

Repairs Handbook

for Housing Services



Where to find equipment

Please fill in the details in the box below. This information may be useful when you have to report a repair.

Item	Location in your home
Stopcock (water)	
Fuse box	
Gas on and off lever	
Tripswitch (electricity)	
Boiler	
Water tank	

Rent reference: _____

Property reference: _____

Introduction

It is our responsibility to maintain your home. However some repairs are your responsibility and these are detailed in this booklet and in your tenancy agreement.

When you report a repair it is important that you give us as much information as possible about the repair. To help you we have included a number of diagrams in this booklet which are labelled to assist you to describe the fault in your home. You can then pass this information, or the page number of the diagram, to the person receiving the repair. You will then be advised of the repairs priority, anything you can do to help and if we can offer you an appointment, when it will be.

Your repair is then placed onto our computer system and we will respond to it according to its agreed priority.

We also provide an out of hour's emergency service, but please do not use this service for reporting non-essential repairs. If we are called out to a non-essential repair you may find you have to pay for the cost of the call out.

Our aim is to continually improve the services we provide to our tenants and have worked in partnership with tenant representatives from the Chase Tenants and Residents Federation to both formulate our repairs procedure and provide this handbook. We would like to acknowledge their invaluable input.

Head of Housing



Contents

Tenants and repairs information

Introduction	1
Tenants Repairs Charter	4
How can you help us?	5
How to report a repair	6
Emergencies	7
Repair priorities, Planned repairs	7–9
Who is responsible for repairs	10–12
Repairs responsibility, Right to Repair, Repairs we can charge you for	13–14
Repairs appointments, Access to work areas	14–15
Safety in your home	16–17
Security and passwords	18
Customer satisfaction, Complaints, compliments or comments	19
We want your bright ideas	20
Complaints procedure	21
Compensation for improvements	22
Condensation and damp	23
Carbon monoxide detectors, Smoke and fire alarms	24–25
Frost precautions	25–26
Gas and solid fuel servicing	26
Heating and hot water, Water leaks	27–28
Insurance, Mutual exchanges	28
Roads and pavements, Translation services	29

Repairs in your home

Introduction	30
Baths and showers	31–32
Door repairs	33–35
Drainage and downpipes	36
Electrics	37–39
Floors, walls and ceilings	40–41
Garages	42
Heating and hot water	43–46
Kitchen units	47

Locks and fittings	48–49
Outside of the property	50–52
Roofs and gutters	53
Sinks and basins	54–55
Stairs and lofts	56
Toilets	57
Water services	58
Windows	59

Handy hints

Introduction	60
Care of your home	61
Clearing a blocked waste pipe	62–64
Cookers	64
Electrics – advice and general information	65
Electrics – fuse box	65–66
Electrics – lighting	66–67
Electrics – sockets and power	67
Frozen or burst pipes	68
Heating – advice and general information	69
Heating – electrical	70
Heating – radiators	70–71
Immersion and showers	72

Other information

Where to find equipment	inside front cover
Useful contact numbers	inside back cover

Tenants Repairs Charter

- Reliability and responsiveness

We will be reliable and do our best to keep any appointments we have made. We will advise you as early as possible, if we can't keep them and respond to your needs accordingly.

- Security and identification

We will keep your home and property secure and not expose it to any unnecessary risks. We will show our identification on arrival and will be happy to show it again at any time on request.

- Appearance

We will be smartly dressed and our operatives will wear a recognisable blue uniform with our logo and their name on it.

- Skilled, competent and experienced

We will make sure all our employees are professional, competent and experienced in the work they are asked to carry out in your home.

- Respect, courtesy, privacy and confidentiality

We will respect and show you courtesy by being polite and considerate and not eating, drinking, smoking, or using the bathroom in your home unless we are given permission to do so. We will also respect your privacy and confidentiality at all times.

- Communication

We will keep you informed of our progress during your work.

- Diversity and language

We will treat everyone equally, as we would expect to be treated ourselves. We will respect your religious or cultural beliefs and will try not to offend you by the use of inappropriate language or mannerisms.

- Cleanliness, noise and dust

We will clean and tidy our work area before we leave your home and we will aim to keep noise and dust levels to a minimum.

- Health and safety

We will undertake all work in a safety-conscious manner in line with current health and safety guidelines.

How can you help us?

You can

- Keep your repairs and inspection appointments or advise us as early as possible if you are not going to be available for them.
- Treat our employees as you expect to be treated yourself, by not abusing them face to face or over the phone if things do not go quite the way you expected them to. (We will not tolerate abuse of our employees under any circumstances and it may offend you further if we refuse to complete your work because of it).
- Take heed of safety advice and instructions given to you by our employees.
- Keep young children and animals away from employees and work areas while repairs are taking place and don't allow them to play on or around scaffolding.
- Clear access to work areas and remove items that may be in our way, especially delicate or expensive items or equipment.
- Remove satellite dishes or aerials that are in the way of access scaffolding (as we cannot be held responsible for loss of signal or damage which may occur during repair works).
- Keep children and adults off scaffolding around your home – (the only people authorised to use that scaffolding will be the Council's employees or sub-contractors).
- Park vehicles away from work areas where they will not obstruct access or risk being damaged.
- Remove carpets and floor coverings to expose floor areas for inspection and repair. (The Council cannot be held responsible for damage that may occur while lifting carpets or floor covering to carry out work. If you are unable to lift your carpets yourself please inform the Repairs Reporting Centre and they will advise you accordingly).
- Avoid leaving your children under the age of 16 home-alone to accept repairs. (All our employees are instructed they should use their discretion or refuse to enter a property, if you are not available).

How to report a repair

There are several ways to report a repair, in all cases please check that the repair is a valid repair and that you have as much information about the fault as you can.

You can report a repair:

- by phone at your local area office



Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

the phone numbers of the offices are on the inside back cover of this booklet;

- in person



at the housing office or at the Hawks Green depot;

- by letter



send written details of your repair problem to the Housing Maintenance Manager, the address of your local office is on the inside back cover of this booklet;

- to any housing officer



if they call;

- by e-mail



at housingrepairs@cannockchasedc.gov.uk; and

- online



using InterFinder.

When you are reporting a repair please make sure that you include your unique property reference, the address at which the repair is needed, access arrangements and your phone number.

Please note

- Failure to provide all the details will result in your repair being delayed.
- Please do not report repairs to any of our operatives.
- Make sure you inform us if you have already reported your repair.

Emergencies

If an emergency occurs and you need to call us outside of normal office hours, please ring **01543 456816**, this number applies to all areas.

General building and electrical heating repairs

Note – these priorities are not applicable for repair to gas or solid-fuel central heating, please refer to page 16 for additional information.

Repair priorities

When you report a repair it will be given one of the following priorities.

Priority 1

Emergency repairs (same day)

An emergency repair is where it involves a risk to your health and safety or serious damage to your property. If you have an emergency you can phone us 24 hours a day on **01543 456816**.

For out-of-hours the Control Centre will arrange for a workman to call and make safe the fault. A full repair will be completed as soon as possible during normal working hours.

Examples are:

- total loss of power;
- unsafe power or lighting socket;
- total loss of water supply;
- blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack or toilet pan (where there is no other working toilet in the property);
- toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the property);
- leak from water pipe, tank or cistern;
- temporary repair to leaking roof;
- insecure outside window, door or lock;
- make good dangerous glazing;
- loss of electric storage heating or electric water heating between 1 November and 1 May;
- loss of lighting to kitchen, bathroom, stairs or landing only;
- loss of power to cooker socket; and
- communal fire alarm system.

Priority 2

Urgent repairs (within three working days)

These are repairs that are not emergencies, but we need to do them quickly to prevent more damage.

Examples are:

- blocked sink, bath or basin;
- tap which cannot be turned;
- rotten or faulty timber floor-boarding or stair tread;
- partial loss of electric power (all electrical repairs not covered in emergency repairs);
- partial loss of water supply;
- replacement of missing inspection chamber covers located within the area of the property;
- repairs to steps and paved areas considered essential by the Council's housing maintenance officers (to and from the front and rear doors only);
- loose or detached banister or hand-rail;
- investigation of underground drains and pipes (repair where possible); and
- repair electrical smoke alarm.

Priority 3

Essential repairs (within five working days)

These repairs will normally be done by the Handyvan service within five working days. The Handyvan Service can also carry out other minor repairs, which happen when on site, without the need for an inspector to call.

Examples are:

- replacement of smoke alarm batteries and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors for pensioners in bungalows or ground floor flats;
- reglazing;
- ball valve replacement;
- broken toilet, if there are two in the property;
- window fasteners;
- replacement of window catches; and
- minor gate and fencing repair.

Priority 4

Routine repairs (within 38 working days)

These are low priority repairs of a non-serious nature and not causing damage to the property.

Examples are:

- repair of faulty or replacement guttering;
- plaster repairs to walls and ceilings;
- repairs to fire surround or fitting;
- replacement wall tiles;
- repair or replacement of kitchen units;
- make available mechanical extractor fans;
- repairs to outbuildings and coal bunkers;
- repointing brickwork;
- repairs to fencing and gates;
- replacement or repair of chimney pots or cowls; and
- repair or replacement of paved areas not considered essential by the Council's housing maintenance officers.

Planned repairs

In addition to carrying out day-to-day repairs, our Housing Property Services section carry out major projects to improve the condition of the housing stock which include:

External Works Programme

This is a survey orientated repair programme which may include:

Replacement gutter with PVCu fascia, roof, chimney, brickwork and render repairs; pre-paint repairs, replacement outside doors and painting work.

Kitchen and Bathroom Replacement Programme

Electrical Upgrade Programme

Central Heating Upgrade Programme

Who is responsible for repairs

Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Back boiler	✓		
Baths	✓		
Brickwork	✓		
Ceilings	✓		
Central heating pipes, radiators, timer and thermostat	✓		
Chimney stack or pot	✓		
Chimney sweeping	✓		Annual unless required more often
Cistern	✓		
Clothes posts		✓	Only on communal areas
Communal area to flats	✓		Unless provided by the Council
Concrete canopies over door or windows	✓		
Cookers		✓	
Cupboards (kitchen)	✓		
Damp-proof course	✓		
Decoration – inside		✓	
Door locks	✓		Unless tenant has lost keys
Doors – outside	✓		
Doors to communal areas	✓		
Downpipes, rain or soil stack	✓		
Drain blockage	✓		Rechargeable if due to misuse
Driveways or venue hard standing		✓	Unless provided by the Council
Electric heaters (provided by the Council)	✓		
Electric plugs		✓	
Electric wiring, sockets and switches	✓		
Entry systems	✓		
Exterior or rendering	✓		

Who is responsible for repairs

Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Fascia	✓		
Fencing	✓		
Fire – gas (provided by the Council)	✓		
Floor tiles		✓	
Floorboards	✓		
Foundations	✓		
Fuse to plugs		✓	
Garages or outbuildings	✓		
Garden clearance and maintenance		✓	
Gardens		✓	
Gates	✓		Unless supplied by present or previous tenant
Glazing		✓	
Gulley surrounds, grids and grates	✓		
Guttering	✓		
Immersion heaters	✓		
Inside banister	✓		
Inspection chambers	✓		
Internal doors	✓		Except where doors have to be eased due to floor covering being fitted
Key replacement		✓	
Kitchen fittings and worktops	✓		Unless supplied by previous or present tenant
Light bulbs		✓	
Lighting pendants	✓		
Locks and ironmongery	✓		

Who is responsible for repairs

Item	Us	You	Exceptions
Overflow pipes	✓		
Painting – outside	✓		
Painting – inside		✓	
Path to garden		✓	
Paths (to communal areas, front and back doors)	✓		
Plaster	✓		
Roof – tiles and slates	✓		
Sheds		✓	
Sink base unit	✓		
Sink drainer	✓		
Skirting boards	✓		
Smoke detectors	✓		Replacement of batteries other than OAPs or disabled tenants
Stairs	✓		
Taps	✓		
Tenant alterations and improvements		✓	
Toilet seat		✓	OAP or disabled tenants
TV aerials		✓	Unless communal
Vents	✓		
Wash-hand basin	✓		
Waste plugs and chains to bath and sink		✓	
Water heating supply	✓		
Water supply	✓		
Window frame and furniture	✓		

Repairs responsibility

As part of your tenancy, we carry out certain repairs in your home. Others are your responsibility. Repairs and replacements not caused by normal wear and tear are your responsibility, so you have to either do the work yourself or pay someone else to do it. You may be able to claim for accidental damage through your household insurance.

Right to Repair

You may have a legal right to compensation if we do not carry out certain small urgent repairs, called 'qualifying repairs' within a set time, which may cause a risk to your health and safety.

Examples of qualifying repairs are:

- total or partial loss of electric power;
- unsafe electrical fitting;
- blocked toilet (where there is no other working toilet in the property);
- blocked sink, bath or basin; and
- insecure door, window or lock.

Full details of the tenants' Right to Repair scheme are available from the housing office.

Repairs we can charge you for

Your tenancy agreement allows for you to be charged for the cost of repairs which arise due to neglect, carelessness or misuse by you, any member of your family, or persons visiting your property. You will not be charged for damage resulting from burglary or attempted burglary if it has been reported to the police and a crime reference number has been given. A repair will be treated as chargeable until this information has been supplied.

We will recharge for repairs caused by:

- deliberate damage;
- wilful neglect; and
- unauthorised alterations.

If damage is caused by the existing tenant, a repair will only be carried out if:

- paid for in advance; or
- the repair is essential for safety reasons.

Misuse of out-of-hours service

You may be charged for the work if you have given us misleading information or were not at home when our tradesman called. An example of misleading information would be where you have already reported the repair during the day time and been given an appointment and this information was not passed onto the out-of-hours repairs reporting centre.

Lock changes

If you report that you have lost your keys and need access to your home, or the locks need to be changed, you will be held responsible for the cost of the work.

Note

- Payment should be asked for in advance, but in exceptional circumstances, the work may be carried out and the cost recharged at the Tenancy Services or Housing Maintenance Manager's discretion.
- If it is a joint tenancy both parties must agree to the lock change or referred to Tenancy Services.

Repairs appointments

Where ever possible we will try to offer an appointment for your repair work to be undertaken or inspected. We can offer four appointment slots:

- am;
- pm;
- all day; or
- between the school run.

If we can appoint your repair, you will be given a choice of appointments and you can select the one that suits you best for that date. The repairs appointment system will give a choice of dates when an employee with the required skill is available within the priority deadline, for example for a Routine Repair an appointment date would be offered within 38 days.

If for some unexpected reason we find we cannot keep our appointment with you, we will contact you and offer our sincere apologies. We will then give you the next alternative appointment date that is convenient to you.

If you find for some reason you cannot make your appointment, please contact the Repairs Reporting Centre on **01543 456816** as soon as possible to rearrange it. We would much rather you call us, even if it is just before we send an employee out to your home, than not at all.

If you persistently miss appointments without giving adequate notice, you will be contacted and asked to explain why you are missing them. If you continue we will recharge you for the missed appointments.

Remember the cost of missed appointments is high and it does have a direct effect on your rent charges.

Access to work areas

Where ever possible it would be appreciated if you could clear access and remove any furniture or carpets that may prevent easy access to work areas before our employees arrive at your home. Obviously if you are old, infirm or disabled, or just can't manage to clear access to the work area, our employees will be happy to help.

Please do your best to keep your appointments
and we will do our best to keep ours.

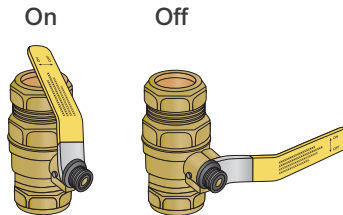
Safety in your home

By taking a few simple precautions, you can prevent danger to your home or distress to your family.

Gas

If you smell gas

- **Open** doors and windows.
- **Turn off** the gas at the meter. (See diagrams below).
- **Don't** operate anything electrical including lights, sockets or phones.
- **Don't** smoke or use naked flames.
- Keep people away from the area.
- **Call National Grid on 0800 111 999 (Freephone)** from outside your home, as **using a phone inside could cause an explosion.**



Gas and solid-fuel heating repairs

Gas repair response times

Priority	Type of repair	Response time	Example
G1	Uncontrolled gas leak or fumes	Within one hour	
G2	Controlled gas escape or fumes	Within two hours	
G3	Any other emergency work	Within four hours	Water leak
G4	Urgent repair	Same day response	Total failure
G5	Specified repairs	Next working day	No hot water
G6	Minor repairs	Within three working days	Focal fire not working One cold radiator

Fires

Preventing fires

- If a smoke detector is fitted in your home, you are responsible for testing it regularly. If it is battery-operated, you must replace the battery when it starts beeping irregularly.
- **Don't** dry clothes over heaters.
- **Don't** leave the kitchen when using chip pans.

Fumes

Preventing carbon monoxide fumes

- Keep rooms well ventilated and make sure vents are not blocked or closed.
- We carry out a gas safety check every 10 months on all heating appliances.
- Always buy appliances with the British Standard Kite mark or CE mark.
- Use Gas Safe registered gas installers to carry out any gas work in your home.



Electrical

- **Unplug** appliances when not in use.
- **Switch off** any faulty switch or socket. Turn off the supply at the consumer unit, unplug appliances and call us.
- **Don't** touch bare wires or wet fittings. Turn off the supply at the consumer unit.
- **Don't** overload sockets. Use a multi-plug rather than an adaptor.
- **Don't** install new electrical fittings, for example showers, without our permission.

Note

Building regulations are now required for certain types of electrical and gas work.

Security and passwords

Before you allow anyone access to your property you should insist on seeing their ID card (Identification card). All Council employees are issued with an identification card and should carry them at all times. All of our employees that come to repair your home should also be in a recognisable navy and light blue uniform with the Council's logo displayed on it.

The ID card should look like this:



If you are in any doubt leave them outside, lock your door and call the Repair Reporting Centre on **01543 456816** to confirm their identity.

Remember – if they don't show you an identification card then don't let them in.

If you are feeling particularly vulnerable when you contact us about your repair, you can ask us to give you or select your own **Repair Password**. This will be printed on the official job or inspection ticket that each of our operatives or inspectors will have with them when they call. They will then tell you your password when they arrive at your home, which you can confirm.

Make a note of your passwords and
appointment dates
and keep them at hand next to the door.

Customer satisfaction

Keeping our customers satisfied is at the core of our business and is very important to us, along with continuous improvement. There are a number of ways you can help us to keep our customer satisfaction levels high and continuously improve.

You can:

- fill in and return your customer satisfaction surveys;
- take part in our phone surveys;
- join one of our tenant focus groups;
- come along to one of our open days; or
- contact us with your complaints, compliments or comments.

It does not matter whichever way you choose to do it, so long as you take part and help us to improve our service to you.

Complaints, compliments or comments

The Housing Maintenance Service is committed to providing excellent customer services that meets your needs, but we do recognise occasionally we may not deliver exactly what you expected us to. This may leave you wanting to make a complaint, give us a compliment or make a comment about our service.

There are a variety of different ways you can do this such as:

- using our leaflet “How to Make a Complaint, Compliment or Comment”;
- returning a customer satisfaction survey; or
- telling or writing to members of staff.

We believe all feedback is positive because we can learn from it and further develop our service to you. Any comments you make, we promise will be looked into and if we feel we can make a service improvement from it, we will enter it into our Bright Ideas scheme. (See the next page for more information).

We want your bright ideas

Do you have a bright idea that could help the Housing service in Cannock Chase?

Cannock Chase Council is offering £25 to tenants who come up with useful suggestions that are put into practice for improving the service, saving money or simply making things easier.

All you have to do is contact Community Development Officer Trish Griffiths and tell her what you have in mind.

In fact, you can now text message her on a special Mobile Number reserved purely for tenants who want to get in touch.

The number is: 07814758558
You can also phone her on: 01543 464757

or Email her at:
trishgriffiths@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

or write to her at:
Civic Centre, The Bungalow Annex,
PO. Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock,
Staffordshire, WS11 1BG

or use the suggestion forms available in Local Council Offices.

www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Complaints procedure

Wherever possible our front line staff will try to resolve your complaint, however if you are not satisfied with the outcome at this informal stage, details will be passed to a Senior Officer. The complaint will then be investigated by our Maintenance Quality Inspectors and recorded on the Complaints database. A Maintenance Quality Inspector will contact you within three working days either by phone or in writing to discuss the matter with you further and try to resolve your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with our decision or suggestion to resolve the situation, the complaint will be passed to the Service Improvement Section. The Service Improvement Manager will investigate the complaint and consider any action already taken. The Service Improvement Manager will contact you within three working days by phone or in writing to discuss your preferred options to resolve the complaint. At this stage you will be informed that you will get a formal written reply within 10 working days.

If you are still not satisfied, the Service Improvement Manager will pass the complaint to the Head of Policy and Performance Management. You will be informed that the complaint will be considered by the Council's Appeals and Complaints Panel and you will be notified in writing of the decision as soon as possible following its consideration. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you will be advised to contact the Local Government Ombudsman. Should the complaint be investigated by the Ombudsman, all appropriate files and records will be made available.

Compensation for improvements

You can apply for compensation when your tenancy ends, which is usually when you move. A claim must be made through Tenancy Services and be done within 14 days of the tenancy ending. Before we can consider any claim for compensation, the improvements must have had our approval at the time of applying.

We will also need invoices and any other documents such as warranties or guarantees, for improvements carried out. There is a leaflet available called “Your right to compensation”, which explains this in detail.

Listed below are some of the improvements you can claim under the Right to Compensation.

- Bath or shower, wash-hand basin and toilet.
- Kitchen sinks and work surfaces for preparing food.
- Central heating, hot-water boilers and other types of heating.
- Storage cupboards in bathroom or kitchen.
- Thermostatic radiator valves.
- Pipe, water tank or cylinder insulation.
- Draught proofing of outdoor doors or windows.
- Double glazing, other window replacement or secondary glazing.
- Re-wiring, or the provision of power and lighting or other electrical fittings, including smoke detectors.
- Security measure (excluding burglar alarms).

Note

Interior decoration, such as painting and wallpapering does not qualify for compensation.

Condensation and damp

Condensation occurs mainly in the winter months because the building's fabric is cold and windows are opened less frequently. When warm moist air meets a cold surface such as a wall or single window pane, this is condensation. Walls, ceilings, floors and sometimes even clothes and furniture can become damp and discoloured as a result of mould growth. To prevent condensation, it is essential to remove the water vapour where it has settled.

The common sources of condensation are:

- steam from cooking or bathing;
- tumble dryers;
- animal or human breath; and
- LPG or paraffin heaters.

In most cases, allowing the warm, moist air to escape by opening windows or ventilators can prevent condensation. Sometimes you may need to use mechanical or electrical ventilation to help move the moist air.

To prevent condensation:

- try to keep all rooms warm, especially in cold weather;
- keep bathroom and kitchen doors closed especially when cooking, washing or bathing; and
- run cold water into your bath before adding hot, to reduce steam.

If you find patches of mould on the walls or your property is damp, condensation may be the cause. If you are taking steps to minimise condensation but it still persists, inform the Housing Maintenance section who will send out an inspector.

Damp can also be caused by other symptoms such as:

- failure of the damp-proofing layer at ground level;
- broken roof tiles or guttering causing rainwater to enter the property;
- poor rendering or roughcasting on outside walls; and
- leaking pipes.

If you feel one of these may be the cause, it must be investigated by one of our operatives or an inspector.

Carbon monoxide detectors

We now fit carbon monoxide detectors to all our properties, which have solid-fuel burning appliances and some properties with older gas appliances. This type of detector will not be fitted in properties that are heated by electricity or have a modern gas-fired system fitted.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a very poisonous gas which is produced when any fossil fuel burns incompletely. It should be noted that CO alarms are not a substitute for regular maintenance or non-compliance with legislation. In line with the Electrical Upgrade Programme, CO detectors being fitted are mains-powered with built-in back up cells and fitted on the ceiling. In normal operation there is a green light to indicate the mains supply is on. Some properties have battery CO detectors that are fitted on a wall. When CO is detected an early warning is given by a flashing light and an alarm sounds a short beep every five seconds. Should the detector continue to detect a build up of CO it will begin to sound continuously. Should either of these happen please be advised of the following:

- Open all doors and windows to vent to the outside air.
- Contact Housing Maintenance immediately on **01543 456816** (24 hours), who will contact the current gas maintenance contractor and where necessary the Gas Emergency Service.
- Where possible turn off all heating appliances.
- Seek medical assistance immediately for anyone suffering from the effects of CO poisoning, such as headaches or nausea.
- Get out and do not return until the detector has stopped.

If the unit develops a fault an amber light will flash and the alarm will sound a short beep approximately once every 40 seconds. If this happens it should be reported to Housing Maintenance and they will have it checked out.

Smoke and fire alarms

A smoke detector is an electronic device that constantly monitors for smoke particles, there are two types optical or ionisation. If the device detects smoke it gives off a warning signal. These devices come in either mains type or mains type with battery back-up or with just a battery, and are usually fixed to the ceiling in the hall and landings of most properties, depending on the layout of the building.

Smoke detectors must now be fitted to all properties. They are fitted in all of our properties and are upgraded from battery alarms to mains-operated under the Electrical Upgrade Programme. If you still have an old battery-operated smoke detector, we will replace the batteries if you are over 60 and live in a bungalow or ground floor flat. If you do not fall into the above group, you must make your own arrangements to maintain the alarm and change the batteries as necessary.

The following information is a guide on how to maintain your smoke alarm correctly:

- Check the alarm every week by pressing the button, this will make the alarm sound.
- If you have a battery-operated alarm, replace the batteries once a year.
- If the alarm goes off, assume it's a serious fire and react accordingly.
- If the alarm goes off in a 'nuisance situation', for example when cooking, open a window to clear the air and make the alarm stop.
- Never remove the battery.
- If the alarm beeps approximately once a minute, the battery is low and needs replacing.
- To help prevent nuisance alarms, use the vacuum cleaner hose to suck out the dust from the grille around the edge of the detector.
- If you have any concerns regarding the safe working of a smoke detector in your home, please contact us.

Fire alarms are provided in all our sheltered schemes and blocks of flats.

Frost precautions

The majority of our properties are well insulated and you should not experience any burst pipes during periods of bad weather. If you feel that pipes or tanks need insulating in your property, you should contact Housing Property Services or Housing Maintenance to find out the current policy or programmes.

If you have carried out additional plumbing work to your property, for example washing machines, or outside taps, you will be responsible for insulating these.

If you are going away during the winter months, remember to do the following:

- Leave the heating system on low.
- Turn off the water at the stopcock and any outside tap (leave this tap open) and outside toilet.
- Ask a neighbour or relative to check your property regularly.

Gas and solid fuel servicing

It is our responsibility to carry out an annual gas safety check and annual service of gas and solid fuel appliances in all of our properties. This includes properties where there is a gas supply but no gas appliances. It is in your interest to allow access to our contractor for this to be carried out. Faulty gas appliances can give off carbon monoxide fumes which can kill. Every year we also have to check those properties where there was no gas supply, to make sure that no gas has been installed. If you have a solid-fuel heating system your chimney will be swept once a year by PH Jones, **but you are responsible if extra sweeping is needed.**

If you want to make alterations or improvements to your property, you must ask for our permission in writing. Under the terms of your tenancy agreement, you must allow Council workers or contractors sent by the Council into your home to inspect and carry out repairs and improvements.

If you have had your own system installed by a private contractor, Housing Property Services must be informed so that they can carry out a check of the installation and, providing everything is in order, it can be included in the cyclical maintenance programme.

The contractor will make at least two attempts to gain access to your property. If they are unsuccessful, a letter will be sent from us on behalf of our gas maintenance contractor, requesting an appointment for a gas service. If we are unable to gain access we will serve a Notice of Entry under Section 54 of the Housing Act 1985, stating the date and time the contractor will attend to carry out the gas safety check and the service. If you fail to comply with this Notice, we will apply to the County Court for an injunction to allow us to force entry and you may have to pay for the cost. You will have to pay the full legal costs charged to us in taking this or any following action.

Heating and hot water

We have a mixture of gas, solid-fuel and electric heating and hot-water systems and clear priorities for repairing faults with heating and hot-water systems. (See pages 69 to 71 for more information).

Gas and solid-fuel heating systems are maintained by our current gas maintenance contractors. Electric heating systems are maintained by our in-house electricians.

If you suffer loss of heating for a long period of time it is possible to arrange basic temporary heating to be delivered, as it is part of our Gas Maintenance Contract. If the gas maintenance contractor cannot fix the problem on the first visit, they are contracted to supply two temporary heaters.

Water leaks

If a water leak happens in your property you need to know where the stoptap is and be able to turn it off. The usual places to find a stoptap are under the sink unit, in the pantry or under the stairs, but they can be found in other places.

If you have a water leak:

- place a bowl or bucket under the leak to prevent any further damage and **do not use** any electrical fittings that may be affected by it; and
- try to identify where the leak is coming from – water supply, heating system or waste pipes.

If a leak is coming from an upstairs flat into the flat below, notify us immediately so that we can ask to speak to the occupier to advise us of access details. We can only gain entry to another Council property in an emergency without the occupiers' permission.

If the property is a sold flat we need to write and give the occupier three months' notice to repair the leak and if it is not repaired within that time we can gain access and we may charge them for the work.

If an underground burst is suspected at a Council property, the Housing Maintenance Department may call in a contractor who normally attends within 24 hours to identify the problem with their leakage detection equipment. If possible they will repair the underground burst immediately or within five days, depending on how difficult the problem is. The responsibility for the repair will depend on where the burst is. The water supply from a property to the pavement is the responsibility of the occupier or landlord and under the

pavement and highway is the responsibility of the local water board. A delay may occur where several properties share the same supply. In this instance the company has to give 14 days' notice to all properties who share the supply, as each will be responsible for an equal portion of the cost.

Insurance claims

Claims for property damage or personal injury arising as a result of the negligence of the Council should be put in writing to: The Insurance and Risk Department, Cannock Chase District Council, Civic Centre, PO Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG.

The letter should state the incident date, exact location, details of injury or damage along with, if possible, photographs to support the claim.

Mutual exchanges

Mutual exchanges are processed by Tenancy Services where two tenants want to exchange properties. If Tenancy Services agree the exchange we have to carry out a gas and electric check to our properties. The Lettings section will contact the Repairs Reporting Centre to request a gas and electric check and a suitable appointment will be made with the tenant.

You are advised to thoroughly check out the property before you move and are reminded that you must accept the property in its present condition. It is your responsibility to make sure you are aware of the dangers and pitfalls of mutual exchanges.

You can ask our advice before making a decision to exchange, we will tell you what to look out for.

We will not replace any fittings or services damaged by the previous occupiers if there has been:

- wilful neglect;
- deliberate damage;
- unauthorised alterations; and
- unmaintained gardens.

Note

Any appliances replaced by the previous tenant without permission will be subject to an inspection by the gas maintenance contractor and may not be accepted onto the maintenance contract.

Roads and pavements

Generally the maintenance of main roads and pavements is the responsibility of Staffordshire Highways.

For enquiries or complaints regarding main roads and footpaths first contact: CLARENCE (Customer Lighting and Roads Enquiry Centre)

Staffordshire Highways

Phone: 0800 232323

Open: 8am to 6pm – Monday to Friday (if out-of-hours the answer machine will provide further contact information).

Problems covered by CLARENCE include:

- potholes;
- flooding;
- gulleys;
- lamp-posts knocked down;
- road traffic accidents;
- spillages;
- road signs; and
- street lighting.

Translation services

For a some of our tenants we have recognised that occasionally it may be necessary to use a translation service. For this reason, we have signed up to Language Line, a 24 hour telephone interpreting service. Officers have a Language Identification Card, which shows the same message in 28 different languages, in English the text reads: "Point to your language. We will get an interpreter on the phone to help us". They can then phone Language Line and ask for the services of an interpreter.

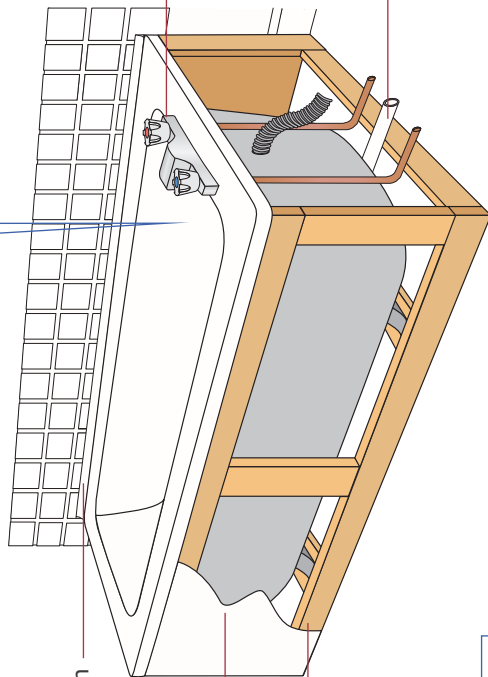
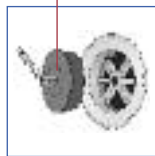
Introduction

When you report a repair to the Call Centre or Customer Service Centre, the agents will use a tool called Repair Finder. This tool enables the agent to establish the exact nature of the repair and subsequently assists them to raise a repair order.

This section contains an exact replica of the diagrams used within Repair Finder. You will find that the diagrams are grouped, easy to understand and contain many of the common repairs that you are likely to need. You will also notice that these repairs have an individual number to assist you in describing your repair to the agent.

It is important that you refer to this section (along with the 'Handy hints' section) before you call us on **01543 456816**. If you can give more details to the agent, including the page heading, page number and fault number, this will assist us in undertaking your repair request more efficiently.

Baths



1 Water seeping between bath and tiles

2 End panel broken or loose

3 Side panel broken or loose

4 Plug and chain broken or missing

5 Tap will not open or close properly

6 Tap dripping

7 Tap leaking from top or bottom

8 Tap broken

9 Bath waste and plug hole damaged

10 Bath waste and under bath broken or cracked

11 Waste pipe broken

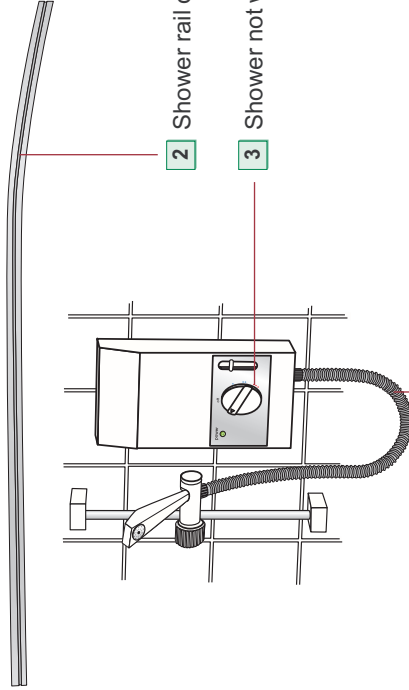
12 Leak on pipework

13 Bathroom repairs needed

Showers



1 Supply switch to shower not working



2 Shower rail damaged

3 Shower not working

6 Shower hose or head damaged or broken

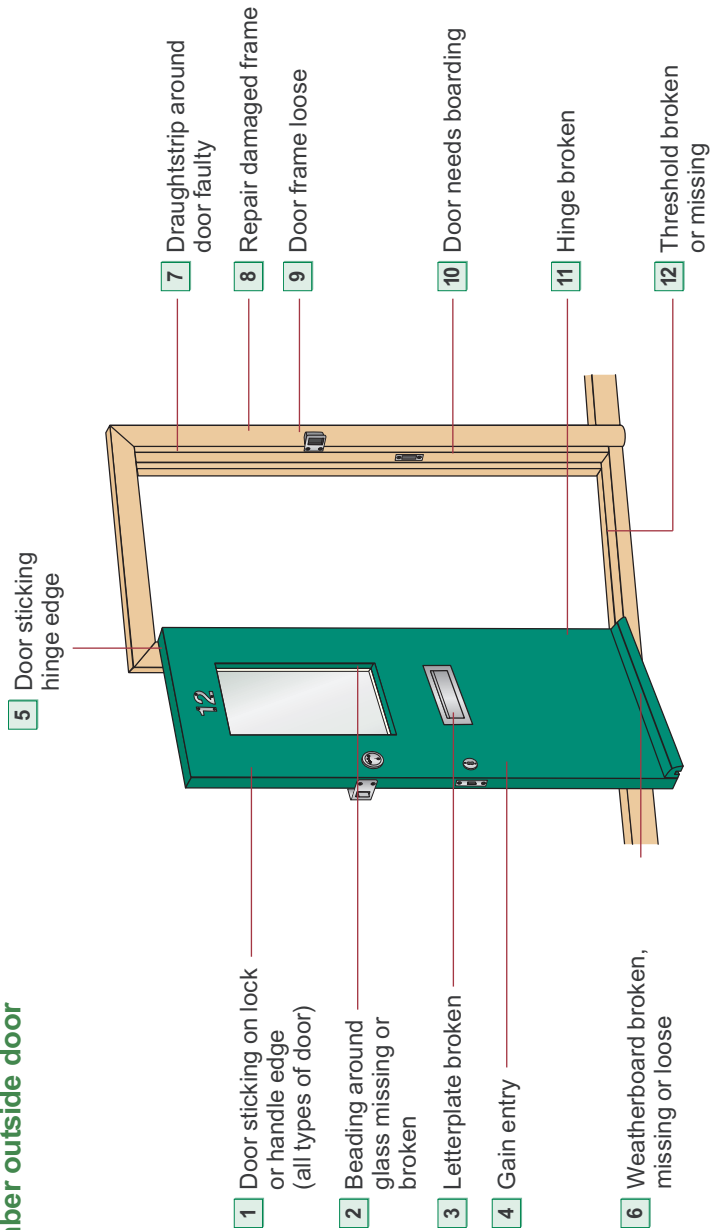
4 Leak on pipework

5 Bathroom repairs needed

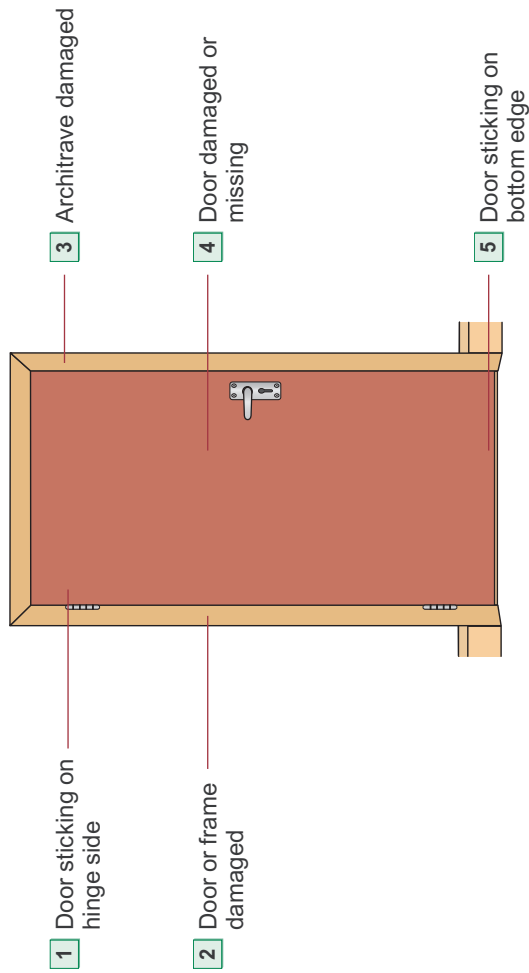
Door repairs

What is the fault and its number?

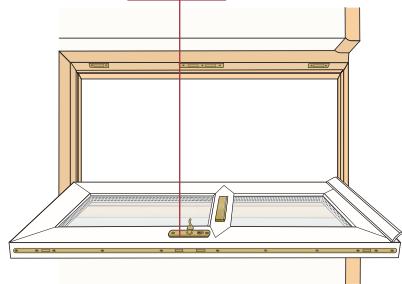
Timber outside door



Timber inside door



6 Carpentry repairs needed **7** Sliding door faulty



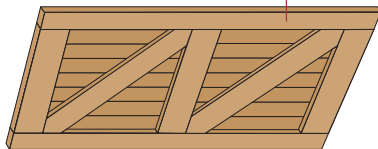
1

Latch broken

2

Locking mechanism broken

Coalhouse or outhouse door



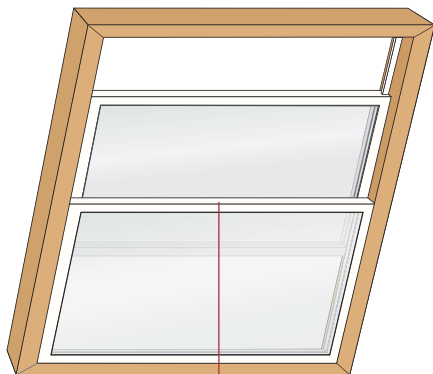
3

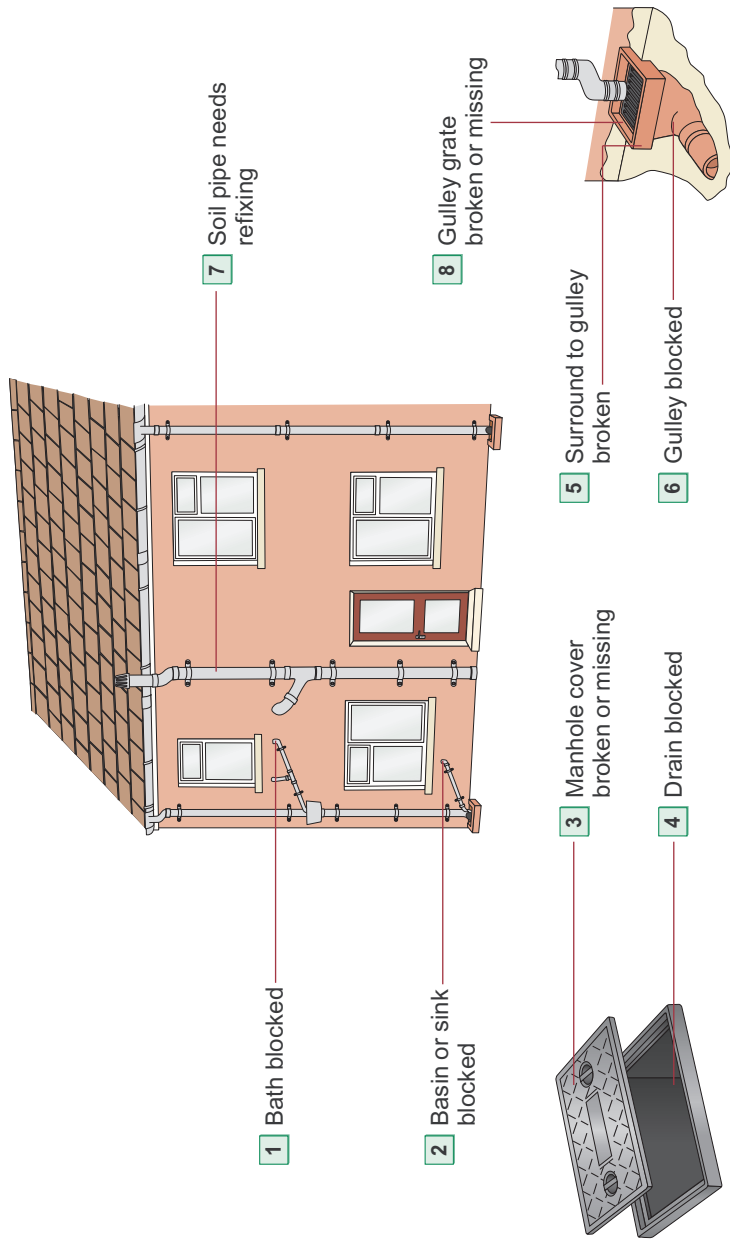
Door not sliding smoothly

4

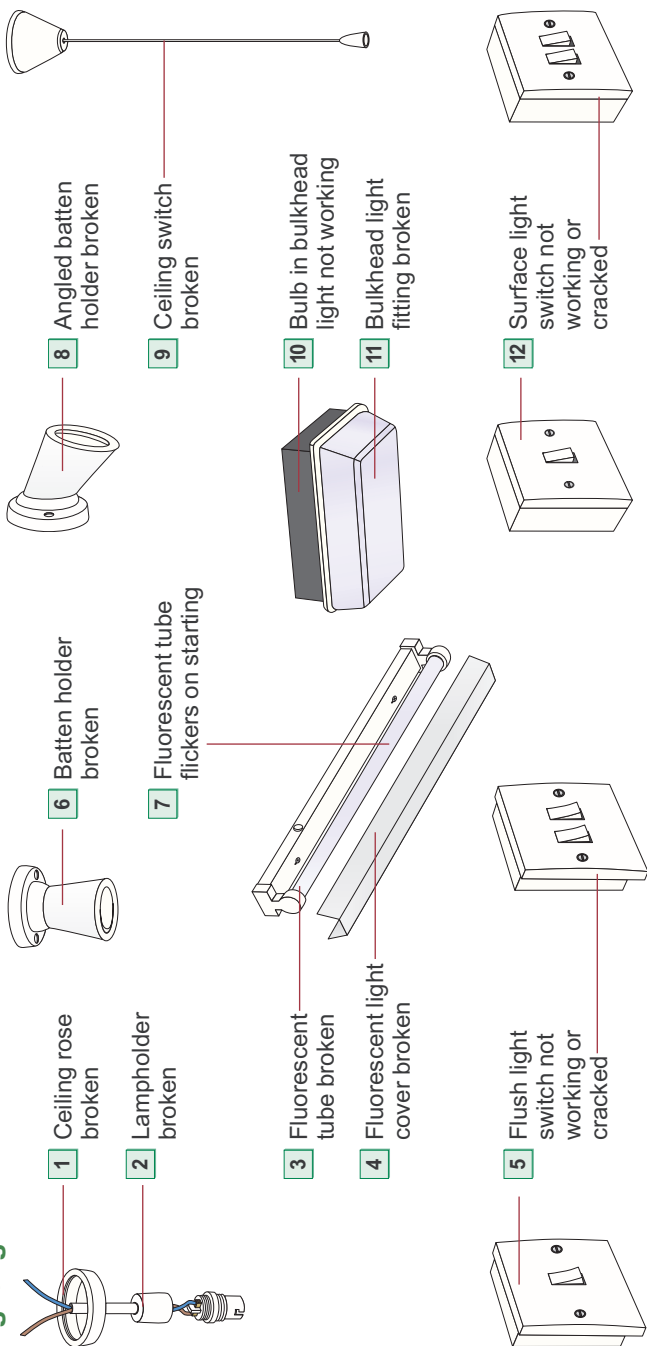
Door will not shut

Sliding door



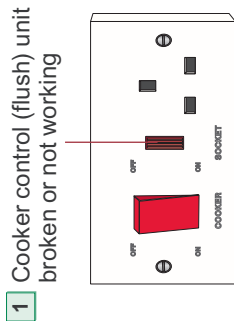


Lighting

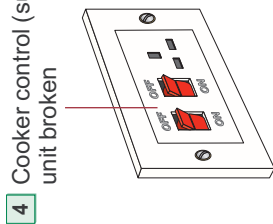


- 13 Security light faulty
- 14 No lights
- 15 Water leaking through electrics
- 16 Single light not coming on
- 17 Electric repairs needed
- 18 Mutual exchange electric check
- 19 Electrics keep tripping

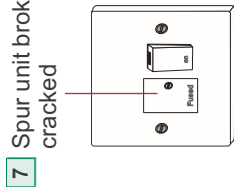
Power



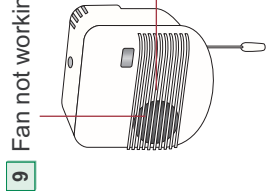
1 Cooker control (flush) unit broken or not working



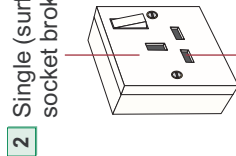
4 Cooker control (surface) unit broken



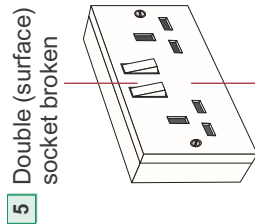
7 Spur unit broken or cracked



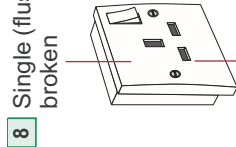
9 Fan not working



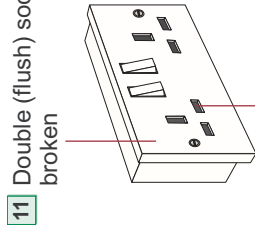
2 Single (surface) socket broken



5 Double (surface) socket broken



8 Single (flush) socket broken



11 Double (flush) socket broken

3 No sockets working

6 Socket (surface or flush) loose

12 No sockets working

13 Shaver unit faulty

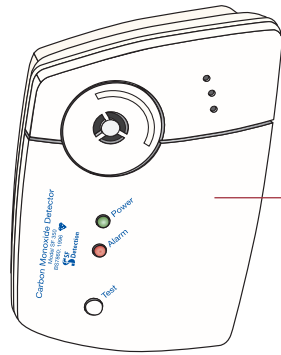
14 No power to sockets

15 Electrical repairs needed

16 Mutual exchange electric check

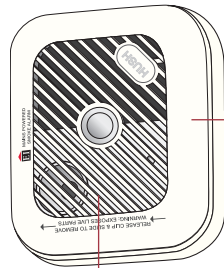
17 Electricians keep tripping

Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors



1 Carbon monoxide detector light flashing or unit beeping

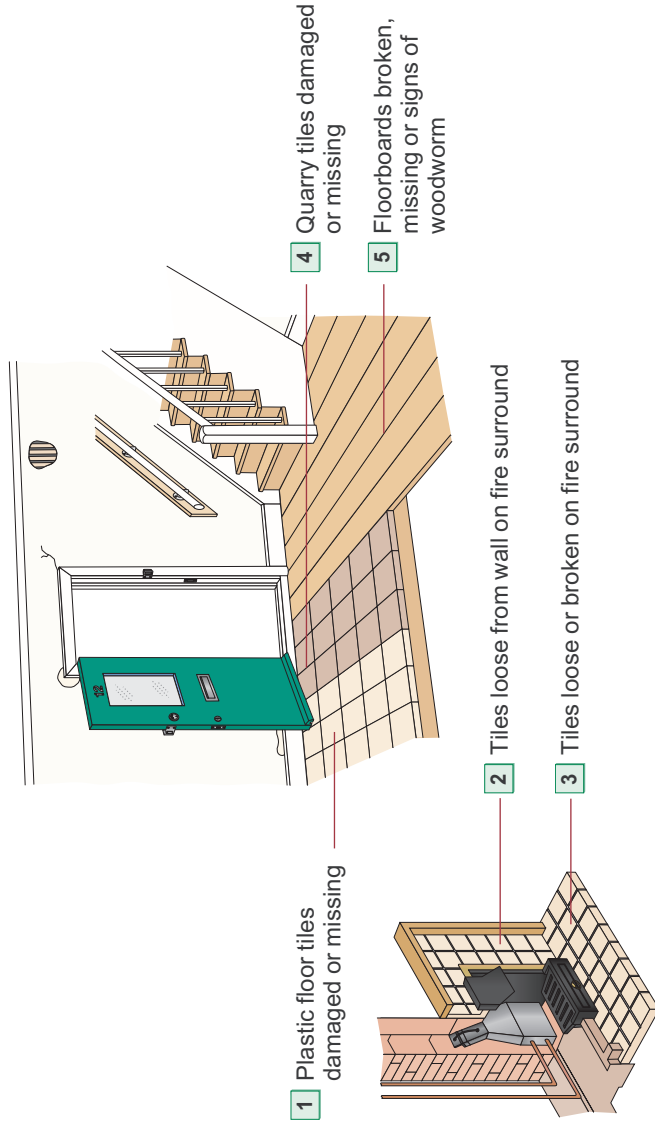
4 Electric repairs needed



2 Mains smoke detector sounding

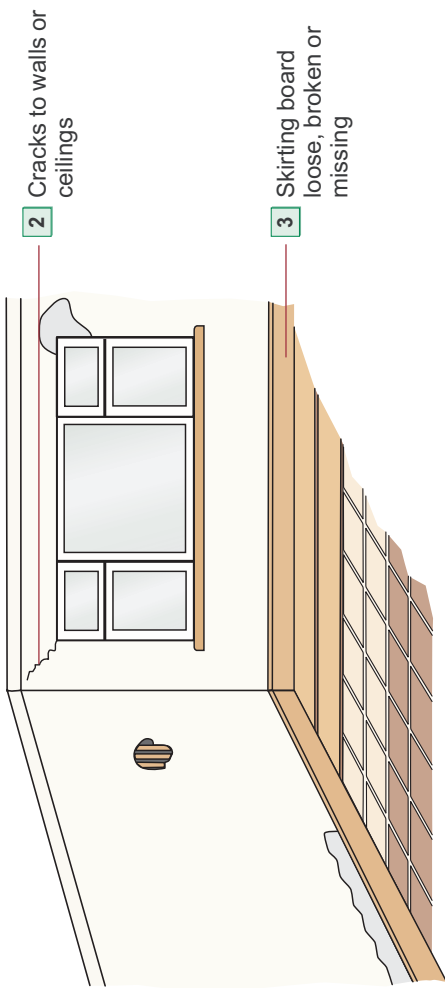
3 Battery smoke alarm not working or beeping

Floors and fire surrounds



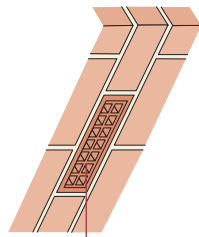
- 6 Leak on pipework
- 7 Bathroom repairs needed
- 8 Carpentry repairs needed
- 9 Plastering repairs needed

Walls and ceilings

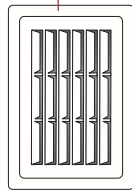


2 Cracks to walls or ceilings

3 Skirting board loose, broken or missing



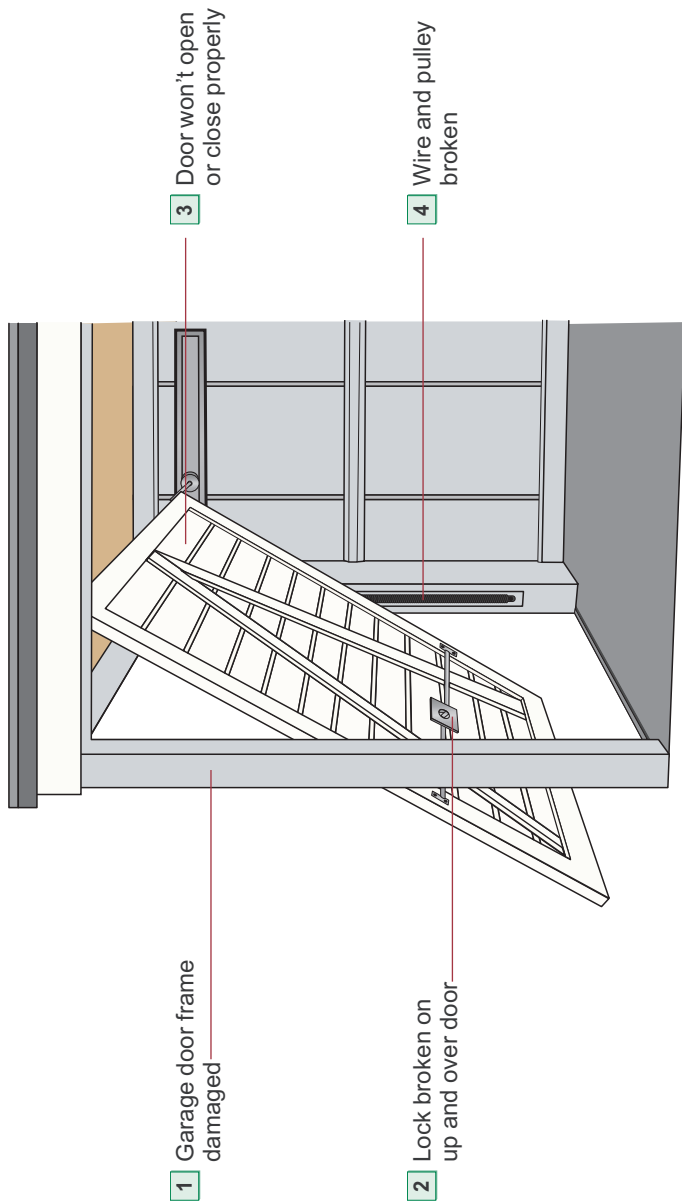
1 Plaster air vent broken or missing



4 Plastic or metal air vent broken or missing

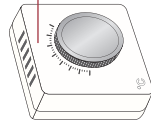
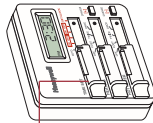
5 Carpentry repairs needed

6 Plastering repairs needed



Electric heating and hot water

1 Electrical heating controls not working



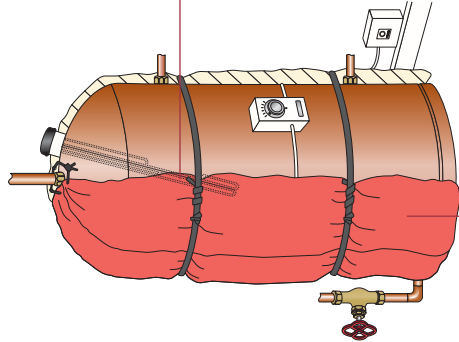
8 Room thermostat not working

4 Immersion heater needs checking

5 Immersion heater switch broken

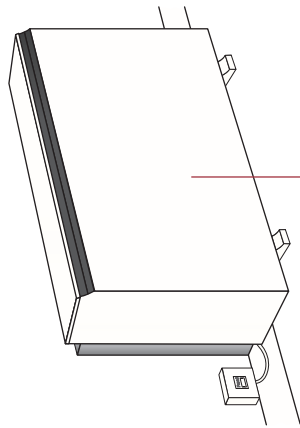
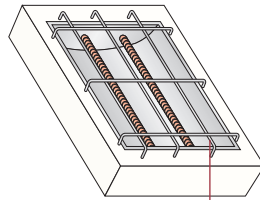
6 Immersion heater not working – too hot or cold

7 Water not getting hot



2 Cylinder jacket needs replacing

3 Electric fire not working



9 Storage heater not working

10 Storage heater loose on wall

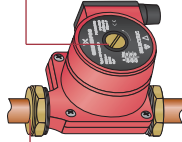
11 Electrical repairs needed

Gas heating

1 Central heating pipework leaking

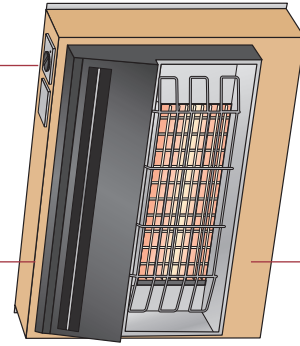
2 Gas fire needs refixing to wall

4 Gas fire or knob faulty/not working



12 Central heating pump needs checking

13 Radiator valve not working



3 Gas fire casing damaged

5 Radiators not heating

6 Radiator not working

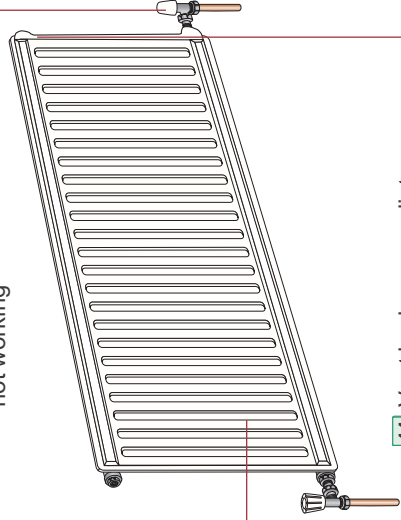
7 Radiator loose

8 Air in radiator

9 Radiator leaking

10 Radiator falling off wall

11 Radiator needs to be removed or refixed for decorating



14 Vent broken on radiator – can't let air out

15 Central heating fan noisy

16 Pipes banging when heating on

17 New tenancy gas test

18 No central heating or hot water

19 Central heating controls faulty

20 Ventilation for gas or solid fuel

21 Room thermostat not working

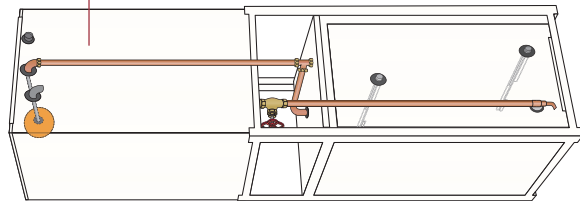
22 GAS LEAK

23 Partial or total loss of gas supply

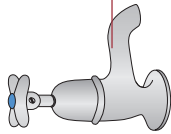
Heating and hot water

What is the fault and its number?

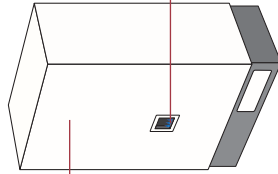
Gas hot water



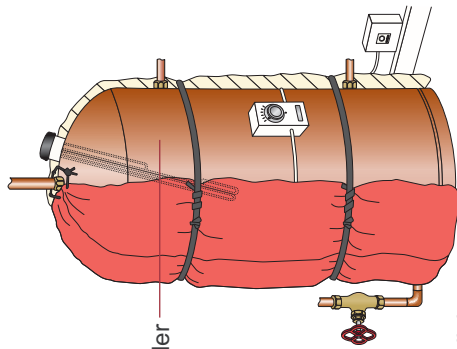
1 Problem with Elson combination tank or tank leaking



3 No hot water – running cold



2 Problem with boiler or boiler leaking



4 Problem with cylinder or cylinder leaking

5 Unable to light pilot light

6 No central heating or hot water

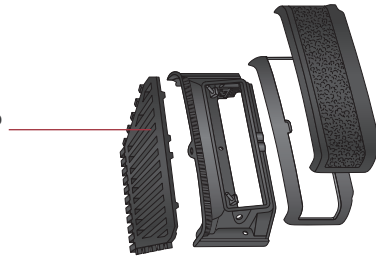
7 New tenancy gas test

8 GAS LEAK

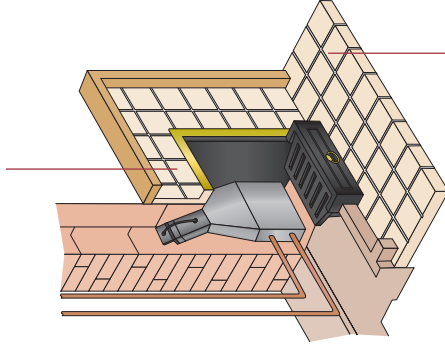
9 Partial or total loss of gas supply

Solid fuels

- 1 Coal fire parts broken or missing

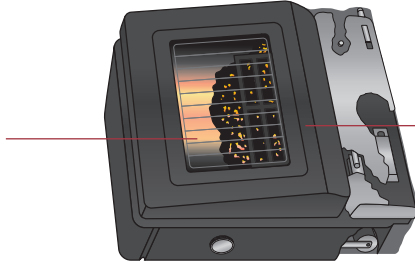


- 2 Tiles on fire surround loose from wall



- 3 Tiles on surround loose or broken

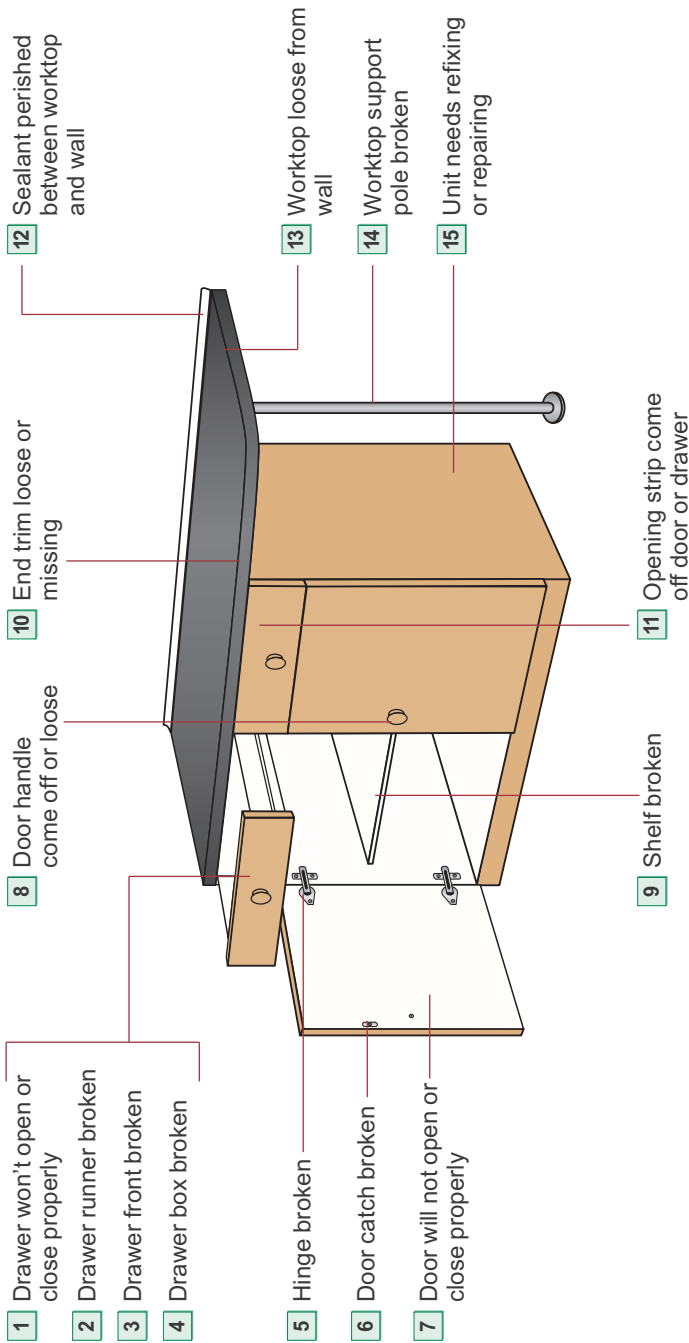
- 4 Glass on Parkray fire broken



- 5 Problem with solid fuel boiler or boiler leaking

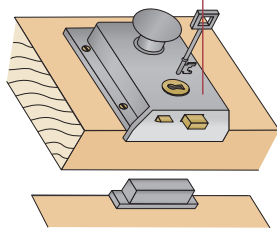
Kitchen units

What is the fault and its number?

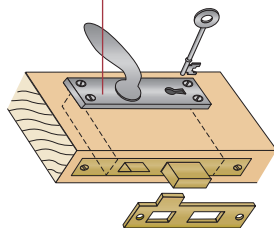
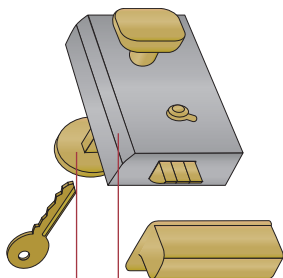


- 16 Leak on pipework
- 17 Plumbing repairs needed
- 18 Kitchen repairs needed
- 19 Carpentry repairs needed
- 20 All units beyond repair – request for new kitchen

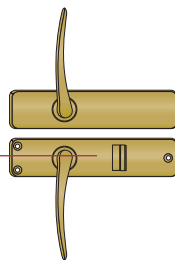
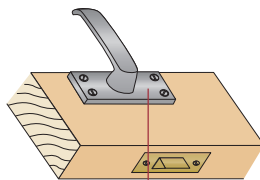
Locks and latches



- 1 New barrel or keys needed for cylinder night latch
- 2 Cylinder night latch lock broken
- 3 Rim lock broken

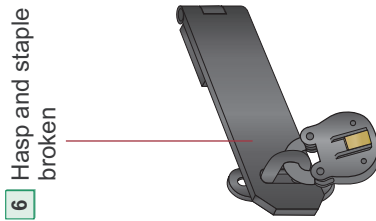
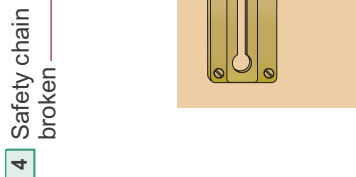
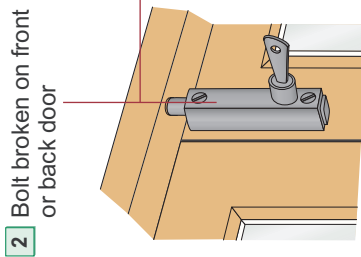
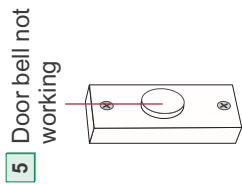
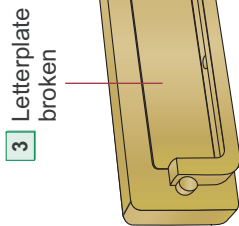
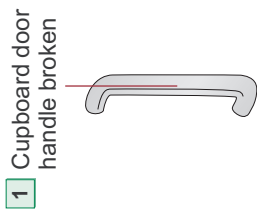


- 4 Mortice lock broken
- 5 Door handle broken
- 6 Bathroom door lock faulty



- 7 Gain access to property
- 8 Medicine cabinet lock faulty

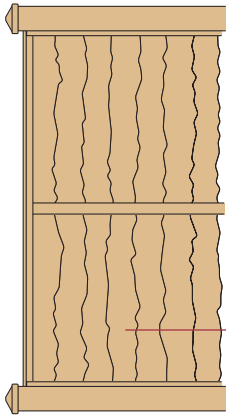
Other fittings



7 Door stop broken or missing

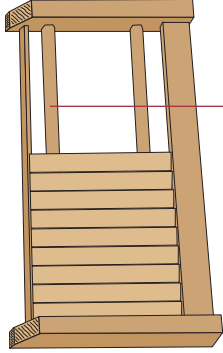
Fences and gates

Larch lap



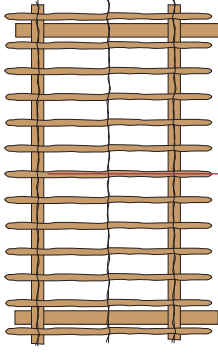
1 Fence panel broken

Close boarded



3 Arris rail broken

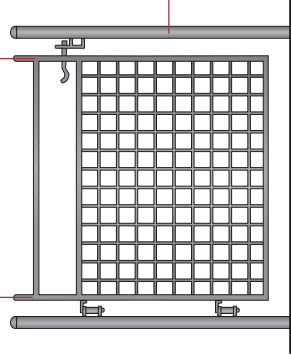
Chestnut paling



8 Fence broken or loose

2 Gate sticking on hinge side

4 Gate sticking on latch side



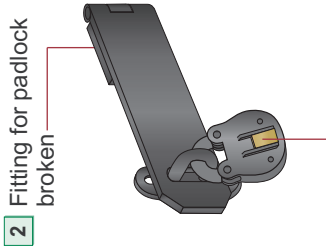
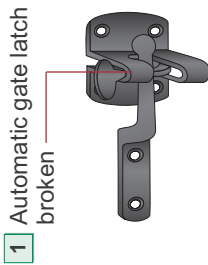
5 Gate stop broken or missing

6 Freestanding gatepost broken

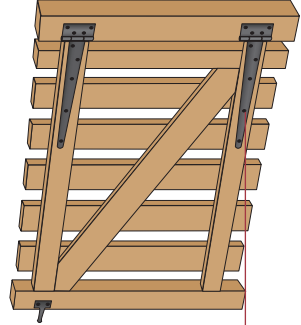
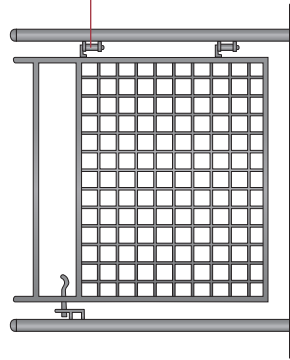
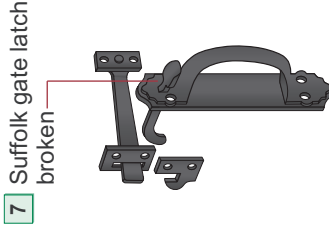
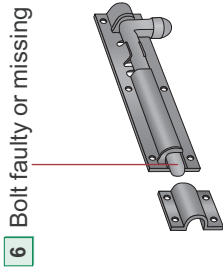
7 Gatepost broken away from wall or loose

9 Carpentry repairs needed

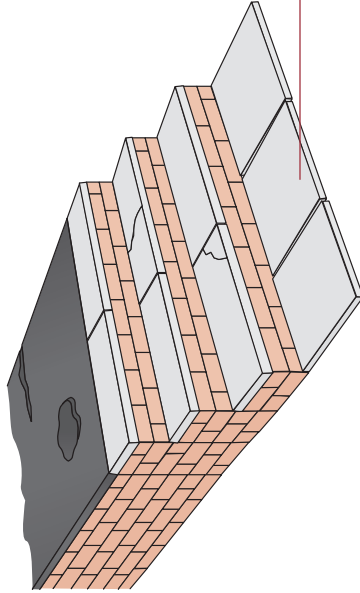
Gate fittings



3 Padlock broken



Walls and paving



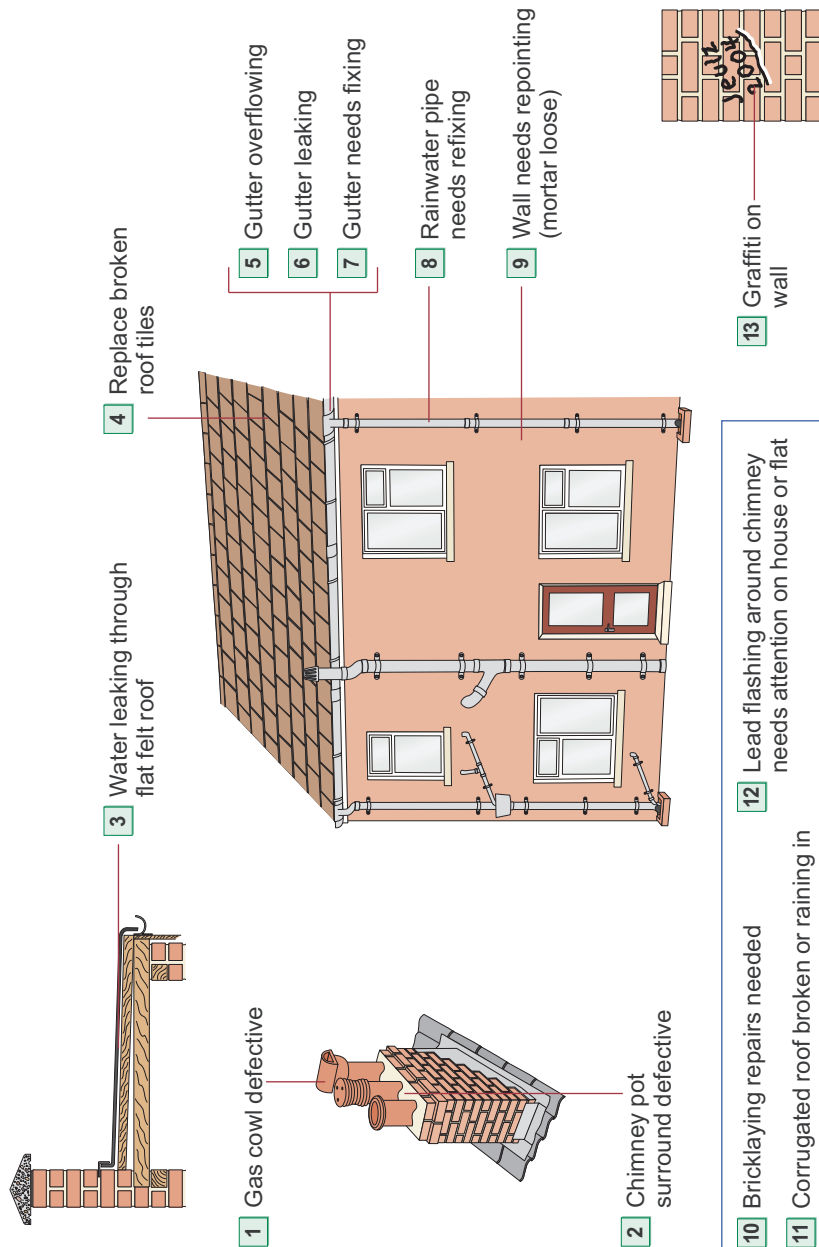
1 Coping stones loose on wall

2 Wall needs repointing (mortar loose)

3 Paving slabs broken or missing

4 Paving slabs broken or uneven

5 Bricklaying repairs needed



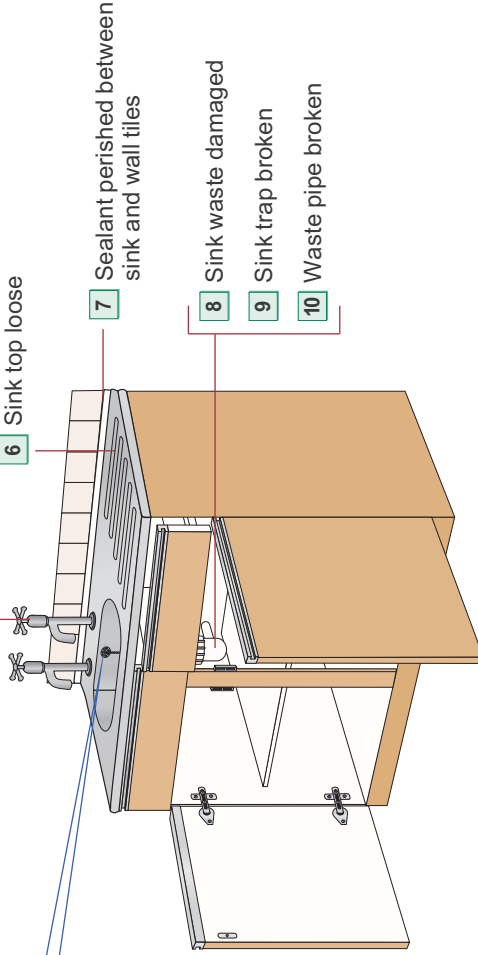
Sinks

- 1 Plug and chain missing or broken



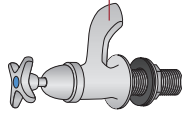
- 2 Tap will not open or close
- 3 Tap dripping
- 4 Tap leaking from top or bottom
- 5 Tap broken

- 6 Sink top loose

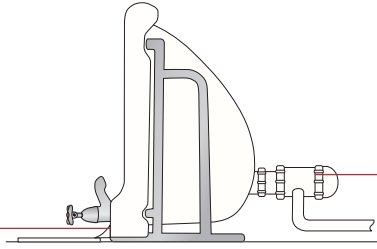


- 11 Leak on pipework
- 12 Plumbing repairs needed
- 13 Kitchen repairs needed
- 14 Carpentry repairs needed

Basins



1 Basin loose from wall



2 Waste pipe leaking

3 Waste pipe broken

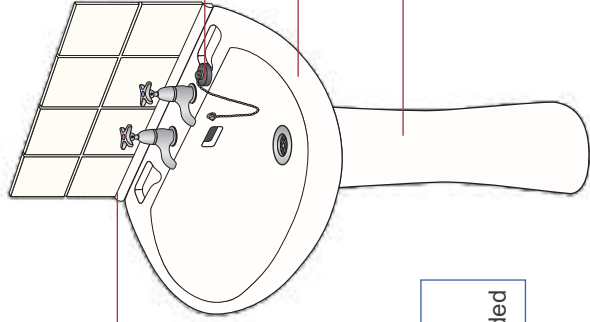
4 Basin waste cracked or broken

6 Tap will not open or close properly

7 Tap dripping

8 Tap dripping from top or bottom

9 Tap broken



5 Sealant perished between basin and wall tiles

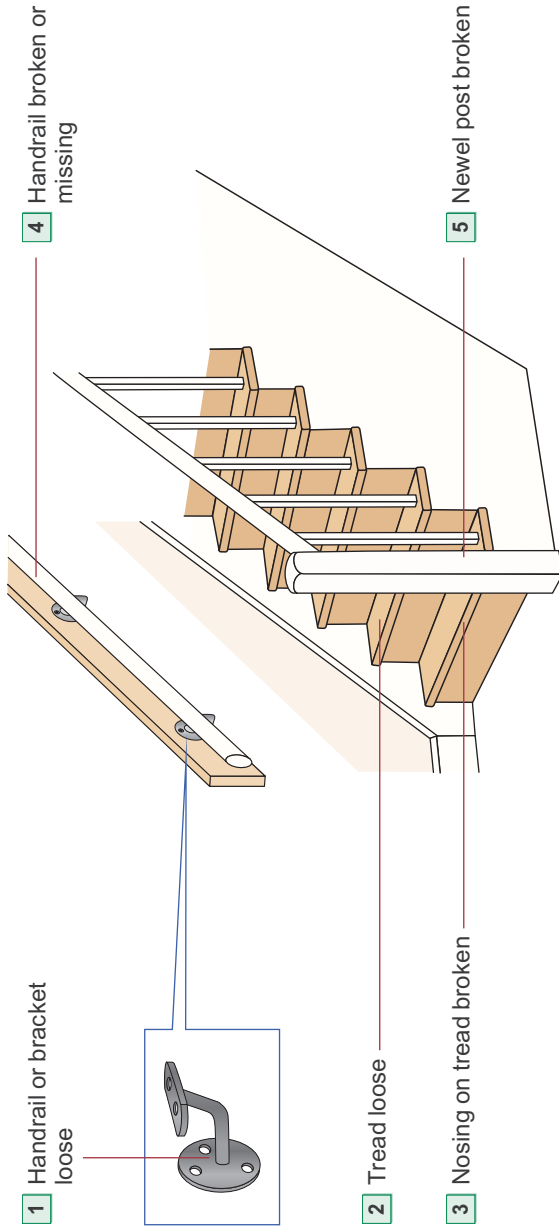
10 Plug and chain broken or missing

11 Basin cracked or broken

12 Pedestal cracked or broken

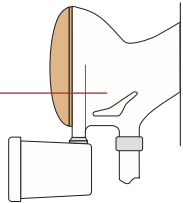
13 Leak on pipework

14 Bathroom repairs needed

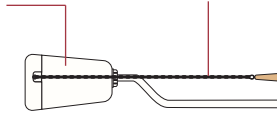


- 6** Loft hatch broken or missing
- 7** Carpentry repairs needed
- 8** Plastering repairs needed

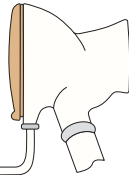
1 Close coupled pan cracked



2 High level cistern cracked

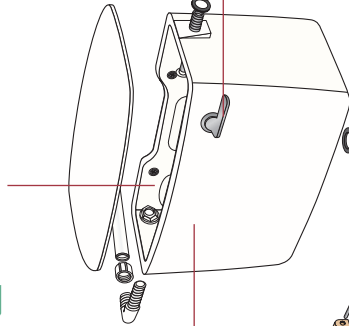


3 Pull chain broken

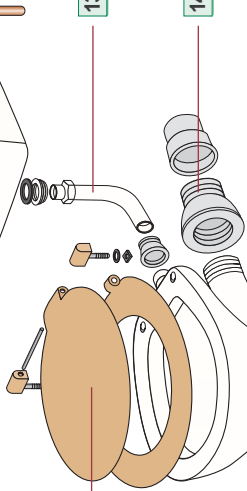


- 4 Low level cistern cracked
- 5 Cistern overflow running
- 6 Cistern does not flush properly
- 7 Water not filling up in cistern

11 Cistern loose from wall



12 Handle broken



13 Flush pipe leaking or broken

14 Joint at back of pan leaking

8 Seat broken or loose

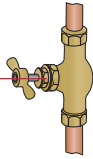
9 Pedestal cracked

10 Toilet pan blocked

15 Pan loose on concrete floor

16 Pan loose on timber floor

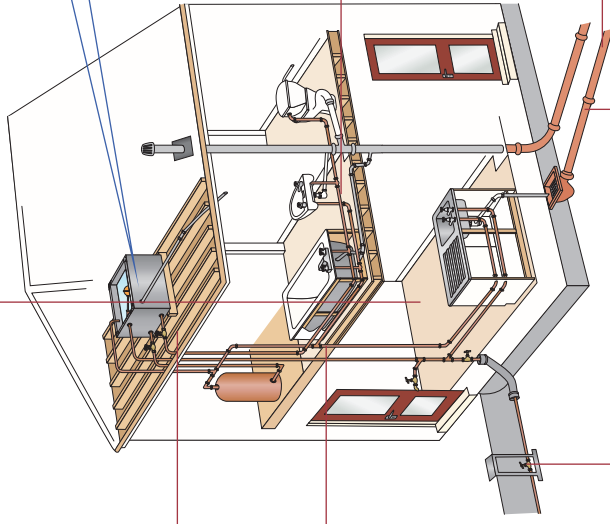
1 Stoptap broken or leaking



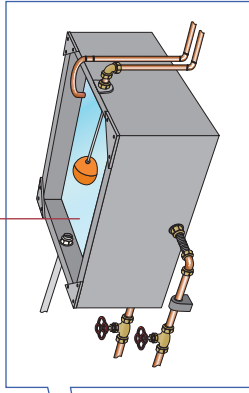
2 Water through upstairs ceiling following rain

3 Water through downstairs ceiling

5 Floors saturated from leak – aqua vac needed



8 Tank overflowing upstairs or in loft



9 Pipes frozen or burst

10 Low water pressure

11 Water hammer when tap not open

12 Leak in pipework

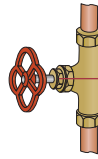
13 Overflow running

14 Water main burst

7 Underground stoptap leaking or broken on path or road

6 Underground stoptap leaking or broken on property

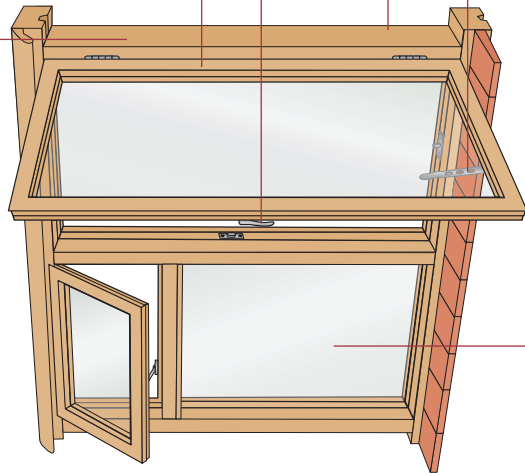
4 Gate valve broken or leaking



15 Plumbing repairs needed **16** Total loss of water supply

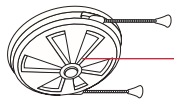
Timber

1 Hinge needs adjusting or oiling



2 Glass broken

3 Faulty window fan



4 Window will not open or close

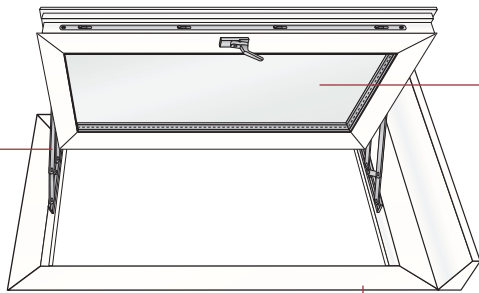
5 Side or bottom handle needs adjusting

6 Sealant perished between window and wall

7 Handle or stay broken

uPVC

8 Hinges broken on opening window



9 Glass broken

10 Draughtstrip around window faulty

11 Rubber seals around window faulty

12 Keys missing for window locks

Introduction

Referring to the advice within this section will help you to identify the things you can do before we attend to a repair. Following this advice will help to prevent damage to your home or your personal possessions and reduce the risk of injury.

The aim of this section is to provide you with:

- important information regarding what is in your home;
- general advice to help you to keep your home safe and secure;
- hints of what to look for before you report a repair;
- information to allow you to identify and prevent possible emergencies; and
- advice which will help you in an emergency.

Contents

Introduction	Page 60
Care of your home	Page 61
Clearing a blocked waste pipe	Page 62–64
Cookers	Page 64
Electrics	Page 65–67
Frozen or burst pipes	Page 68
Heating	Page 69–71
Immersion and showers	Page 72

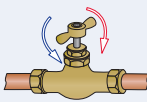
Care of your home

General advice

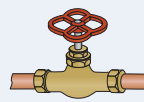
Regular cleaning and checking around your home can help prevent serious problems happening.

- Cleaning windows – wipe down sills to remove condensation puddles.
- Waste pipes – clean through sink, bath and basin wastes with suitable solutions from a DIY or general store.
- Limescale – remove limescale from kettles and taps with descaling solution or vinegar.
- Gullies – clear any leaves or debris from covers.
- Hinges and locks – ease with a little lubricating oil.
- Stoptaps and gate valves – check you can turn them freely. (See diagrams below).
- Gutters and downpipes – are any leaking or blocked?
- Gas appliances – have they been serviced or had a safety check?
- Heating – has the system been serviced?
- Taps – are any dripping or loose?
- Check for other repairs that we should know about.

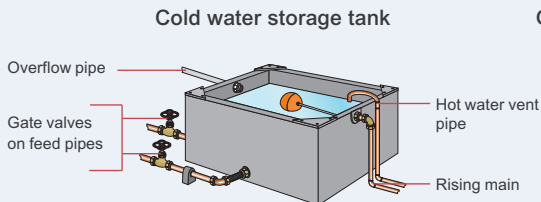
Valves and storage tank



Stoptap



Gate valve



Clearing a blocked waste pipe



Avoiding blockages

Blockages are often caused by people trying to flush objects or substances down toilets or drains that should not be disposed of in that way such as:

- nappies;
- baby wipes;
- cooking fat;
- sanitary towels;
- paper;
- toys; and
- air fresheners.

If we clear a blockage caused by one or several of these objects getting stuck, you may be charged for the work.

General advice

- Blockages to waste pipes are usually caused by a build-up of fat, grease, tea-leaves, or hair in the waste trap.
- The trap is located underneath the basin, sink or bath and always holds some water. This stops air or foul smells coming up the drain, however, waste material can build up and cause a blockage. Traps can easily be unblocked by unscrewing the joint and cleaning them out. **Before you unscrew the trap, place a bucket underneath to catch any water.**

- To keep your wastes flowing freely, regularly pour a kettle of boiling water down them to clear any fat or grease that may have built up. Please do this carefully to avoid injury from the boiling water.
- If the blockage is in the soil stack or main drain, it will need to be cleared by us.

Note

It is advisable to clear waste pipes and traps, preferably with a suitable product available from most DIY stores. **Do not** use caustic soda as it destroys modern plastic fittings.

Unblocking a basin, sink or bath

To unblock a basin, sink or bath waste you will need:

- a bowl;
- a jug or cup;
- a rag or dishcloth;
- a plunger; and
- rubber gloves.

You will then need to:

- bale out most of the water, so it is half full;
- wet the rag and hold it tightly over the overflow opening;
- place the plunger over the plug-hole; and
- pump up and down rapidly until the blockage clears.

Unblocking a toilet

To unblock a toilet you will need:

- a bucket;
- a bowl or jug;
- a plunger; and
- rubber gloves.

You will then need to:

- always wear rubber gloves;
- if the pan is full, remove some of the water into a bucket using a bowl or jug and pour it away in the outside drain;
- push the plunger to the bottom of the pan.
- pump up and down rapidly about 10 times. This creates a pressure vacuum, which may shift the blockage;

- pour water from a bucket into the pan and see if it clears;
- if necessary, repeat this process several times until the toilet flushes normally; and
- thoroughly wash your hands and all equipment after you have finished.

If the fault cannot be rectified, call us on **01543 456816** to report the fault.

Cookers

Unless owned by the Council, it is your responsibility to maintain and repair your cooker.

If you are disposing of, or renewing your cooker it is your responsibility to disconnect your old cooker and have the new one safely connected. This work must be carried out safely by a qualified electrician. If a cooker outlet (or terminal box) is fitted, the connections must be made at that point.

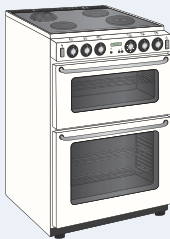
If your electric cooker stops working make sure:

- the cooker switch is in the 'on' position;
- the cooker trip switch is on in your fuse box; and
- there is power or credit on your meter.

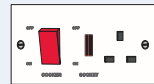
If part of your cooker is still working, for example cooker rings, the problem is with the oven, so you will need to have it tested.

Do not use the oven if there is a fault.

Cooker fittings



Electric cooker



Cooker power point



Cooker connector

Electrics – advice and general information

- Keep a torch handy in case you have a power cut.

Before you report a repair

If all of your electricity goes off:

- check you have credit on your meter or that your bill has been paid; and
- see if there has been a power cut, by checking if the street lights are on.

If there has been a power cut, you will need to contact your electricity supplier for assistance.

If the electricity meter is faulty, vandalised or damaged you will need to contact your supplier and not Cannock Chase Council.

Warning – never tamper with the electricity company’s fuse, meter or seals.

Water leaks

- If there is a water leak or spillage in your home and it affects the electrics, for example the bath overflows and water comes through a light fitting, **do not use the affected points**. If possible, switch off the circuit at the fuse box.

Do not touch electrical points if you have wet hands.

Damaged or dangerous electrical points

- If you smell burning or if a fitting is damaged and showing exposed cables or connections, do not use it. If safe to do so, switch it off.
- If you are not sure which circuit it is, switch everything off at the fuse box.
- Call us on **01543 456816** to report the fault.

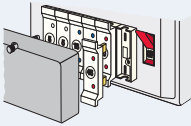
Electrics – fuse box

Many homes are now installed with modern fuse boxes called ‘consumer units’ which contain circuit breakers or trip switches. If a fault occurs these circuit breakers switch off to prevent injury and damage. If you do not have trip switches in your home and have rewirable fuses, we recommend that you do not attempt to repair or replace them.

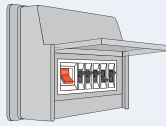
Trip switches can operate for various reasons, some of these are:

- an overloaded circuit, for instance too many appliances being used at once;
- faulty or misused appliances, for example cookers and extension leads;
- unclean cookers or toasters;
- overfilled kettles;

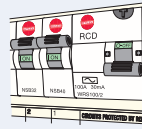
Electrical fuses



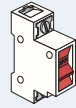
Fuse board



Consumer unit



Trip switches



Circuit breaker

- faulty immersion heaters; and
- light bulbs blowing.

If your lighting circuit goes off, check that the trip switches marked 'lights' are switched on. If any are off, switch off the main switch (usually the red one at the end), reset the circuit breaker and switch the main switch back on. Check to see which light has 'blown'.

If your sockets stop working, unplug all electrical appliances, switch off the main switch (this is usually the red one at the end), reset the circuit breaker and switch the main switch back on. Go around the house plugging appliances back in until you find the one with the fault.

If any appliance is faulty, do not use it. You may need to have it replaced or repaired by a qualified electrician.

Warning – never tamper with the electricity company's fuse, meter or seals.

Electrics – lighting

It is your responsibility to change pull cords, light bulbs, fluorescent starters and tubes.

If possible, do this during daylight and make sure the light switch is turned off before you start. If you are not sure, turn off the circuit at the fuse box. (See page 65 for more information).

Light bulbs and fluorescent tubes can get hot while they are switched on, so be careful and let them cool down before you touch them. Make sure you use a suitable pair of steps to climb up to light fittings.

If a lighting point is not working or a light is flickering, switch it off and do not use it. You may need to have it replaced or repaired by a qualified electrician.

If you have any table or upright lamps, use them to light up a passageway or corridor.

Common light fittings



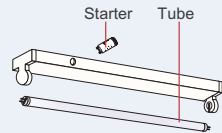
Batten holder



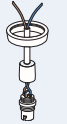
Single switch



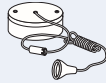
Double switch



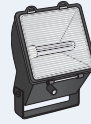
Fluorescent



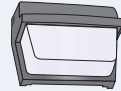
Pendant



Pull cord



Security light



Bulkhead light

Electrics – sockets and power

Check the cartridge fuse in the plug to make sure it doesn't overheat. Is it the correct rating for the appliance? Check the manual or look for a sticker on the appliance to find out its wattage and then use the correct fuse.

Do not overload sockets. Overloading sockets is dangerous.

Extensions leads and adaptors have a limit on how many amps they can take, therefore be careful not to overload them. Never plug an adaptor into an adaptor.

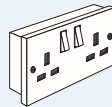
If electrical appliances are not in regular use, switch them off at the plug. When you are away from your home for any length of time, switch off and unplug appliances to prevent a fire risk. It also wastes energy if they are left on standby.

We do not supply plug tops. If a plug top is missing or damaged it is your responsibility to replace it.

Common electrical fittings



Single socket



Double socket



Fused spur



Switched fused spur



Plug top



Cartridge fuse

Frozen or burst pipes

General advice

- Know where your stoptap is located. It can be found where the water pipe enters the house. This would be under the kitchen sink, a downstairs toilet or at the side of the chimney breast.
- Know where the gate valves for the hot and cold water tanks are located. They are usually by the hot-water cylinder and cold-water tanks.
- Make sure that you can easily turn all taps and valves.
- Make sure pipes and tanks in your roof space are lagged. Never insulate underneath the water tank in the loft, as it needs some heat to penetrate from below.

What to do

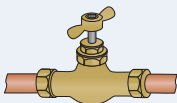
Frozen pipes

- Turn off the water at the main stoptap.
- Gently thaw the pipes with a hair dryer or hot-water bottles.
- If the hot-water system is frozen, turn off the water heater.

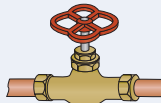
Burst pipes

- Turn off the water at the main stoptap and any water heaters.
- Turn on all your taps to drain water from the system. This may take about 15 minutes.
- When the water stops running, turn all your taps off.
- If electrical fittings are getting wet, do not touch them. Turn off the electricity at the consumer unit or fuse box. (See page 66 for more information).

Pipework and valves



Stoptap



Gate valve



Pipe lagging

Heating – advice and general information

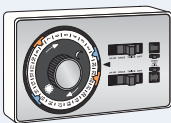
If you have problems with your central heating or boiler, please read the following checklist before requesting a repair visit to your home:

Central heating checklist

- Is the gas supply connected?
 - Is the meter isolation valve turned to **ON**? (See diagram on page 16). The handle should be in line with the gas pipe.
 - If you have a prepayment meter, is there credit on the meter and does the meter state it is **ON**?
 - If you have a gas cooker, is it working?
- Is the electric supply in the property working? Do the sockets and lights work?
 - Is the main wall switch for the boiler **ON** and has the fuse blown? (If necessary, remove the fuse and replace with a 3 amp fuse).
 - Is the power switch on the boiler switched **ON**?
- If the boiler has a pressure gauge, does it show a **minimum** of 1 bar? (See diagram on page 71).
- Are the central heating controls set correctly? (See diagrams below).
 - Is the timer set to “constant or run”?
 - Is the room thermostat turned up?

If you have tried all the suggestions above and the system still does not operate, please call us on **01543 456816**.

Heating controls



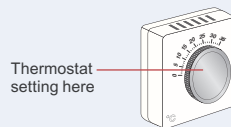
Timer or programmer



Timer, clock or programmer



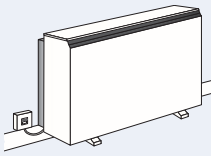
Immersion switch



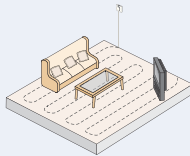
Thermostat setting here

Room thermostat

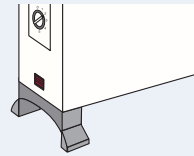
Heating – electrical



Storage heater



Underfloor heating



Electric warm-air heater

A majority of electrical heating systems operate on some type of ‘off-peak’ tariff, which is generally available throughout the night.

The heaters are usually ‘charged’ up overnight and store the heat ready to be released at other times, depending on how the controls are set. Once the stored heat is fully released, the heater will again ‘charge’ up the following night. You must make sure that the controls are set according to your needs.

Before you report a repair – check that the controls are switched on and set to what you need.

If you find that the controls are incorrectly set or switched off, reset them.

Remember

The heaters will only charge overnight, so it is important that you wait until the next day before you report the repair.

If after waiting there is still a fault, call us on **01543 456816** to report the fault.

Heating – radiators

Air in radiators can be a common fault but it can be easily put right. If the radiator is cold at the top and hot at the bottom you will need to bleed it.

How to bleed your radiators

- Turn off the central heating.
- Insert a radiator bleed key into the radiator bleed vent. (See diagram on next page).
- Hold a cloth underneath the radiator bleed vent to catch any excess water.
- Undo the bleed vent in an anti-clockwise direction and to a maximum of one turn. You should hear a hissing noise which is the air escaping.

- As soon as water starts to appear, turn off the bleed vent by turning it in a clockwise direction – **do not over-tighten**.
- Turn on central heating and recheck the radiator.

Note

Some central heating systems are sealed, therefore after removing the air from your radiators the system will require re-pressurising. (See below for more information).

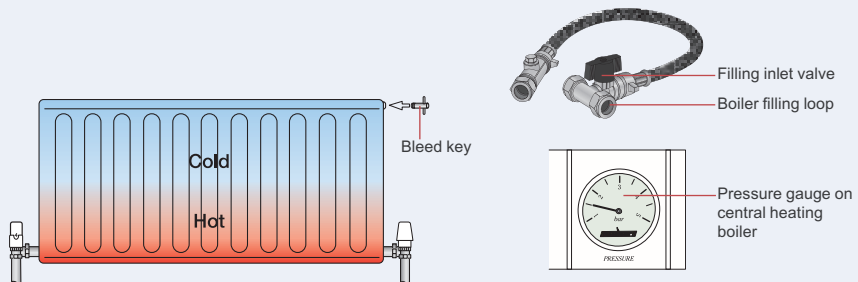
How to re-pressurise your sealed system

Sealed central heating systems can be identified by a pressure gauge on the central-heating boiler or on the system.

Full instructions on re-pressurising your system can be found in the user's manual provided with your boiler.

- Turn off the boiler.
- Find your filling loop (see diagram below), usually on the pipework underneath the boiler.
- Connect the filling loop (if not already connected).
- To fill, slowly turn the handle of the filling inlet valve to the 'on' position.
- Mains water may be heard entering the system or boiler.
- As the water enters the system or boiler the pressure gauge starts to rise.
- Continue to fill the system or boiler until the gauge is showing between 1 bar and 1.5 bar. (See diagram below).
- Turn handle of the filling inlet valve to the 'off' position.

Radiator, boiler filling loop and pressure gauge



Immersion heaters and showers

Immersion heaters

If your immersion heater does not work, check that all controls are switched on. If you use 'off-peak' electricity to heat your water, check to see if there is a booster switch that can be used temporarily.

Showers

We will only maintain showers where there is no other form of bathing.

Before you report a repair

Please check which type of shower you have before you report a problem. Electric showers usually have a pull switch nearby and there are lights or indicators which show that there is power. If none of these are present, it is not an electric shower.

Unless installed by the Council, it is your responsibility to maintain and repair your shower and to change the shower pull cord (but not the switch).

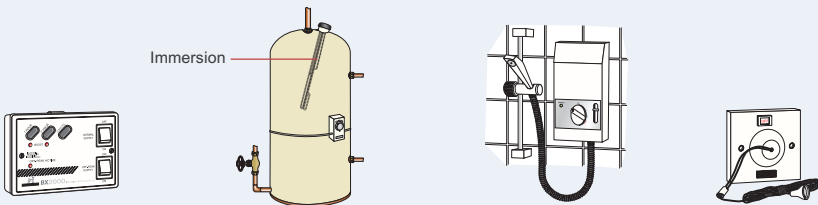
Please also check:

- the shower pull switch to see if it has been switched off accidentally; and
- the shower head to see if it is blocked. This can cause problems with the water flow, if not kept clean and clear.

If your fuse box is fitted with circuit breakers or trip switches, check that the one marked 'shower' is switched on. If it is not on, switch off the main switch (usually the red one at the end), reset the circuit breaker and switch the main switch back on (see pages 65 and 66 for more information).

If you report a problem with an electric shower, please tell us if there is a water leak.

Immersion heaters and showers



Booster switch

Hot-water cylinder

Electric shower

Pull cord

Useful contact numbers

Housing office

Bungalow Annex
Civic Centre
PO Box 28
Beecroft Road
Cannock
Staffordshire
WS11 1BG

Phone: 01543 462621 or 01543 456816
(General enquiries and repair reporting)

Repairs hotline: 01543 456816

Office hours

Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm

Emergencies (out of hours)

Emergency telephone number for all areas is
Phone: 01543 462621 (General enquiries) or
01543 456816 (Repairs)

Repairs reporting

E-mail: housingrepairs@cannockchasedc.gov.uk
or report it online using InterFinder

Cannock Chase Council

Phone: 01543 462621 (General enquiries)

Staffordshire County Council – Highways

CLARENCE (Customer Lighting and Road Enquiry Centre)
Phone: 0800 232323

Staffordshire Police

Phone: 999 (Emergencies)
Phone: 0300 123 4455 (General enquiries) or
0800 555 111 (Crimestoppers)

Receive this information in other languages or formats.

This Repairs handbook can be provided in Braille, on audio cassette tape or disk, **large print** and in the following languages on request to Cannock Chase Council on 01543 462621.

Bengali, Gujarati, Chinese, Urdu, Punjabi and Polish.

আপনি অনুরোধ জানালে এই কাগজপত্রগুলোর বাংলা অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা করা যেতে পারে।


如有要求的話我們可將此文件翻譯成中文

बिनंती उरवाथी तमने आ दस्तावेज तमारी मातृभाषामां भणी शके छे.

আপনি অনুরোধ জানালে এই কাগজপত্রগুলোর বাংলা অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা করা যেতে পারে।

یہ دستاویز آپ کی زبان میں، گزارش پر دستیاب کی جاسکتی ہے۔

Ten dokument jest dostępny na żądanie w twoim języku

? =  01543 462621

Published in September 2011 for Cannock Chase Council by:

Northgate Information Solutions Limited, People Building, Maylands Avenue,
Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 4NW.

Phone: 01442 204816

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written consent of Northgate Information Solutions Limited.