Council Housing Services

A Guide for Using Your

Gas Fired Central Heating System

What is Central heating?

A central heating system consists of pipe-work and radiators that are connected to a boiler. The **boiler** provides the **heat** and the **pump** moves the heated water from the boiler through the pipe work to the radiators, and back to the boiler for re-heating. It also provides hot water to the hot taps to the sink, wash hand basin, and bath. There are generally two types of boiler fitted within the Council Housing stock, a system boiler which heats the hot water in a cylinder and a combination (combi) boiler which heats hot water directly and does not have a cylinder.

How do I control the heating?

You can control the heating system by using the controls that have been fitted in your central heating system. These include the following depending on the type of system fitted –

Room thermostats
Thermostatic radiator valves
Programmer
Boiler thermostats
Cylinder thermostats

Room Thermostats – these control the temperature within the room that they are sited. When the room reaches the set temperature the thermostat will send a signal to the pump and water is no longer circulated around the radiators and the boiler will shut off. As the temperature drops the thermostat will send a signal to the pump to start to circulate the water again and will bring on the boiler again. Typical room thermostats are shown below.



The Recommended settings for a room thermostat is 18^{o} C for a healthy young adult and 21^{o} C for an elderly person. However these should be adjusted, by adjusting the dial or setting to the required temperature, to suit individuals needs.

Thermostatic Radiator Valves – These are fitted to individual radiators and control the temperature of the air within the room they are fitted. They will shut off the flow of the water to the radiator when the desired temperature is reached. Examples of these are shown below.



Programmer – This is simply a switch that turns the heating system on and off. You are able with most programmers to set periods for heating only, hot water only or heating and hot water. You simply set the dial or reading to the time that you want the heating or hot water to come on and set it again to when you want the heating or hot water to go off. You can also set the programmer to have the heating on once a day or twice a day. You can also set the programmer to continuous which will mean that the heating and hot water is on all day or off which means the heating and hot water is continually off. Examples of programmers are shown below.



Boiler thermostats – These control the temperature of the water going around the radiators and should be set according to the manufacturer's instructions contained on the boiler itself. These are generally dials fitted to the boiler.

Cylinder thermostats – these are fitted to the cylinder and control the temperature of the hot water from the taps. Examples are shown below and these should normally be set at 60^{o} C.


What can go wrong?

No heat and no hot water –	Check that the pilot light to the boiler is lit. If not re-light following the manufacturer's instructions on the boiler.
No hot water -	Check that the boiler and cylinder thermostats are set correctly.
No heat to all the system -	Check that the room thermostat is set correctly.
No heat to part of the system -	Check that the thermostatic valve to the radiator is set correctly.
Only part of a radiator is hot -	Check that there is not air in the radiator by bleeding the radiator. To bleed a radiator do the following – 1. Make sure that the central heating control is in the off position. 2. Place your bleed key on the bleed nipple (this will be at the top, at one side only or could be at the back, but usually is at one end). 3. Turn the bleed key 1/2 a turn anti clockwise to open (you should here the air hissing). 4. When water starts to dribble out turn the key 1/2 a turn clockwise to shut it off (Do Not Over Tighten). If you have a combi. system then the pressure will probably need topping up (If there isn't a gauge on or near the boiler then this instruction will not apply).

If none of the above resolves the problem contact Council Housing Services who will arrange for an engineer to call.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT YOUR HEATING SYSTEM CONTACT YOUR ESTATE MANAGER WHO WILL BE ABLE TO HELP.