

repairs & improvements to your home



Repairs & Improvements to your Home

Three Rivers Housing Group provides a comprehensive repairs service which aims to respond to you promptly when things go wrong in your home, whilst at the same time allowing us to plan ahead to renew major facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms when they wear out. The information in this leaflet provides you with details of these services.

We aim to:

- fulfil our statutory maintenance obligations with regard to all properties.
- repair the structure and exterior of the property or building.
- repair and keep in proper working order the installations in the property for the supply of water, gas, electricity, sanitation, heating and hot water.
- seek to provide a responsive and efficient maintenance service to customers and to respond to repair requests within the agreed time-scales.
- complete repairs to as high a standard as possible, and seek wherever possible to replace components that do not meet current standards.
- recover costs of rectifying deliberate damage or disrepair caused by a tenant or their family or visitors from the tenant.
- deliver a planned programme of external redecoration for each estate.
- ensure that funds are set aside for modernising of properties where this is necessary.

Contact Customer Services Team
24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year on:

0191 384 1122

Legal Responsibilities

By law, we must ensure that wind and rain cannot get into your home. We must maintain the installations in your home which supply gas, water, electricity and drainage. Although we carry out most repairs to your home you will also have some responsibilities – please see section: Who is responsible for what?

Reporting Repairs

When reporting a repair, please make sure you have the following information ready:

- Your name, address and current contact number
- Times when someone will be at home or access is available
- As much about the repair as possible
- Whether you have reported the repair before

How long should the repairs take to complete?

We deal with all repairs as quickly as possible. As some repairs are more urgent than others, we put them into a timescale category according to priority:

A. Emergency Repairs (outside office hours)

We will respond within twelve hours of you reporting the repair. The fault will be resolved or made safe on the initial visit. If follow up repairs are needed, they will need to be completed within five working days.

B. Emergency Repairs (within office hours)

We will respond within twelve hours of you reporting the repair. The fault will be resolved or made safe on the initial visit. If follow up repairs are needed, they will need to be completed within five working days.

Where possible, contractors will try to complete an emergency repair during their initial visit. However, if it is not possible for the contractor to do this job and a repeat visit is needed, the following will happen.

1. The contractor will inform you of how long it will take for the repair to be completed and will also arrange a time for their return visit.
2. Where heating and hot water are affected, the contractor will provide temporary heating and a portable water heater.
3. All follow up repairs should be completed within seven calendar days of the original emergency repair request.

Typical emergency repairs are:

- No heating and or hot water
- No electrical supply
- Floods of water which are un-containable
- Breakdown of security to properties
- Lack of light in areas of risk, ie. staircases, kitchens, internal communal areas, etc.
- Blocked drains
- No electrical supply to cookers
- Maintaining access/exit to and from the communal entrance

C. Urgent Repair

Response and completion within five working days. (Repairs which are less serious, but need to be done quicker than routine repairs).

Example: Minor leaks, toilet not flushing, partial heating or hot water failure.

D. Ordinary Repairs

Response and completion within 20 working days. (The majority of repairs will be classified in this category).

Example: General joinery repairs, minor plumbing repairs, external repairs.

E. Programmed Repair

Major works to your home will be carried out at certain times during the life of your property. This is subject to the condition of the facility and detailed surveys carried out by our Maintenance team.

Example: Replacement kitchens, windows, external decoration, bathrooms heating systems.

Damage

Three Rivers reserves the right to recharge tenants for repair costs where repairs have been necessary due to negligence, misuse or malicious wilful damage. In this case, it is up to you to get the repair done and to pay for it, even if it was an accident. Any repair work must be carried out to a good standard. If Three Rivers carries out the work, you will be recharged the cost of the repair, failure to pay for these repairs may result in legal action against you.

Who is responsible for what?

Element	Who is Responsible		Priority	Comments
	TRHG	Tenants		
Baths	✓		D	Except unblocking wastes.
Ceiling repair	✓		D,E	Artex will only be patched in
Central heating - partial loss	✓		C	Earlier depending on circumstances.
Central heating - total loss of heating (May-Sept)	✓		C	Three Rivers will not repair tenants' appliances.
Central heating - total loss of heating (Oct-April)	✓		A,B	Three Rivers will not repair tenants' appliances.
Central heating radiator leaks / bursts	✓		C	Earlier if leak is uncontainable.
Chimney pots and cowls	✓		D,E	Earlier if dangerous.
Chimney stack	✓		D,E	Earlier if dangerous.
Chimney sweeping	✓			Unless the property is empty.
Communal lighting	✓		C	Priority depends upon circumstances.
Decoration - internal		✓		This also includes normal preparation.
Door lock changing - due to lost keys, being locked out, etc		✓		
Door locks - normal wear and tear	✓		D	Priority will depend upon security required. Tenants' responsibility for broken keys in lock etc.

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Element	Who is Responsible		Priority	Comments
	TRHG	Tenants		
Doors external	✓	✓*	D	*As in 'Glazing'.
Doors internal		✓		Including adjustment when new carpets fitted
Electric fuses and plugs	✓			Tenants' responsibility to check and renew 'blown' fuse wire, cartridge fuses and trip switch.
Electric lights, lampholders & switches	✓		C	Priority depends upon circumstances.
Electric power sockets	✓		C	Recharge if sockets 'tripping' through faulty appliances.
Extractor fan	✓		D	Earlier if room has no openable window.
Fences - general repairs	✓		D,E	Perimeter security. Earlier if dangerous - i.e. fences protruding onto public walkways.
Fences - replacement	✓		E	
Floor coverings		✓		Laminate lifted for access will not be compensated for
Floor - general repairs	✓		D	
Fuse boxes - no electricity	✓		A,B	Tenant to report electricity failure to electrical board if more than one dwelling is without electricity within the immediate vicinity.

Element	Who is Responsible		Priority	Comments
	TRHG	Tenants		
Garages general repairs	✓		D,E	Three Rivers will not maintain structures erected by tenants.
Gas leak	✓	✓	A,B	Report immediately to TRANSCO, then to Three Rivers.
Glazing		✓		Three Rivers responsible if criminal damage. However, a police crime number will need to be provided prior to any repairs being undertaken.
Gully blocked	✓			
Gully grid broken	✓		D	
Gutters and downpipes	✓		D	Earlier if evidence of water ingress into property.
Insulation - glass fibre, rock wool, beads, etc.	✓		D,E	Three Rivers to repair to original specification.
Kitchen sink - blocked		✓		
Kitchen unit - replacement	✓		E	
Kitchen units - repairs	✓		D	
Kitchen work tops	✓		E	
Overflows	✓		C	Earlier if there is a continuous flow of water or possibility of freezing.
Path giving access to front/rear door or gate	✓		D,E	

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Element	Who is Responsible		Priority	Comments
	TRHG	Tenants		
Plugs and chains		✓		
Roof coverings - slates, tiles, mineral, felt, etc	✓		D	Priority depends upon roof coverings capability to withstand changing weather conditions and contractors health and safety requirements.
Sheds		✓		
Showers	✓		D	Earlier depending upon circumstances.
Skirting board repairs	✓		D	
Taps	✓		C,D	Earlier depending upon circumstances.
Toilet blocked		✓		
Toilet cistern not flushing / leaking	✓		C	Earlier under exceptional circumstances.
Toilet seats		✓		
TV aerials		✓	C,D	Three Rivers will only maintain communal aerial systems.
Wall pointing and cracks	✓		D,E	
Wall cracks & small holes up to 5mm		✓		
Walls damaged/collapsed walls	✓		D	Speed of repair depends upon potential danger.
Wash hand basin, blocked		✓		
Wash hand basin, leaks	✓		C	Earlier if the leak is uncontainable.

Element	Who is Responsible		Priority	Comments
	TRHG	Tenants		
Water heating	✓		C	Earlier depending on circumstances.
Water - hot water cylinders/tanks	✓		D	
Water immersion heater - (sole form of water heating)	✓		C	Earlier depending on circumstances.
Water immersion heater (secondary form of heating)	✓		D	
Window lintels and sills	✓		D,E	
Window locks	✓		D	Priority will depend upon security required. Tenants' responsibility if keys are lost.
Window repair / replacement	✓		D,E	Earlier if security problem exists
Yards	✓		D,E	

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The section refers to repairs which you, the tenant is responsible for carrying out. Here Three Rivers may be prepared to undertake some minor acts and repairs listed previously for tenants without charge. The decision on whether or not a particular tenant is exempt from such repairing responsibility will be made by Three Rivers' staff based on each cases individual merits.

Inspections

Repairs are carried out by our own staff and approved contractors. Sometimes we will need to inspect a problem before it can be repaired. We also make random inspections from time to time to check that repairs have been carried out satisfactorily.

You can help the repairs service work smoothly by:

- keeping your repair appointments so that our contractors and staff can get on with the job as soon as possible. Missed appointments mean time wasted and unnecessary expense. You could be charged for a wasted call out.
- sending your satisfaction questionnaire back straight away. The postage is free.

Access

You or anyone living with you must allow Three Rivers' staff, their contractors, agents or statutory undertakers to enter your home at all reasonable hours to:

- inspect the condition of the premises
- inspect the state of repair
- carry out repairs and improvements
- service equipment
- general inspection of the dwelling
- gain access to facilitate the above to any adjoining premises
e.g. party walls, flats

Three Rivers will always try to arrange access at a time that is convenient and will normally give you at least 24 hours notice.

If you or anyone living with you does not allow access, Three Rivers will serve notice of not less than 24 hours of its intention to gain entry to the property using reasonable force if necessary in accordance with its rights in the section above.

In an emergency, Three Rivers may require immediate access without notice. In the event that such access is necessary and the property is unoccupied or access is denied, Three Rivers or their agent may use reasonable force to gain entry into your home.

In the event that access is denied, you may be prosecuted for obstruction. Examples of emergencies include but are not limited to fire, flood, gas leaks, an occasion where there is a threat to personal injury or the structure of our property is at risk.

Decoration

We will decorate the outside of your home and any shared landings and staircases. This will normally be done every five years.

It is up to you to decorate the inside of your home. You must keep your home decorated to a reasonable standard.

Planned Maintenance

As well as carrying out day to day repairs, Three Rivers sets aside money from your rent to modernise and improve your home over a period of time. This need is established from an ongoing property condition survey of all our customers' homes. These include cyclical works such as external decoration, cleaning gutters and general maintenance to keep the properties in good condition, and more major improvements such as renewing kitchens, bathrooms, windows and heating systems.

You will be consulted and informed of our plans so that you have a say in what work we do and when it should be done.

If you ask for a repair that is due in a major improvement programme, then we may ask that you wait until the work starts. By doing so, we can make sure that the work is carried out to an agreed standard and style, and that we achieve value for money.

Electrical Works

The Government introduced a new law in January 2005, which demands that most electrical work in UK households is only carried out by a 'competent' person.

It is a legal requirement for landlords to prove that all electrical installation work complies. Failure to comply with the requirement is a criminal offence. Local authorities also have the power to require the removal or alteration of work that does not comply with the Building Regulations.

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Condensation and Damp

Condensation and damp are often confused because they both leave a musty smell. If you think you may have damp or condensation in your home, the first thing you need to do is check that you are doing everything you can to prevent condensation from occurring.

Condensation:

A lot of moisture goes into the air whenever you cook, run a bath or dry clothes in your home. When this moisture meets a cold surface it turns into droplets called “condensation”. If this is left mould will start to grow. This usually happens on cold outside walls and surfaces, and in areas where the air does not circulate well. It can damage clothes and furnishings.

You can reduce the problem by:

- wiping moisture away whenever you see it. It may collect on windows over night.
- keeping a window open if you are drying clothes indoors. Dry them outside whenever possible and only use a tumble drier if it has direct ventilation to the outside.
- keeping rooms warm, even a low “background” heat will help.
- ventilating the room. Nobody likes draughts but some air does need to come in and out. So, open windows a little until they stop misting up.
- not using bottled gas or paraffin heaters. They actually produce water in the air and are a fire risk too.
- not blocking up air vents fitted in your home.

Damp:

Damp happens when a fault in the basic structure of a building lets in water from the outside. The usual signs are mould, a musty smell and wet patches on the walls or ceiling after rain.

If you think your home has damp, contact our Customer Services team. They will arrange for an officer to call at your home to look into the problem. We will carry out any necessary repair work.

Alterations and Improvements

For any alterations and improvements that you wish to undertake to your home you must apply for written permission first.

The work must be done to a good standard and we would not allow any work that would make your home unsafe or reduce its value.

If we do give permission, you may still have to get permission and building control approval from your local council. They will advise you of what work requires their permission.

Right to Compensation

You are encouraged to make improvements to your home (eg. putting in a shower) but we ask that you seek written permission from us first. Depending on the improvements you make to your home, we may compensate you for some of the costs you have incurred when you end your tenancy with us.

Right to Repair

Let us know immediately if a repair is not done within its set timescale. Under the Right to Repair legislation, you can make a claim for compensation if we fail to do the repair after you have reported it a second time.

The Right to Repair is a right you have by law. If you wish to make a claim or carry out a repair yourself, you should contact the Maintenance team prior to any work taking place.

Code of Conduct for Contractors

We expect those who work for us to behave properly whilst they are in your home and this means they should:

- contact you to arrange a convenient time to carry out the repair.
- introduce themselves to you, show proof of their identity and explain what they will be doing.
- carry out the works between 8.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday except in cases of emergency.
- not play radios or smoke in your home.
- treat you politely at all times.

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- protect your belongings from damage while they are carrying out the work.
- keep your home secure while working there.
- work safely.
- leave you with all essential services (e.g. water, electricity, gas etc) working at the end of each day even if they have not finished their work.
- clean up the mess they make and take away all rubbish and materials at the end of each day.

Please let us know if you feel the person carrying out your repair has not met these standards of behaviour and workmanship.

Consultation and Participation

You will automatically receive a questionnaire to complete each time you have a repair carried out. This is to find out if you were happy with the work and if the staff or contractor was friendly and efficient.

We also run surveys occasionally to find out your views on the service provision of other maintenance activities (eg. gas boiler servicing) and major home improvements (eg. new kitchens and bathrooms).

Your opinion about the quality of our work counts and it is important we use your feedback to improve the delivery of our services.

We always look at new ways for you to be more involved in the way we deliver maintenance activities. If you wish to take part in group discussions (eg. interviewing and selecting contractors) on how we can improve the service, please contact the Maintenance team on **0191 384 1122** or email **customer.services@threeivershousing.co.uk**

We can produce this information leaflet in alternative formats and languages.

If you would like information in another language or format, or require the services of an interpreter, please contact us on: 0191 384 1122.

إذا أردت هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بصيغة أخرى، أو إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات المترجم، نرجو الاتصال بنا.

আপনি যদি অন্য কোন ভাষায় অথবা ধরনে এই তথ্য চান, অথবা কোন দোভাষীর সার্ভিসেস-এর প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের কে যোগাযোগ করুন।

若您想要此資訊的另一語言版本或另一形式，或者需要傳譯員的協助，請聯絡我們。

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਸਮਝਣ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਫਿੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دوسری زبان یا شکل میں درکار ہوں، یا آپ کو ایک انٹریپرٹیر کی سروسز کی ضرورت ہو تو ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Contact Addresses

Head Office - Durham
Three Rivers House
Abbeywoods Business Park
Pity Me, Durham
DH1 5TG

Open: 9.00am - 5.00pm
Monday to Friday

Sherburn Road Office
62/63 Bede Avenue
Sherburn Road Estate
Durham
DH1 2EN

Open: 10.00am - 1.00pm
Monday to Friday

Hartlepool Area Office
Central Buildings
Church Street
Hartlepool
TS24 7EB

Open: 10.00am - 1.00pm
Monday to Friday

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customer.services@threerivershousing.co.uk

Visit our website for more information on www.threerivershousing.co.uk



Awarded for excellence



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



POSITIVE ABOUT
DISABLED PEOPLE



Give respect Get respect



business for neighbourhoods