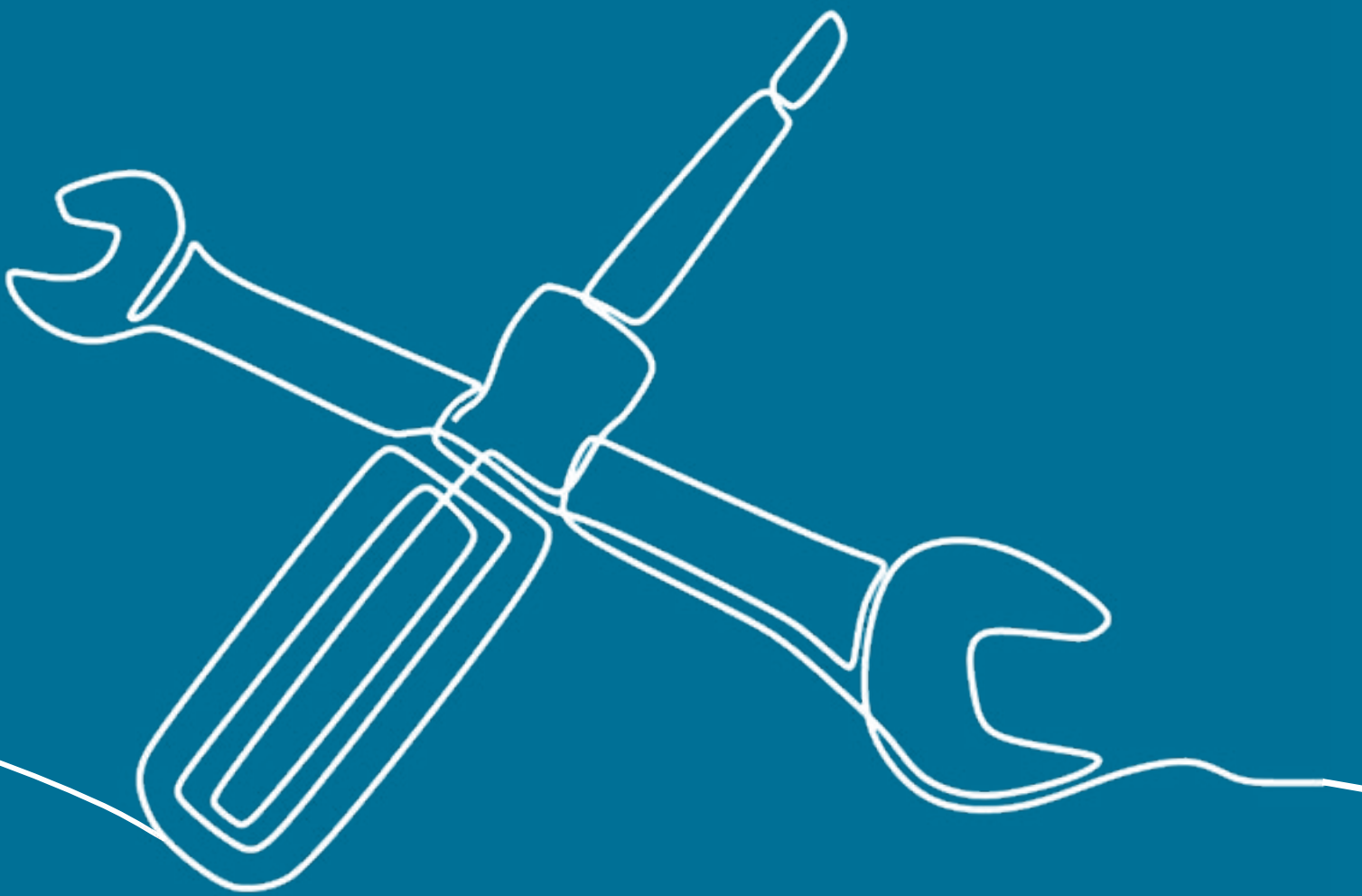


Repairs Handbook



Welcome

Please find a copy of your Repairs Handbook.

Your Repairs Handbook outlines your rights to repairs as a tenant and the responsibilities of Darlington Borough Council as a landlord.

The Handbook will enable you to see what repairs Darlington Borough Council will attend to and what repairs as a tenant you will need to maintain.

This booklet identifies emergency, urgent and routine repairs, and details response times dependant on the urgency.

Important information is provided in relation to all repairs, improvement works and advice concerning common repair issues.



Contents

- Which repairs are your responsibility
- Timescales and reporting of repairs
- Emergency, urgent and routine repairs
- Repairs before letting
- Gas and Electric checks
- Recharges
- Home Improvements
- Home Gas Safety
- Gas Servicing
- Electrical Periodic Testing
- Loss of Power
- Damp and Condensation
- Right to Buy
- General Advice
- Improvement works

Via email -
housing@darlington.gov.uk

Online at
<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/your-home/your-property/repairs/>

Ways to report your Repair

Telephone -
01325 405333

Via your Darlington Home Online

Please provide all the relevant information when reporting a repair including name, address, contact information and detailed issues of the repair required.

Our phone lines can experience busy periods so if you repair is not an emergency then where possible report via our online methods.



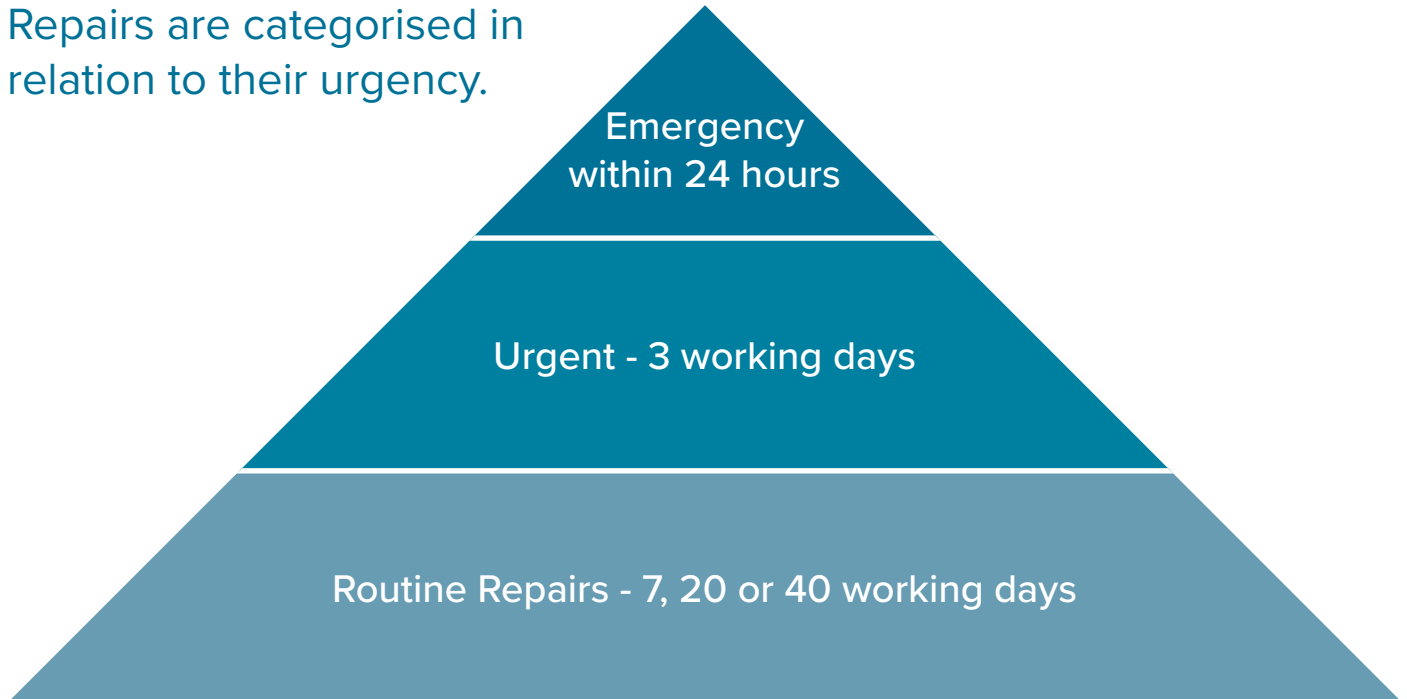
Who is responsible for what repairs?

Trade	Description	Us	You
Adaptations	Adaptations that are recommendations from Social Services	✓	
Drains and Guttering	Blocked drains, downpipes, drains and gulley surrounds and gulley trades	✓	
Roofing	Broken or dislodged roof tiles Roofing structure or coverings TV aerials only when part of a communal area	✓	
External	Damage to external brickwork, rendering, foundations, and door canopies Rotary Driers installed by the council Garden walls Chimney stacks Council owned garages	✓	
Electrical			
	Plugs Sockets and light fittings installed by the council Communal emergency lighting Extractor fans Cooker connection point Pumps Immersion heaters Door entry systems Electric fires and showers installed by the council Storage heaters/air source heating	✓	
	Faulty appliances causing switches to trip House alarms Cooker disconnection and reconnection Battery smoke alarms Electricity meters Electric supply		✓

Gas			
	Damage to gas meter doors Damage to gas pipes Boiler not working or displaying fault codes. Radiators not working Radiator valves Thermostats Cooker bayonet	✓	
	Cooker disconnection and reconnection Gas supply and meter		✓
Plumbing			
	Internal water supply Taps Shower pumps Leaking toilet Issues with the toilet not flushing due to fair wear and tear	✓	
	Blocked sinks, basins or baths caused by negligence Broken plug chains Toilet seat and fittings		✓
Joinery			
	Faulty door locks Broken floorboards due to wear and tear Kitchen units due to wear and tear Door handles, catches and hinges supplied by the council Windows Stairs, tread, banisters, and handrails	✓	
	Locks being changed due to stolen keys (rechargeable) Boarding up broken windows (rechargeable if no crime reference number provided) Lifting of laminate flooring Door adjustments following carpets being fitted		✓
Plastering			
	Large area of plastering which is due to wear and tear	✓	
	Minor cracks that can be filled with decorating filler Damage caused by a wallpaper stripper		✓
General			
	Garden maintenance Doorbells unless installed by social services		✓

Timescales and reporting of repairs

Repairs are categorised in relation to their urgency.



Emergency repairs

These are repairs that pose a risk to health and safety.

Urgent repairs

These repairs do not pose a danger but are an inconvenience.

Routine repairs

These are routine repairs that can be completed within the three timescales dependant on the nature of the repair. These repairs can be left without causing serious damage to a property or pose a risk to health and safety.

You can report repairs during the below hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 8.30am to 4.45pm

Thursday 09.30am to 4.45pm

Friday 8.30am to 4.15pm

If you are reporting a repair via an online method, then you can report this at any time. You will receive a response during our normal office hours as above within 3 working days of your repair request.

When you report your repair, you will be given a date and time slot for us to attend. If the date needs to be changed then please contact us.

Emergency repairs

These are repairs that can affect your health and safety. We will carry out these repairs or make safe within 24 hours depending on the nature of the repair.

If we attend for an emergency repair but are unable to fix it at the time, then you will receive a call the next working day to rebook the follow on works to complete it. We will always leave the property in a safe condition if we do need to return at a later date.

You can report an emergency repair 24 hours a day, including bank holidays. Our repairs telephone number **01325 405333** operates during our normal opening hours. The phonenumber will divert to our out of hours emergency line outside of these hours.

We will not be able to give an exact time for attending emergency appointments, so we advise where possible to remain in the property until an engineer can attend. Attendance times can run into the evening if we are unable to attend during normal working hours.

You will be advised that you may be recharged for a missed emergency appointment or for attendance of a repair that is not deemed an emergency when we arrive.

Examples of Emergency Repairs

- Burst Pipes
- Boilers - no heating or hot water between November and April and no other form of heating.
- Cylinders, tanks, or WC cistern leaking badly
- Frozen pipes
- No cold water
- No power
- Smoke alarms not working
- Cooker control out of order or dangerous wiring. Please check the fuse first.
- Make safe dangerous structures
- Loose tiles on roof



Urgent repairs

We will carry out or make safe urgent repairs within 3 working days. You will be given an appointment date and time for these repairs.

Examples of urgent repairs are:

- No heating or hot water (May-October)
- Flat floor shower drain blocked
- Blocked toilet - where this is the only facility within the property

Routine repairs

Our routine repairs are attended to within 7, 20 or 40 working days depending on the nature of the repair. For all routine repairs please provide as much information in relation to the repair required. You will be given a date and time for the appointment.

Examples of routine repairs

- Gate latch insecure
- Toilet cistern constantly running/overflowing
- Light switch not working
- Kitchen unit door loose
- Dripping tap
- Loose skirting board
- Bath panel loose
- Leaking shower head

Repairs before Letting

When a property becomes vacant, we carry out an inspection to identify any repairs required before a new tenant moves in. We will carry out all repairs once a property is empty ready for the new tenancy to start. This ensures no works will be required when you move into the property.

Gas and electric checks

When a property becomes empty, we cap the gas and lock the electrics to ensure the upmost safety when the property is void.

When the sign up for a property takes place, we will arrange for the gas to be uncapped and tested on the same day. These are called our repairs on letting checks.

You will be asked to ensure the gas meter is changed into your name before the checks and that there is money on the meter.

The electric check will be carried out prior to you moving in.

Recharges

Recharges can occur in some instances with repairs. Darlington Borough Council have a repairs recharge policy to ensure consistency and fairness.

Any potential recharge will be discussed with you before a repair has been arranged.

We will always advise of a rough estimate of the cost of the works beforehand and ask for you to sign a recharge form before works commence.

We will send an invoice to you for the cost of the works which details payment methods and plans.

Recharges may occur for:

- Repairs that are your responsibility.
- Repairs to be carried out caused by damage or negligence.
- No access for pre-planned repairs.
- Changes to a property that have not been approved by the Management Officer.

User guides

User guides for appliances fitted into your home can be found at www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/
<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/your-home/your-property/repairs/>



Home improvements

Home improvements are subject to approval from your Housing Management Officer.

Any requests for improvements should be put in writing to your Management Officer, either by email or letter.

Permission must be granted before any improvement works are started.

If you carry out improvements without permission, then you may be asked to restore the property to its original state.

Some improvements require planning and building control approval. Any associated costs will be your responsibility.

You must get approval for the following:

- carrying out alterations to the property
- putting a greenhouse or shed in the garden
- putting a garage on the property
- fitting a satellite dish
- constructing a parking space or drive
- Erecting a pigeon creche or aviary
- decorating the outside of your house

Home gas safety

If you smell gas, then you need to ring Northern Gas Network on 0800 111 999 to report this. They will attend free of charge to investigate a potential leak.

Contact our repair team after they have attended on **01325 405333**, and we will attend within 24 hours to investigate further once Northern Gas have made the leak safe. We may need to complete a survey and then carry out further works.

If possible, turn the gas off whilst awaiting attendance.

Open all windows and doors to ventilate the property.

Do not use any appliances or switches.

Do not smoke in the property.



Gas servicing

As a landlord we are legally responsible for carrying out your gas service each year. You must allow us access to do the service. All appliances are checked by a Gas Safe Engineer.

By Law we must repair and maintain gas pipework, flues and ensure appliances are in a safe condition. We do not maintain your own appliances such as cookers or gas fires, but we do make sure they are safe to use. If not, we will disconnect them and ask you to get a certified engineer to check them.

Once the service is completed, we will Issue you with a copy of the gas certificate.

We will write to you when your service is due and ask you to call to make an appointment. If you do not respond, then we will contact you via telephone calls, visits to your property or send further letters to attempt to contact to arrange the service.

As a last resort we will apply to court to obtain a warrant to enter the property to complete the service if we are unable to get in contact before the compliance date.

This may result in the locks to the property being changed to enable access if you are not present at the time of the execution of the warrant.

If we do get to this stage, then you will be recharged any costs that occur.

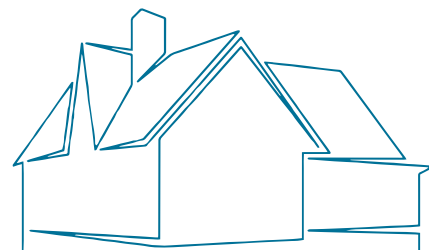
Electrical periodic testing

Every 5 years we will carry out the periodic electrical tests. This test checks all electrics within the property.

The test takes around 2 hours and you will be issued with a certificate on completion.

We will write to you when the test is due asking you to call and make an appointment.

If we don't receive any contact then we will try and contact you via telephone, home visits and further letters.



Loss of power

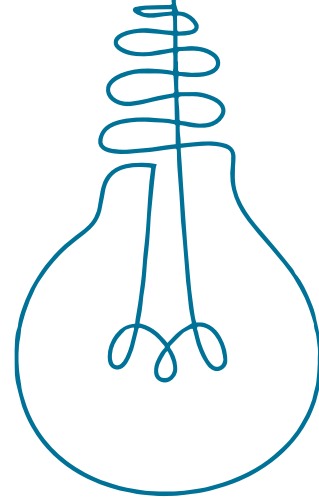
If all power is lost in the property, then check if the neighbours are affected also. If they are then you will need to report it to the Northern Power Grid as it's not an isolated incident.

If the neighbours are not affected, then first check if an appliance has caused the issue (can be rechargeable if so). Faulty appliances can cause sockets to trip.

Check the trip switches to see if one hasn't tripped. If so, try and put it back on.

Check there is money on the electric meter.

If you still have no electric then we will attend on an emergency appointment to investigate the cause.

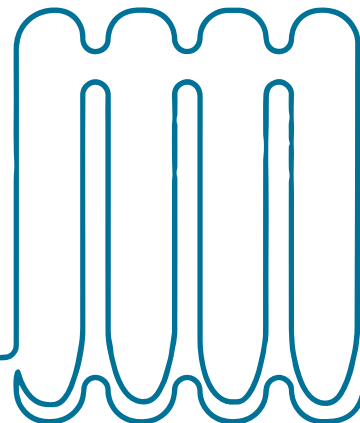


Damp and condensation

If condensation occurs it can lead to damp and mould if not managed correctly. If it is managed then condensation should not lead to any further problems.

You can reduce condensation by:

- Venting tumble dryers outside
- Open windows and trickle vents
- Dry clothes outside where possible and do not place them directly on radiators
- Use extractor fans when cooking or using the bathing facilities
- Close doors to keep moisture out of other rooms



Right to buy

If you apply for the right to buy for your property, then we will only carry out emergency repairs whilst the application is in progress.

Routine repairs will not be attended to.

If you cancel your right to buy, then we will resume all repairs.

If you purchase your council property then you are responsible for the decoration, repair and maintenance of your purchased home. This includes the interior of the property and its services.

You will also be responsible for all repairs and services to the exterior of the property. This includes the grounds too.

In the case of flats the Council is responsible for the exterior and communal areas. We recover the costs in the annual service charge.



Advice

If you experience any issues with leaking, frozen pipes or blocked toilets then there is some advice below we can give to temporarily reduce the hazards caused until we are able to attend.

Leaking Pipes

Place a dish or bowl underneath

Pull back carpets

Use a towel or newspapers to absorb any excess water

Turn off any electrics affected by a leak

Burst Pipes

Turn off the water at the main stop tap

Frozen Pipes

Turn off the main stop tap and open the cold taps

Do not use a blow torch to thaw the pipes

Clearing a blocked toilet

Use a toilet brush or plunger to try and clear the blockage

Use bleach to try and break up the blockage

Try and flush the toilet following this to see if the blockage clears

You may be recharged if the blockage is caused by something that has been flushed down that shouldn't have been. For example, wet wipes and nappies.

Clearing blocked waste from a sink

Use a jug to scoop out the majority of the water

Hold a cloth tightly over the overflow and use a plunger over the plug hole

Use bleach to try and break up the blockage

You may be recharged for any blockage caused by products being put down the sink that shouldn't have been. For example, fat from a frying pan.



Improvement works

We want our tenants to live in homes that are modern, warm, comfortable and are of a good standard. To achieve this, we provide:

- new kitchens
- bathroom
- heating systems.

We have a planned programme of work to ensure our properties are being improved.

We will write to you when your property is due for any improvement works to give a timescale for the works to be completed. We will send out letters at the start of the programme. These advise if we have included your property in the programme for that financial year. We will still send out further letters to arrange visits to your property.

The work will normally be completed within 5 to 6 working days. However, if your home requires a heating system or additional works it may take longer. Access to your home will be required throughout this time. We will also need access to carry out a final inspection and complete any remedial work.

By the end of each working day we will provide:

- heating
- electricity
- hot and cold water
- flushing toilet
- lighting
- television reception

Please note that your cooker will be disconnected on the day we start the work. It will be reconnected/ tested as applicable upon completion of the work by our engineers.

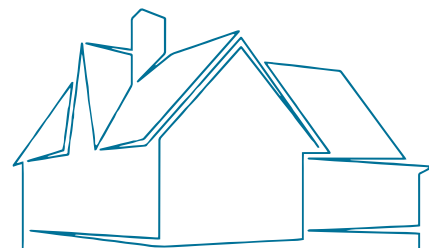
Specific adaptations may be available if you are:

- of pensionable age
- disabled
- if a household member has a specific requirement

We will assess your needs and may also involve other professionals. (for example, an occupational therapist) for adaptations such as a level access shower.

We have a no smoking at work policy. We ask that you do not smoke in the presence of our staff whilst they are working in your home.

Always ask for identification from anyone who calls at your home and claims to work us. All staff carry identification cards. If you are unsure, do not let them into your home and call 01325 405333 for advice.



Get in touch



01325 405333



customerservices@darlington.gov.uk



www.darlington.gov.uk/housing



[darlingtonbc](https://twitter.com/darlingtonbc)



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