

A better deal for tenants

Your Right to Repair



housing



Your Right to Repair

As part of the Citizen's Charter scheme, a **Right to Repair** scheme was introduced for council tenants from 1 April 1994.

The Right to Repair is a scheme for council tenants. It will make sure that certain small urgent repairs which might affect your health, safety or security, are done quickly and easily. Councils will be told by law to carry out these repairs within a certain time.

If the council doesn't do your repair in time, you can tell it to get another contractor instead. If the second contractor doesn't do the repair in time, the council will pay you compensation. The council will tell you what repairs come under the new scheme and how long it has to carry them out. Repair times vary depending on the type of repair. For example, if your toilet isn't flushing, the council usually has one working day to come and repair it. It has three working days to mend a loose bannister rail and seven working days to mend a broken extractor fan in your bathroom or kitchen.



What repairs can you get done?

You can get certain small urgent repairs done (up to the value of £250) if they are likely to affect your health, safety or security. These are called **qualifying repairs**.

Qualifying repairs include:

- unsafe power or lighting sockets or electrical fittings;
- blocked flue to open fire or boiler;
- leaking roof;
- toilets which don't flush;
- blocked sink, bath or basin;
- leaking from a water or heating pipe, tank or cistern;
- loose or broken bannisters or handrails.

Your council will have a full list of repairs which come under the scheme. It will be able to tell you if a repair you need is included in the scheme and how long it has to get the repair done. The council will also be able to tell you how it deals with repairs which aren't covered under this scheme.



How can you get your repairs done?

You should tell the council what repairs need to be done. The council may need to send someone to your home to check the problem first. If the repair comes under the Right to Repair scheme, the council will tell a contractor to do it in the set time. The council will also send you a copy of the repair notice it sends to the contractor. The notice will show you:

- the name, address and telephone number of the contractor who will do the repair;
- the arrangements made for the contractor to do the repair (the date and time);
- what the repair is; and
- when the repair should be done by.

You must let the council know when someone can be at home to let the contractor in.



How long has the council got to carry out these repairs?

This depends on the type of repair you need, but the council can always tell you how long it should take. Qualifying repair times are set by law – not the council.



What happens if the first contractor doesn't do your repair in time?

If the first contractor doesn't do your repair in time, you should phone the council and tell them to get a second contractor to carry out the work.

Unless there is a good reason why the work hasn't been done, the council will get a second contractor. You will get a copy of the second repair notice – which the council sends to the second contractor. The second contractor then has the same amount of time to do the repair as the first one had.



Compensation

If the second contractor doesn't do your repair in time, you will get £10 in compensation. For every extra day you wait, you will get another £2. The most compensation you can get for any one job is £50. The council will pay your compensation – unless you already owe it some money. If you do owe money to the council, it will take away the amount you owe from your compensation.

Sometimes there may be a good reason why a repair can't be done. For example, if you didn't keep your appointment to let the contractor in, and they therefore couldn't carry out the repair, the council won't have to pay you any compensation.



How to find out more

Contact your council's housing department.

This leaflet is one of a series of three dealing with tenants' rights (Your New Right to Manage, Your Right to Repair, and Your New Right to Compensation for Improvements).

These leaflets and further copies of this leaflet, can be obtained from:

Communities and Local Government Publications

PO Box No 236

Wetherby

LS23 7NB

Tel: 0870 1226 236

Fax: 0870 1226 237

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www.communities.gov.uk

The Welsh Assembly Government

Crown Buildings

Cathays Park,

Cardiff CF1 3NQ

Tel: 029 2082 3761

Fax: 029 2082 5391

They are also available from many Citizens Advice Bureaux, Law Centres and Housing Advice Centres.



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