repair costs and additional works required.

Home Improvements

Any improvement or alteration to the structure or fabric of your home requires written permission from the Housing Service. Consent to carry out improvements will not be withheld unreasonably, however, all permissions for any improvement will be subject to the following conditions:

- Written consent is required before any work is undertaken
- All work to be carried out and any damage made good at the tenant's expense
- All works to be completed within three months of written consent and all work to be completed to the satisfaction of the Council
- New installations, which are a permanent fixture, will become the property of the Council and must not be removed unless prior permission has been obtained and the dwelling reinstated to the satisfaction of the Council
- The Council will not be responsible for the future maintenance cost of any additional space or water heater installed by the present tenant, however, ownership and maintenance of such appliance will transfer to the Council when the tenancy terminates
- The Council will post inspect all alterations or improvements and shall require the tenant to correct any defects found at his/her own expense
- Any alterations to gas appliances must be completed by a Gas Safe registered installer
- The Council does not undertake to carry out annual maintenance of space and water heating appliances fitted by the tenant

Please remember if you alter something without permission you may be required to put it back to its original condition or be recharged for the Council doing so.

Tenancy Restrictions

Please remember, you should check with the Housing Service before carrying out any work. If you alter something without permission you may be required to put it back to its original condition or be recharged by the Council for doing so.

The following type of works are included:

- Installing satellite dishes or additional aerials.
- Boarding or altering internal doorways

- Artexing walls or ceilings.
- Removing or replacing kitchen units and worktops.
- Removing or altering gas appliances.
- Shower installations or water heaters.

Remember - When you begin and end a tenancy the Council carries out an inspection of the property to identify:

- The condition of the property and the grounds.
- Any damage left by the previous tenant.
- An inventory of all fittings and fixtures.

Routine maintenance

The outside of your home and internal decoration to communal areas will normally be painted every six years.

Is my property included in this year's Improvement Programme?

Contact our Maintenance Team on 01229 876365 to establish if any improvement works are scheduled to be carried out to your home within the current year.

Annual Gas Service Checks

The safety of our tenants is our top priority and, as a landlord, we are required by law to carry out an annual safety inspection/service of all Council-owned gas appliances and visual checks of tenant-owned appliances. The gas service is free and usually takes no more than 45 minutes.

Our contractor, Sure Group, will always contact you in advance of these checks to arrange a convenient time to visit.

The vast majority of our tenants allow Sure Group access to carry out these crucial checks, but unfortunately access isn't always given in the run up to the due date and this can lead to court action being taken to gain entry.

It is in everyone's best interest that inspections are carried out promptly to ensure all gas appliances are working properly and safely. So please allow access when requested so that everyone stays gas safe.

Please note if you have or are about to fit your own gas fire, you must obtain permission from the Council first. Once fitted the Council will carry out a gas safety check but the cost of any repairs must be met and carried out by yourself.

Note - the painting of fire surrounds is forbidden.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

We are nearing the end of a major contract to fit Carbon Monoxide alarms in all our properties fitted with a gas boiler (or gas fire where fitted). These are then interlinked with the existing smoke and heat alarms.

The alarms you have fitted by the Council are then tested as part of the annual gas service to ensure they are fully functional.

As we are required by law to fit these alarms, please allow access for the contractor to install them, as we would have to seek access via court action to carry out the work if access is not granted.

If you are decorating your ceilings next to any of the alarms, please do not be tempted to remove them from the ceiling. You can use the dust cover for the alarm whilst painting and then remove the cover as soon as you have finished. You should not paint over the alarm or the base.

Right to Compensation

If you have carried out certain types of improvements you may be entitled to compensation if you terminate your tenancy to go and live somewhere else (but not if you buy your home).

If you have made improvements to your property you should inform the Housing Office at the time you end your tenancy. The Housing Officer will give you further advice on the legislation and will assist you in completing any necessary paperwork.

Complaints

If you have any cause for complaint regarding any aspect of the repairs service please call us on 01229 876578.

For more information

If you need any more information about our repairs service, call our Maintenance Team on 01229 876365 or email: housing@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk