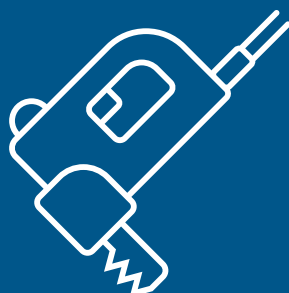
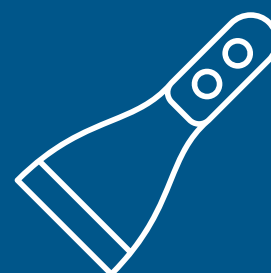
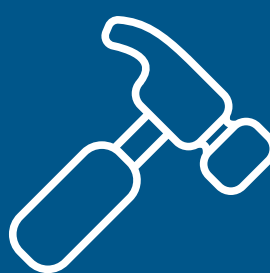
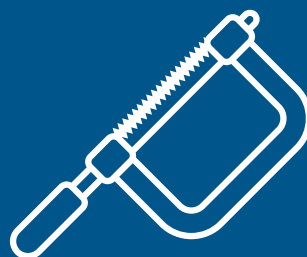


# Repairs Handbook

A guide for North Yorkshire Council  
housing tenants and leaseholders



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# Introduction

This handbook is for people living in council houses managed by North Yorkshire Council. It tells you what to do if something in your home needs to be repaired.

It explains:

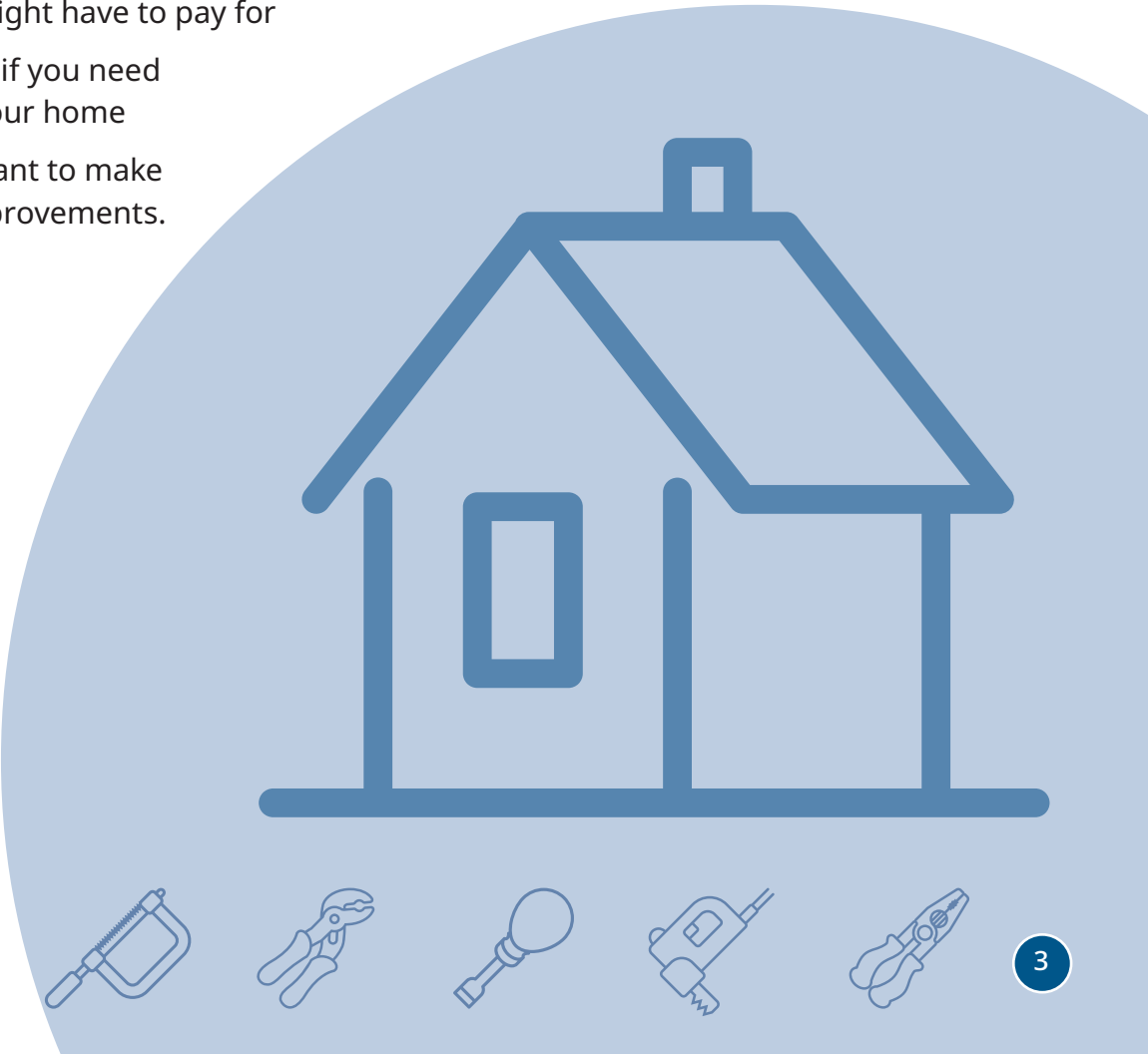
- How to tell the council about a repair
- Which repairs are done quickly and which ones take longer
- What repairs are planned for the future or as part of a replacement programme.

Section 13 gives tips to help keep your home safe. It talks about:

- Gas, electricity, water, fire, asbestos, and lift safety
- How to deal with condensation, damp and mould
- How to make a complaint or say thank you.

In Sections 1 to 12, you'll find:

- How to get ready before someone comes to do your repair
- What to do when the repair person arrives
- What repairs the council will do and what you need to look after yourself
- What to do if you lose your keys
- What repairs you might have to pay for
- How to ask for help if you need changes made to your home
- What to do if you want to make your own home improvements.



# 1. How to report a council house repair

You can report housing repairs online on the North Yorkshire Council website, or by phoning the council.

**The normal office hours are: Monday and Tuesday 9am to 5pm; Wednesday 9.30am to 5pm; Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm.**

Outside of these times, and during weekends and bank holidays we provide an out of hours emergency repairs service for emergency repairs only. If it is not possible to complete an out of hours emergency repair, we will complete work to ensure your home is left safe and arrange to return to complete the repair during normal office hours.

## Before you report a repair make sure that you have:

- Checked if the repair is your responsibility (see the guidance on page 8)
- Gathered as much information as you can about the repair.

## When you report a repair, we will need the following details:

- The type of repair, including details and the location of the item that needs repairing
- Your full name, address and postcode
- A contact phone number.

## After the repair is reported, we will:

- Confirm if the repair is our responsibility
- Record the details of your repair
- Inform you of the date of the appointment
- Tell you if the work will be done by the council or the name of the contractor if the work is to be done by one of the council's contracting services
- We may need to inspect the problem before carrying out the repair.

After the work is completed, we may inspect the work in person or discuss it with you over the phone.

## You can report repairs to us in the following ways:

Online [northyorks.gov.uk/housing-repairs](https://northyorks.gov.uk/housing-repairs)

Do not use the online form to report an emergency repair. Where possible please include a photograph of the issue.

Completing the online form is quick and easy, and you can do it at a time to suit you.

By telephone: Call **0300 131 2 131** and say 'housing repairs' when prompted.

If you're reporting an emergency repair outside normal office hours—including weekends and bank holidays—please use the same contact telephone number.

If you smell gas call the National Gas Network immediately on **0800 111 999** (minicom **0800 5875 055**)



# 2. When will my responsive repair be carried out?

## Emergency repairs

If there is serious damage to the property, or risk to life, we will respond as soon as possible, usually within 2–4 hours and the issue will be made safe within 24 hours. This is for repairs that are necessary to remove immediate risk to people and avoid major damage to the property.

Sometimes further repairs may be needed to complete the works after making the situation safe. Examples include:

- serious water leak
- no power in property
- no heating and/or hot water (between 31 October and 1 May)
- overflowing drains
- attending a lift breakdown
- a blocked toilet (if it's the only accessible one in your home).

## All other repairs

We will aim to carry out all other repairs in accordance with the council's repair priority times. These cover work inside or outside your home, where there is no immediate inconvenience or danger to occupants or the public.

## Responsive repairs timescales

The Responsive repair priorities are:

**Priority 1 – response within 2–4 hours, and made safe within 24-hour timeframe.**

An **emergency** that puts someone's safety, security, or health at immediate risk – for example, no heating or hot water, burst pipes or dangerous electrical fittings.

**Priority 2 – response within 72 hours.**

Not an emergency but an **urgent** repair that needs to be done quickly to prevent increased risk to tenants or more damage to the home, (for example, loose handrail, blocked sink/ basin, partial loss of electricity or water)

**Priority 3 – response within 7 calendar days.**

Not urgent but a repair which poses a **moderate risk** to tenant safety (for example, missing roof tiles, faulty extractor fan); or work which has been identified, following a safety survey.

**Priority 4 – response within 28 calendar days.**

**Routine** repair that does not pose a risk to tenant safety or the property, for example, plaster work, joinery work to windows/doors, rainwater goods, general surveyor inspection.



**The housing health and safety rating system** will be used by the council to assess potential hazards reported by you, e.g. damp, mould, excess heat/ cold, asbestos, and we will do this within specific timeframes as outlined within Awaab's Law, a piece of legislation which is designed to safeguard you in your home.

The council will do this by:

- Responding to any reports of Housing Health and Safety within 24 Hours in accordance with our Priority 1 Emergency repair priority
- Making emergency repairs to make your home safe within 24 hours if a hazard is found and deemed significant and 'imminent' to health or safety
- Carrying out initial investigations within 14 days of a relevant request and providing a written summary of findings to you within 48 hours. These investigations will be undertaken by a suitably qualified surveyor
- Commencing repairs within 7 days if a potential hazard is judged to pose a significant risk, in accordance with the Repairs Priority 3 response times. Completion will take place within a 'reasonable' period. You will be kept informed of the work to be undertaken and the progress being made.

### 3. Planned repairs and follow up inspections

If the problem requires more planning, is not urgent or dangerous and cannot be fixed as a responsive repair, the Housing Standards Service will identify this as a 'planned repair'.

The time to complete a planned repair will vary, depending on the nature, size and urgency of the job as well as any tenant vulnerabilities.

Planned repairs may include the following:

- Some boundary work, i.e fencing
- Cleaning out of guttering
- Extensive plastering (more than 1 full surface area)
- Non-emergency plumbing work
- Cleaning out cavities
- Non-emergency electrical work
- Garages i.e. roof repairs
- Outhouse work (roofing, demolish etc)
- Pathway repairs
- Pointing

If a planned repair relates to health and safety, the works will be identified with a 28 day (Priority 4) response.

All other planned repair works that are agreed will be recorded on the council's repair and maintenance system and released in batches to the appropriate repairs team. Once released for action, all repair works will have 10 weeks (70 calendar days) from the release date of the batch, to complete the works.

Planned repairs could take up to 24 months to be completed. You will receive updates in relation to any agreed and outstanding work via letter or email within the following timeframes:

- 14 days after any inspection to confirm what has been agreed.
- Quarterly updates on outstanding work with estimated completion dates

Complex works, including damp and mould requiring follow up surveyor inspections to ensure the work undertaken has addressed the issued, will be released for action by the surveyor every 8-10 weeks, dependent upon the type of work to be undertaken.

### 4. Programmed replacements (including retrofit work)

If the problem cannot be fixed by a responsive repair and requires a full component replacement, and/or internal/external alterations the repairs service will identify these works as 'programmed replacement/retrofit.'

Programmed replacement/retrofit works are component replacements and include the following common items, although this list is not exhaustive:

- Kitchen (part or all)
- Bathroom fittings (part or all), including anti-slip flooring
- External doors
- Internal doors
- Windows

- Fascias, soffits and rainwater goods (guttering, fall pipes)
- Replacement/alternative heating systems.

Where a programmed replacement relates to Health and Safety, the works will be identified on the repairs and maintenance system with a 28-day priority (priority 4) e.g. a fire door.

All other programmed replacement/retrofit works that are agreed will be recorded on the council's repair and maintenance system.

All works once released for action will have 10 weeks (70 calendar days) from the release date of the property to complete the work. The work may be done by the council's own in-house team or its contractors.

The repairs service operates a rolling programme of programmed replacement/ retrofit work and, as such, properties could be on the programme for up to 24 months. Tenants will receive updates in relation to any agreed and outstanding work via letter or email within the following timeframes:

- 14 days after any inspection to confirm what has been agreed
- Quarterly updates on outstanding work with estimated completion dates.





## 5. Preparing for repair work

- Make sure your prepayment meter for electricity or gas is in credit. Repair operatives or council contractors may need to use these to carry out checks
- Ensure clear access to the repair area. If you are elderly or disabled and have difficulty arranging this, let us know in advance
- Once you have agreed an appointment date with us, a responsible adult aged 18 or over must be at home on that day to allow our operatives and contractors into your home.

## 6. When the repair operative arrives

- Always check their identification before you let anyone into your home
- Keep children safe while work is being done and ensure pets are secured away from the area of work
- In line with the Government's smoking regulations, you must provide a smoke-free environment for any repair operative or contractor who comes into your home.

## 7. Who is responsible for what repairs?

### Repairs the council is responsible for

By law, the council has an obligation to look after the structure of your home. The structure of the building is insured by the council, but you are responsible for insuring the contents of your home.

Repairs must be carried out to make sure that fixtures and fittings for water, sanitation, gas and electricity are safe and in working order. The council must also maintain any equipment it has installed to provide hot water and heating, and communal facilities, such as lifts and door entry phones.

We are responsible for undertaking repairs needed in the communal areas as well as repairs to tenants' homes.

We will try to make sure that you have electricity, gas and water by the end of each day, but we cannot be responsible if the problem is caused by a failure of the utility company.

We will provide temporary heaters if your main heating source breaks down and it is not possible to repair it immediately, for example if parts must be ordered.

### Repairs you are responsible for

We expect you to take care of your home by making sure it is kept safe, clean, and free from rubbish. We expect you to report any repairs as soon as possible and make sure that no one else damages your home.

There are also some repairs that are your responsibility as a tenant. The table in section 11 provides a list of common repairs and shows who is responsible for that repair. This is not an exhaustive list.

Before you contact us please check the list so that you are sure the repair is North Yorkshire Council's responsibility. This will save you time in getting the problem fixed.

If, however you are in any doubt, or the repair is not listed, please call **0300 131 2 131** and say '**housing repair**' when prompted.

## 8. What if I lose my keys?

If you become locked out of your home or lose your keys it is your responsibility to replace the key or change the lock at your cost – you are responsible for regaining entry.

If you have lost a key or fob to a communal entrance door, or you live in sheltered accommodation please contact us to purchase a replacement.

## 9. Chargeable repairs

If repairs are needed because of neglect or damage by you, a member of your household or any visitors to your home, you will be responsible for the cost of the repair. The work to correct the damage should be carried out by a competent person, i.e. someone who has the necessary skills, knowledge and relevant experience to do the work required.

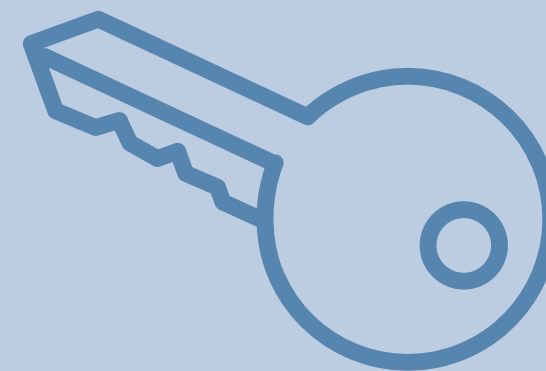
No work should be undertaken to heating system by anyone who is not qualified and registered with the relevant trade body i.e. The Gas Safe Register.

No work should be undertaken to electrical systems by anyone who is not qualified and registered with NICEIC.

Where the damage has created a health and safety issue, we will carry out the repair and you may be charged for the work that is carried out.

Examples include:

- Failure to report a repair as soon as possible which then leads to further damage because of the delay
- Deliberate, careless or negligent acts caused by you, a member of your household or a visitor.



10. Table of repair responsibilities

Repair request	Responsibility	
	North Yorkshire Council	Tenant
Shared areas such as lifts, stairs, rubbish chutes and communal TV aerials	Yes	
Replacement or extra key fobs for communal door		Yes
Chimney and stacks	Yes	
Roof structure and coverings	Yes	
Guttering, rainwater pipes and clips	Yes	
Fascias and soffits	Yes	
External walls and rendering	Yes	
Foundations	Yes	
Concrete canopies over doors or windows	Yes	
Rendering to property	Yes	
Window frames, external sills, ironmongery and locks if damage is fair wear and tear (tenant's responsibility if damage is caused by any misuse including accidental damage)	Yes	
Damaged glazing		Yes
Security chains, key safes and spy holes (Key safes may be fitted by the council following a referral from Occupational Therapist)		Yes
External doors, frames, locks, ironmongery, other boards and threshold strips caused by fair wear and tear. (Damage caused by a tenant or their visitors misuse or neglect will result in recharge to tenant)	Yes	
New or replacement keys		Yes
Locked out of home		Yes
Soil and vent pipes and clips	Yes	
Clearing blocked gulley grids		Yes
Clearing gullies		Yes
Blocked drains (council will refer to relevant Water Company if affecting more than one property)	Yes	

Repair request	Responsibility	
	North Yorkshire Council	Tenant
Inspection chambers	Yes	
Work carried out to gardens and flooded gardens (unless caused by an underground leak)		Yes
Garden walls if built by us. If tenants own and in unsafe condition work to make safe would be done and recharged to tenant	Yes	
Fencing (if installed by council) and garden gates	Yes	
Pathways and steps which provide main access to the front or back of property	Yes	
Washing lines and posts (except in communal areas or part of an independent living scheme, or new build property where one is provided at time of handover)		Yes
Replacement or repairs to sheds		Yes
Garages or outbuildings if provided by us at the point of tenancy	Yes	
Locked out of garage (unless lock is faulty)		Yes
Additional keys to garage		Yes
Structural walls inside a property	Yes	
Major plaster repairs	Yes	
Minor repairs to plasterwork for example small holes and cracks		Yes
Wall tiles to match existing as closely as possible damaged due to fair wear and tear	Yes	
Concrete floors (not including floor tiles)	Yes	
Vinyl fitted by the council as part of the improvement work, and or tenants own.		Yes
Carpets and floor coverings		Yes
Floorboards and joists but not including laminate	Yes	
Council fitted fireplace and surround	Yes	
Staircase, bannister and handrail	Yes	
Kitchen cupboards, drawers, door catches, hinges and handles where damage is fair wear and tear (rechargeable if damage is not fair wear and tear)	Yes	
Worktops where damage is fair wear and tear (rechargeable if damage is not fair wear and tear)	Yes	



Repair request	Responsibility	
	North Yorkshire Council	Tenant
Cookers that were provided and installed to an adapted kitchen at point of tenancy	Yes	
Cooker ovens, hobs and cooker extractor fans (these are disclaimed at point of tenancy)		Yes
Electrical wiring sockets and light fittings	Yes	
Smoke or carbon monoxide alarms	Yes	
Plugs on tenant’s appliances		Yes
Electrical consumer units (fuse box)	Yes	
Electric storage heaters (if installed by North Yorkshire Council)	Yes	
Electric fires (if installed by North Yorkshire Council)	Yes	
Immersion heaters	Yes	
Extractor fans	Yes	
Water service pipes, overflow pipes and water tanks	Yes	
Blocked toilet, sinks, bath and hand basin waste pipes	Yes	
Taps, stop taps, and wheel valves	Yes	
Toilet flushing mechanism	Yes	
Sink units and hand basins (if not fair wear and tear can be rechargeable)	Yes	
Toilet seats (we will supply one on start of tenancy only)		Yes
Shower curtains		Yes
Bath or shower trays	Yes	
Sink and bath plugs and chains		Yes
Bath seals and two rows of splash back tiles	Yes	
Kitchen sink seals and two rows of splash back tiles	Yes	
Boxing in of new or existing pipe work if damaged caused by the council	Yes	
Gas pipe work inside the property	Yes	

Repair request	Responsibility	
	North Yorkshire Council	Tenant
Supply of gas and gas meters		Yes
Annual gas servicing of appliances	Yes	
Council gas fires	Yes	
Topping up the heating systems, water pressure and bleeding radiators	Yes	
Radiator valves, time clocks and thermostats	Yes	
Gas boilers	Yes	
Ground and air source heat pumps	Yes	
Heat exchange units	Yes	
Solid fuel fire grates	Yes	
Low energy light bulbs, tubes, starters for fluorescent light tubes		Yes
Loft insulation	Yes	
Replacement of broken glass		Yes
Washing lines		Yes
Letter box repair or replacement		Yes
Damaged caused to council property by self or visitors		Yes
TV/satellite aerials (except for communal aerials in blocks of flats and/or sheltered housing schemes)		Yes
Internal redecoration		Yes
Hat and coat rails		Yes



## 11. Can I make improvements to my home?

The council allows you to make certain improvements to your home, but you must get written permission from us before starting any work. We would not unreasonably withhold permission unless the work is likely to affect the safety of the building, cause a future maintenance problem, or cause a nuisance to your neighbours.

We may attach conditions to the permission, such as insisting that the work is carried out by a competent contractor and to a satisfactory standard. Work undertaken on gas and electrical installations must be carried out by appropriately qualified persons and copies of certificates must be submitted to the Housing Standards Service at North Yorkshire Council prior to works commencing.

We may need to inspect the work that you have carried out. Whilst you remain the resident you will be responsible for the repairs and maintenance of any improvements made.

You may receive compensation at the end of your tenancy if you have undertaken satisfactory improvements to your home which are included in the Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Act 1994 as qualifying improvements.

You do not require our permission to decorate the inside of your home e.g. paint, wallpaper, lay carpets, put up mirrors or shelving. However, you should not paint kitchen cupboards or the exterior of your home.

You must contact us before starting all other work.

To request permission to make improvements please e-mail [housingstandards@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:housingstandards@northyorks.gov.uk) detailing your name and address, the improvements you wish to make and who is going to undertake the work.

## 12. Aids and adaptations

We aim to help you live as independently as possible. One of the ways we can do this is by working with our Occupational Therapist colleagues who will identify certain aids and adaptations to your home so that you can live more comfortably and maintain your independence for longer.

For more information speak to a member of the Housing Standards team on **0300 131 2 131** (say 'housing' when prompted) or email [housingstandards@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:housingstandards@northyorks.gov.uk)

## 13. Home safety and security

### Gas safety

#### Annual gas safety check

We are responsible by law for carrying out an annual gas safety check in all our homes with a gas supply. This means that if your property has a gas supply, even if you never use gas, we need to have access to your home every year. This check is to make sure all gas appliances, fittings or pipework in your home are safe.

You will be contacted by the council's Gas Contractor when your annual gas safety check is due.

It is essential that you allow us access to your home to carry out our annual safety check. If you are unable to make the appointment booked for you, please contact our gas contractor to rearrange.

Once the safety check is completed, the gas engineer will issue your home with an annual gas safety certificate, called a LGSR – this is usually posted out to you within 28 days of completion of the service. Copies of this certificate are available on request.

If you do not let us into your home to carry out the annual safety check you will be putting yourself and your neighbours at risk. This is a breach of tenancy, and we will need to take action to get into your home to carry out the safety check.

If you don't give us access, we may have to take you to court to enable us to get into your home. All costs associated with gaining access through the courts will be charged to you.

### Gas leak

**If you smell gas call the National Gas Network Service on 0800 111 999 immediately (minicom 0800 5875 055)**

**DO** turn off the meter at the control valve

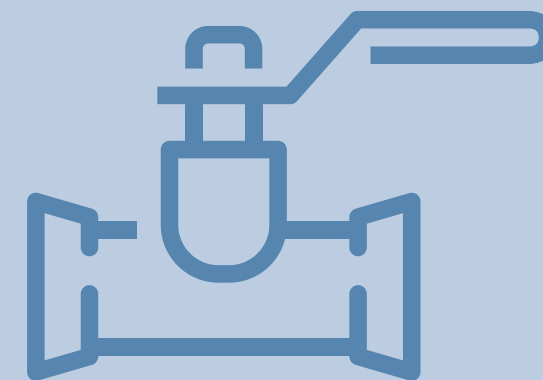
**DO** put out any naked flames

**DO** open doors and windows

**DO** keep people away from the affected area

**DON'T** smoke or strike any matches

**DON'T** turn electrical switches on or off.





## Carbon monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is a gas produced when natural gas does not burn fully.

It cannot be seen or tasted and does not smell, but it is poisonous if breathed in, even for a short time.

Every year thirty people are killed by carbon monoxide poisoning in the UK.

The symptoms are very similar to the flu – they include: headache, nausea, dizziness and sleepiness.

You might not realise what is happening until it's too late. North Yorkshire Council will check you have a working carbon monoxide alarm when we carry out the annual gas safety check and if not, one will be installed.

The tell-tale signs that your gas appliance might be leaking carbon monoxide include:

- Yellow or orange flames may be visible
- A pilot light that often goes out
- Signs of soot or yellow/ brown staining around a gas appliance.

**If you think there is a carbon monoxide leak, please call the National Gas Network Service on 0800 111 999**

### Other gas safety tips:

**NEVER** use a gas appliance if you think it is not working correctly.

**NEVER** cover up a gas appliance.

**NEVER** block or obstruct any internal or externally fixed ventilation grille or airbrick.

**NEVER** block or cover any internal or externally fitted flue from a gas appliance.

**NEVER** allow an unqualified gas fitter or person to install or carry out works on your gas appliances or attempt the work yourself. (All qualified gas fitters are registered with Gas Safe and must present an up-to-date Gas Safe identification card).

**ALWAYS** allow access for our contractors to carry out our annual gas safety check or carry out repairs.

Watch out for signs that an appliance is not working properly and contact us straight away.

Try to avoid damaging any gas appliance provided in your home.

## Electrical safety

### Electrical safety checks

Electrical safety checks on the wiring, switches, light fittings and sockets will be undertaken by the council prior to you moving into your home followed by a five-year program. We will contact you when your electrical safety check is due to ensure this is completed in time.

It is essential that you allow us access to your home to carry out these checks.

If you are unable to make the appointment booked for you, please contact us to rearrange on **0300 131 2 131** (please say 'housing' when prompted).

If you do not let us into your home to carry out the electrical safety check, you will be putting yourself at risk.

This is a breach of tenancy, and we will need to take action to get into your home to carry out the safety check. If you don't give us access, we may have to take you to court to enable us to get into your home. All costs associated with obtaining access through the courts will be charged to you.

### Electrical safety tips

There are some easy to spot signs for electrical hazards in your home including:

- Frayed, cut or damaged leads
- Cracked or damaged cases on plugs and appliances
- Burn marks on plugs, leads or appliances
- Blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
- Damaged plug sockets or light switches.

Always make sure you:

- Report any problems with the electrical installation of your home to us straight away
- Always use appliances according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Use an RCD (Residual Current Device) when using electrical equipment outdoors
- Remove plugs from sockets carefully – pulling out a plug by the cable puts a strain on the terminations which can be dangerous.

### NEVER

- Carry out DIY repairs on electrical installations or appliances
- Bring mains powered portable appliances into the bathroom
- Use any appliance that has a worn flex
- Use any electrical appliance with wet hands
- Attempt to extend, repair or replace damaged or worn-out parts of the electrical wiring, switches and lights yourself.



Water safety

Legionnaires’ disease

Legionnaires’ disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia. It is caused by the inhalation of small droplets of water from contaminated sources containing legionella bacteria.

Everyone is susceptible to infection, but Legionnaires disease most commonly affects the elderly, or people with chest or lung problems. Not everyone exposed to legionella bacteria becomes ill.

The symptoms are very similar to the flu – they include high temperature, tiredness, fever or chills, muscle pain, headache, nausea or a dry cough. Legionnaires’ disease is not contagious, and you cannot get it from drinking water.

Where is Legionella found?

Legionella can be found in all hot and cold-water systems and certain conditions increase the risk from legionella:

- The water temperature in all or some parts of the system is between 20-45 °C, which is suitable for legionella bacteria growth
- It is possible for breathable water droplets to be created and dispersed e.g. from the use of showers and taps
- If water is stored and/or re-circulated in cold water tanks or hot water heaters for example
- If there are deposits that can support bacterial growth providing a source of nutrients for the organism e.g. rust, sediment, scale, organic matter. These can be commonly found on shower heads, on filters, in cold water storage tanks and hot water heaters.

North Yorkshire Council will carry safety checks and on-going servicing to water tanks where these serve more than one home. This is usually in blocks of flats and independent living/sheltered housing schemes.

We will also carry out checks when a home is empty.

If we need to gain access to your home to carry out any checks or repairs to your water systems, please allow us access. In most homes, this will not be necessary. If you have any concerns about the condition of the water system in your home, please contact us immediately on **0300 131 2 131** (please say 'housing repairs' when prompted).

Water safety tips

Always make sure you:

- Run or flush out any water outlet that is not used at least weekly for 2 minutes
- Flush through showers and taps for 10 minutes after a period of non-use (i.e. after they have not been used for one week)
- Keep all shower-heads and taps clean and free from a build-up of lime scale, mould or algae growth
- Flush toilets with the lid down following a period of non-use
- Drain hosepipes after use and keep out of sunlight.

NEVER

Change any pre-set water temperatures on the water system in your home, if you are in doubt contact us on **0300 131 2 131** (please say 'housing' when prompted).

Fire safety

You should ensure you that you test the smoke alarm in your home and keep exits clear.

Every year, in the UK, there are approximately 500 fire related deaths. The majority of these occur within the home between 12am and 6am when people are asleep.

Smoke alarms give you advance warning of fire and more time to react. You only have minutes to escape a fire so every second counts.

We check smoke alarms annually and replace or upgrade them where necessary. If your smoke alarms are not working or you don't have one, please contact us on **0300 131 2 131** (please say 'housing repairs' when prompted).

We carry out periodic fire risk assessments for all communal areas in blocks of flats.

We will provide annually, and at the start of tenancy a fire safety booklet to all residents of blocks of flats and independent living/sheltered schemes which have communal areas.

We will carry out improvements to properties to improve fire safety, i.e. installing new fire doors.

How to plan for a fire

- Plan your escape
- Fires happen when you least expect them, and you will only have a short time to act. Think about how you would get out of your home if the normal way is blocked
- Keep all escape routes clear of rubbish or bulky items at all times
- Tell everyone in the house where the door and window keys are kept. If you live in a block of flats make sure you read and understand guidance provided and notices in the communal area of your block.

Fire safety tips

Always make sure you:

- Test smoke alarms weekly
- If you smoke, use deep ashtrays so that cigarettes cannot roll out, and do not throw hot ash into the bin
- Keep matches and lighters well out of the reach of children
- Sit at least three feet away from heaters
- Close all doors as this helps to prevent fire spreading
- Switch off and unplug electrical appliances except those that are meant to stay on, like the fridge
- Check your cooker and heaters are turned off
- Keep doors and window keys where everyone you live with can find them.

If you live in a flat with a communal entrance/shared areas, always read the fire safety information provided.



NEVER

- Obstruct any escape routes from your home with rubbish or bulky items
- Smoke in bed or in an armchair if you think you may fall asleep
- Leave a lit cigarette, pipe or candle unattended
- Put a heater near clothes or furniture
- Overload electrical sockets
- Use a barbecue on flat balcony (or inside the flat)
- Leave pans unattended when cooking.

If a pan does catch fire

- don't throw water on it – it will make it worse
- Turn off the heat if you can do safely.

If in any doubt, leave the room, close the door, shout to warn others to get out and call 999.

Asbestos

What is asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral that was used extensively as a popular building material since the 1950s.

It was used as an insulator (to keep heat in and cold out), has good fire protection properties and protects against corrosion.

Asbestos was officially banned in 1999, so if your house was built after 2000 it should be fine.

Asbestos can be found in many products used in buildings (both inside and outside a property).

Here are some of the common place's materials containing asbestos may be found:

- Roof tiles and roof felt
- Soffit and Fascias
- Cold water tanks
- Insulation to pipes
- Textured coatings to ceilings & walls
- Insulation to floor voids
- Gaskets & seals to gas appliances
- Floor tiles
- Partition walls
- Panels behind & inside electrical equipment
- Panels under windows
- Insulation in old electric storage heaters.

This is not a full list and materials containing asbestos could be found elsewhere in the property.

Artex is a textured decorative coating that was widely used on interior walls and ceilings. Some older types of Artex contained a very small amount of asbestos.

Artex is safe as long as it is not disturbed i.e. sanded or scraped.

Some older floor tiles can contain asbestos.

Even broken pieces of tile are extremely unlikely to release any asbestos fibres.

Asbestos Surveys

We may need to carry out an asbestos survey to your home, especially if we need to carry out repairs or other works which may disturb asbestos.

We will survey all your home, so we have as much information as possible about asbestos in your home.

When asbestos surveys are carried out, not only do we confirm whether materials contain asbestos, we also confirm their condition if left.

Materials containing asbestos in good condition do not pose a risk to your health and sometimes removing it can be more hazardous than leaving it alone. If the material is in a poor condition, then the decision will be made to either remove it or make it safe. If left undisturbed asbestos is safe.

Asbestos safety tips

Always make sure you:

- Contact us if you think you have damaged asbestos in your home
- Contact us if you are planning any DIY or improvements to your home
- Help us by keeping any appointments we, or our asbestos surveyors and contractors may give you
- Take care to avoid damaging asbestos materials.

NEVER

- Attempt to remove any suspected asbestos materials yourself
- Put yourself at risk by carrying out DIY on or next to asbestos materials e.g. cutting, drilling or sanding
- Dust, sweep or vacuum areas where asbestos debris may lie.





## Lift safety

If you live in accommodation that has access to a passenger lift to aid your mobility you should ensure that you always use the lift as instructed.

Operating information for passenger lifts will be detailed inside the lift, which should be always followed.

The council will work with its specialist lift contractors to undertake planned preventative maintenance and repairs on our lifts.

Where defects are found following examination the council's contractor will respond in accordance with their contractual time frames, and you will be made aware of any necessary work.

The council maintains a service and maintenance program which ensures all lifts within a tenants' home are serviced annually and all passenger lifts within its housing schemes are serviced bi-monthly.

### Lift safety tips

Always make sure you:

- Follow information provided in the council's fire safety for tenants literature in cases of fire
- Always report any repair issues to the council on **0300 131 2 131** (please say '**housing repairs**' when prompted).

### Never

- Use a lift when there is a fire in the building
- Overload a lift – only the permitted number of people should use it at any time.

## Condensation damp and mould

### What is condensation?

Condensation is caused by too much moisture in the air.

If condensation occurs regularly in your home, it can cause damp and mould.

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather. It will appear in corners and on walls, around windows or behind wardrobes and cupboards, in places where there is less or little air movement.

### What is damp?

Damp usually creates a 'tide mark' if it has come from outside sources.

The main causes of damp in the home are:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- Rain seeping through a roof where tiles or slates are missing
- Blocked or defective guttering causing an overflow of rainwater
- Rising damp due to a defective damp course, debris in the cavity or slumped wet cavity wall insulation.

If the damp in your home doesn't come from an outside source, then it is probably due to condensation.

### How to avoid or minimise condensation?

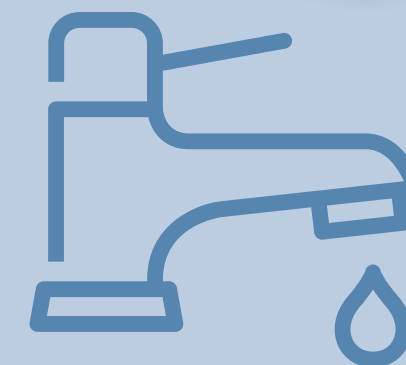
Always make sure you:

- Use pan lids when cooking
- Ventilate bathrooms, kitchens and living areas when in use by opening windows and always having trickle vents open
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when in use to help prevent moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms which are often colder
- Make sure your extractor fans are working, and you use them whenever you are running a hot bath, taking a shower or cooking in the kitchen
- Dry washing outside where possible rather than on radiators. If you have wet clothing in the home ventilate the room by opening windows
- If you have a tumble dryer, make sure it's properly ventilated
- Keep a small window ajar when anyone is in the room for any length of time
- Always keep furniture away from walls to allow air flow between the wall and furniture
- Try to keep the temperature in your home constant
- Wipe down early signs, such as water on the glass of windows, immediately with a dry cloth.

If you have problems with damp and/or mould you can report it in the following ways:

Online: [www.northyorks.gov.uk/dampandmould](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/dampandmould)

By telephone: Call **0300 131 2 131** and say '**condensation, damp and mould**' when prompted.





## You can report repairs to us in the following ways:

Online: **northyorks.gov.uk/housing-repairs**

Do not use the online form to report an emergency repair.

By telephone: Call **0300 131 2 131** and say 'Housing repairs' when prompted.

If you're reporting an emergency repair outside normal office hours – including weekends and bank holidays – please use the same contact telephone number.

If you smell gas call the National Gas Network immediately on **0800 111 999** (minicom **0800 5875 055**)



## Complaints and compliments

We want you to be happy with the services you receive. However, sometimes you may feel you want to complain about our service or something you feel we have done or failed to do. Or you may want to leave a compliment for a member of the team.

You can share feedback or make a complaint in the following ways:

Online: **northyorks.gov.uk/complaints**

Email: **comdev.complaints@northyorks.gov.uk**

By telephone: **0300 131 2 131** and say 'housing' when prompted.

By post: **Complaints**, North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD



Please recycle this handbook when you have finished reading it.

## Contact us

Online: **northyorks.gov.uk/contact-us**

By telephone: **0300 131 2 131** and say 'Housing' when prompted

North Yorkshire Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

You can request this information in another language or format at **northyorks.gov.uk/accessibility**