

Customer repairs guidance



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Our repairs service

Homes are complicated with thousands of components that can and do fail. While some faults are just inconvenient others can be life-threatening. Many issues are quick and simple to put right; others can be challenging, expensive and time consuming to deal with.

With well over 10,000 houses, bungalows and flats to take care of, we have our work cut-out to keep everyone's home in a good, safe and comfortable condition. But it's one of our biggest priorities.

Understanding how we repair and maintain our customers' homes can help you to get the best out of our repairs service.

Any fault in your home can be annoying so we know it's important to fix things as quickly as we can. But we also need to make sure that we deal with the most serious issues, especially those that can be dangerous or cause serious damage to your home, first. Alongside this we need to take extra care of customers who may have certain needs or circumstances. There are some things that we expect you to deal with yourself as a customer, where you can, and feel safe to undertake, we will give you information about these below.

This document gives you information about how we will handle your repair. It also explains how we will communicate with you, how you can expect your repair to be done and further steps that may be needed to sort out issues with your home.



Our repairs service divides repairs into three main groups:



Responsive repairs – this covers most of the repairs we carry out. It means repairs that are reported by our customers and that can generally be resolved quickly. This guidance focuses mainly on this type of repair.



Planned works – this covers large scale repairs, such as rebuilding walls or relaying paths. It also includes roofing work where we may have fixed a leak as a short-term solution but need to carry out a more comprehensive repair with scaffolding to fix an underlying problem.



Component replacement – this includes upgrading or replacing major components in your home such as a kitchen or bathroom or upgrading your boiler.

When you move into a Futures home, we evaluate it against a checklist before we give you the keys. This checklist – our lettable standard - sets out what you can expect when you arrive . View or download a copy of the lettable standard [here](#).

Repairs you are responsible for

There are some faults in your home that you need to take care of yourself. Examples of things in this category include:

-  replacing toilet seats, standard light bulbs (not covered units) or shower heads
-  fixing small plaster cracks
-  looking after your garden.

However, we do recognise that some customers need assistance with jobs that other customers may be able to do themselves. If you are struggling with any repair, then please contact our customer service team who will be able to provide you with some advice as to what support you can get.



How to get in touch

Our customer contact team are your first port of call when you have a fault in your home that we need to fix. There are many ways to get in touch with them:



- ◀ Log in to MyAccount



- ◀ Fill out our customer enquiries form.



- ◀ Use the live chat on our website homepage in the pop-up box in the bottom right corner when we're online.



- ◀ Call **0300 456 2531**. Our phones are open from 8:30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8:30am to 4:30pm on Fridays. If we're busy, you can use the call-back option and you won't lose your place in the queue. If you hang up and call again you will go to the back of the queue once more.



- ◀ Outside our normal opening hours (eg at weekends) we only offer an emergency call-out service. This service will only treat hazardous problems to make your home safe and habitable again and is not a full repairs service. To keep things simple you can just phone our usual number and you'll be automatically transferred to our out of hours call centre.



You can help make things run more smoothly and quickly if you have some basic information ready when you get in touch. We will need to know your name, address, date of birth and how we can get in touch with you – so a telephone number or email address.

We also need to know the following:

-  If there is an immediate risk to your health and safety or other personal situations that we need to be aware of (for example that you have children or that you work nights) or that yours or a neighbour's home is damaged.
-  When you are available for someone to visit and inspect or repair your home.
-  Anything about your personal circumstances that would help us to provide a better service such as hearing loss, difficulty getting to the door or having just got out of hospital. If you are reporting on behalf of someone else then we will ask you if you have authority to speak on the customer's behalf.

Once we have all this information we will:

-  give you a date and time slot for the appointment
-  send a text to your mobile to confirm the appointment details.



Household circumstances

We understand that you or your family members may have personal circumstances that we need to take into account when we set a timescale for a repair, for example a medical need. Your wellbeing and safety are important to us so we will do all we can to prioritise repairs flexibly to help meet people's individual or family needs.

Our repairs process

We follow a standard process when you report a repair. The process is the same, but the priority level and speed of response will depend on the type of fault.

Here is an overview of the process:

- 1** | We'll normally assign one of our repairs team to your request when we hear from you. For some specific types of repair this may happen later but if this is the case we will still try to tell you when you can expect an appointment.
- 2** | We'll send you a text message to confirm your appointment.
- 3** | We'll send you a weekly reminder text in the run-up to your appointment.
- 4** | We'll send a final reminder to you 48 hours before the appointment.

- 5 | We'll call you when our team member is on their way to your home - this may be from a withheld number
- 6 | Our team will visit and carry out the repair.
- 7 | Wherever possible we will fix the problem on our first visit but sometimes we may need to make a follow-on appointment (for example where we need to order parts to finish the job, if more time is needed or if we have to bring in a specialist or contractor). If this happens we will always leave your property in a safe and liveable condition and aim to complete the work as soon as possible. Where possible we will offer you a new appointment before we leave. Where we can't, one of team will be in touch with you within five working days to let you know what is happening.
- 8 | If we find that a full replacement is due when carrying out a repair, we will schedule this into our planned works programme. We'll consider your personal circumstances when making this decision.
- 9 | If a contractor is carrying out your repair, we will pass your contact details on to them and ask them to arrange the appointment with you directly.

Our appointments process

We offer repair appointments during the working week (Monday to Friday). We have morning slots (8am to 1pm), afternoon slots (12pm to 4pm) and school run slots (9:30am to 4pm). If one of these slots is a problem for you, please let us know and we may be able to offer a more specific time, such as the first call of the day. If you struggle to meet any of our appointment slots due to exceptional circumstances, then please let us know and we may be able to offer you an appointment that suits you outside of our normal slots.

If a repair falls into the emergency category, we will only be able to tell you the day of the appointment and not a specific time. If it's a repair to the outside of your home, such as guttering, fencing or a boundary wall, and you're happy for us to be flexible on the time of the visit please let us know and we will come to your home when we are in the area. If you're out when we do the repair we'll put a card through your letterbox to let you know we've been and done the work.

How to change an appointment

Please tell us if you find out you aren't going to be available for your appointment. You can change an appointment through MyAccount at any time or call our customer contact centre to do it. It's important to let us know as soon as possible if you will miss an appointment so that we can use that time slot to help another person.

From time to time, we may have to cancel your appointment. This could be due to a variety of reasons such as staff sickness or bad weather. We will call you as soon as we are aware of this and re-book the appointment.



What to do if you miss an appointment

If you happen to miss your appointment because of something unexpected (such as needing urgent medical treatment) we will post a calling card through your letterbox. It will give details of the repair we came out to do as well as the date and time. The operative will photograph your front door with a date/time stamp as evidence of our visit. In these situations you will need to contact us again to book your appointment.

In a few situations we will rebook the appointment for you. This includes urgent repairs, health and safety issues, compliance, aids and adaptations, planned works or problems that could damage your home if not addressed quickly.

If you no longer need a repair, please let us know so we can cancel the appointment and use the time slot to help someone else. Please also be aware that some visits, such as annual gas servicing or electrical safety checks, are legal requirements and can't be cancelled (although rescheduling may be possible).



Moving appointments

We may need to occasionally move appointments due to bad weather (such as snow, ice or very windy conditions), sickness or other unexpected staff absences. If this happens we will phone you as soon as possible and try to rearrange the appointment to another suitable time. We will give you as much notice as we can.

We understand that you might be busy when we arrive – perhaps in an online meeting or about to leave for the school run. All of our operatives will ring on the way to your home to make sure that you are there. If you are tied up when we arrive, we will wait for up to ten minutes until you are free. But if it's going to be longer we will have to reorganise the appointment.

Can my child wait at home instead?

We can only carry out a repair visit if someone aged 16 or over is at home. Our operatives will not enter your home if a child under 16 is home alone and this will count as a failed appointment.



How we prioritise repairs

To help us make sure that we are tackling the most urgent jobs first we categorise faults, repairs and maintenance into four priority groups. We'll let you know when you contact us what category of repairs your issue falls into.



Emergency repairs (we will attend within 24 hours)



If you have a fault or issue in this category we will come to your home within 24 working hours. We will aim to fully sort out the problem on our first visit if we can but sometimes we will have to do work to make things safe and then come back later. Because it's an urgent issue we will ask you to make sure that someone stays at home until we have visited.

If you contact us about a emergency fault after 2pm we may have to arrange an out-of-hours 'make safe' visit until we can return to carry out the full repair.

This category of repairs includes issues such as:

-  faulty carbon monoxide or smoke alarms
-  no working toilet in the home
-  uncontrollable leaks or anything causing significant damage to the property
-  total loss of power
-  window and door repairs to make your home secure.

To see a full list of emergencies repairs please click [here](#).

Fast repairs (within four working days)

We aim to resolve issues within this category in four working days or less.

Faults treated as fast repairs are things such as:

-  boiler faults leaving you without heating or hot water
-  making sure you have a working bath or shower (when you have no other way of bathing)
-  failure of one of the electrical circuits in your home.

For a full list of fast repairs click [here](#).





Standard repairs (time scale)



This basically covers all other faults and issues that are our responsibility and that don't fit into the emergency and fast categories.

We aim to resolve these within 25 working days although some issues may take longer.

Examples of standard repairs include:

-  a dripping tap
-  containable leaks
-  a fault with a single light fitting.

If you don't want to wait for us to come and fix your issue, it may be something that you can sort out yourself. Check out our Help Hub for information, and advice on DIY repairs.

Out of hours response (within four hours)

If you find a fault in your home that you need us to deal with when our contact centre is closed, our out of hours service will carry out an emergency or 'make safe' repair to ensure that you are safe and that your home is habitable. We will come to your home within four hours and then return another day to carry out the full repair.



Planned work

Sometimes when we investigate a fault, we may decide you need a full replacement rather than a repair. When this is the case, you may need to wait longer than a standard repair because we will schedule it into our planned repairs programme. Of course, if work is needed sooner to make things safe we will carry out a temporary repair and carry out the full replacement at a later date. Typically this includes things such as:

- roofing repairs or replacements
- larger plastering works
- external works such as fencing, path and boundary wall replacement.



If we tell you something will be replaced as a planned repair it may take up to 12 months for the job to be completed, unless there is a new risk or a sudden deterioration – in which case please let us know.

Component replacement

As well as breaking unexpectedly, many parts of your home suffer routine wear and tear. Things age and building standards change.

We invest millions of pounds every year in planned updates and improvements to our customers' homes. Examples of this include:

- central heating systems
- window and doors (including fire doors)
- kitchens
- bathrooms.



This type of work will be scheduled well in advance according to the age and style of your home. Our surveyors will contact you to let you know if we are planning to do component replacement work at your home.

Find out more about planned works here and stock condition surveys by clicking [here](#).



How we use contractors

Some repairs are carried out by contractors working for us. This is typically for more specialist work such as electronic door entry systems, structural repairs or lock changes.

If we have asked a contractor to visit you, they will contact you directly to book an appointment. If you later need to reschedule this, please contact our Contact Centre who will be able to advise you. All contractors are expected to meet the same service standards as our own employees, including carrying identification and working cleanly and safely with minimum disruption to you.

If you have moved into a new build home you may also find that your repair is passed to a contractor. This is because we have a 12-month warranty period with many of our developers so repairs are their responsibility during this period. However you should still report faults to us in the normal way as it helps us to monitor and manage the work they do.

Working in your home

Our operatives will aim to carry out your repair with the minimum amount of disruption to you. They will wear shoe covers and are well trained around health and safety. They will not make personal phone calls, eat, drink, smoke or vape in your home. If they need to use your facilities such as the toilet, they will ask beforehand. They will use dust sheets where required and tidy up the area they have been working in after the repair is completed.

Sometimes we will need to send more than one operative to carry out the work.

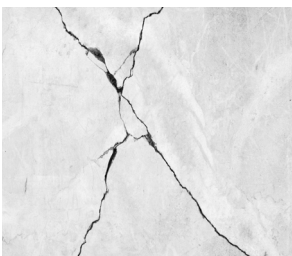
The operative(s) will take photos to evidence the work they have done but only of the areas where they have been working. Before they leave they will also explain and show you what they have done if it is safe to do so. They may ask you to sign a form to show that you accept the work that has been done.

How to check the identity of our people



All our operatives wear a Futures uniform and carry an ID card with their name, a photograph and our logo. If you have any concerns when an operative arrives, please call our contact centre to confirm their identity. If you would like our operatives to have a password before entering your home as an extra check, just let us know.

What happens if we damage your home decoration



If we damage your home decoration while carrying out a repair, we will put things right. How we approach this may vary depending on how your home is decorated and what the damage is so we will discuss this with you on a case-by-case basis.

What happens if we damage your possessions



We are not responsible for personal items in your home and advise all our customers to take out adequate contents insurance at the start of their tenancy. Contents insurance should cover damage caused by leaks within your home, including the roof.

If you think we have damaged your possessions while carrying out repairs, we may be able to compensate you. There is more information about this in our compensation policy.

Disclaimers



Sometimes you may need to clear an area – for example by moving furniture or lifting carpets – so that we can carry out repairs. We know this may be difficult for some people so if this is the case we may be able to do this for you but we may ask you to sign a disclaimer for the items we are moving. If we need to remove an area of carpet to carry out a repair, we will put the carpet back to the best of our ability although you may prefer to ask a professional carpet fitter to carry out this work.

Repairs for leaseholders or shared owners

Your lease will include exact details of the services we will provide for you and this may vary from property to property. Generally we do not maintain leasehold or shared ownership homes although we are responsible for a few areas. If you are unsure, please get in touch for more information.



Surveys and post inspections

Customer feedback is important to us so we may phone or visit you after a repair to assess the quality of the work. Your answers and input help us shape the service and continue to improve.

We share feedback with the relevant team and there may be times we contact you again to discuss the feedback you have given us or to try to resolve any outstanding issues.



Help us to help you

There are some simple things you can do to help us to get your repairs dealt with more quickly.



- ▶ Make sure we have your up-to-date contact details so that we can get in touch to make arrangements when we need to.



- ▶ Carry out some preparations before the appointment:



- ▶ Make sure you have credit on your gas and electric meters before gas or electrical work if you have a pre-paid meter.



- ▶ Make sure the area around the repair site is safe and cleared of items. If you are having difficulty doing this then please let us know. If we are doing window repairs, you may need to remove curtains or blinds.



- ▶ Make sure all breakables and valuables are cleared away from around the repair site.



- ▶ Keep your pets in a separate room where possible.



- ▶ Try to keep your children away from operatives when they are working. Tools or materials they use could be dangerous to children.



- ▶ Use **MyAccount** rather than calling if you can – it's usually quicker.

Permission to improve your home

We understand that you may want to make changes to your home to make it more personal to you but it's vital that you get approval from us before carrying out any work other than decorating.

As each request is different we will assess your request on an individual basis. Please be aware that you will be liable for any costs for this and the item's future maintenance. We may also ask you to give us relevant certificates to prove that the work has been carried out safely and to the right standards.



Recharges - repairs we will charge you for

If we carry out repairs that are considered beyond normal wear and tear, or that have been caused by neglect or vandalism, we may recharge you for the repair.



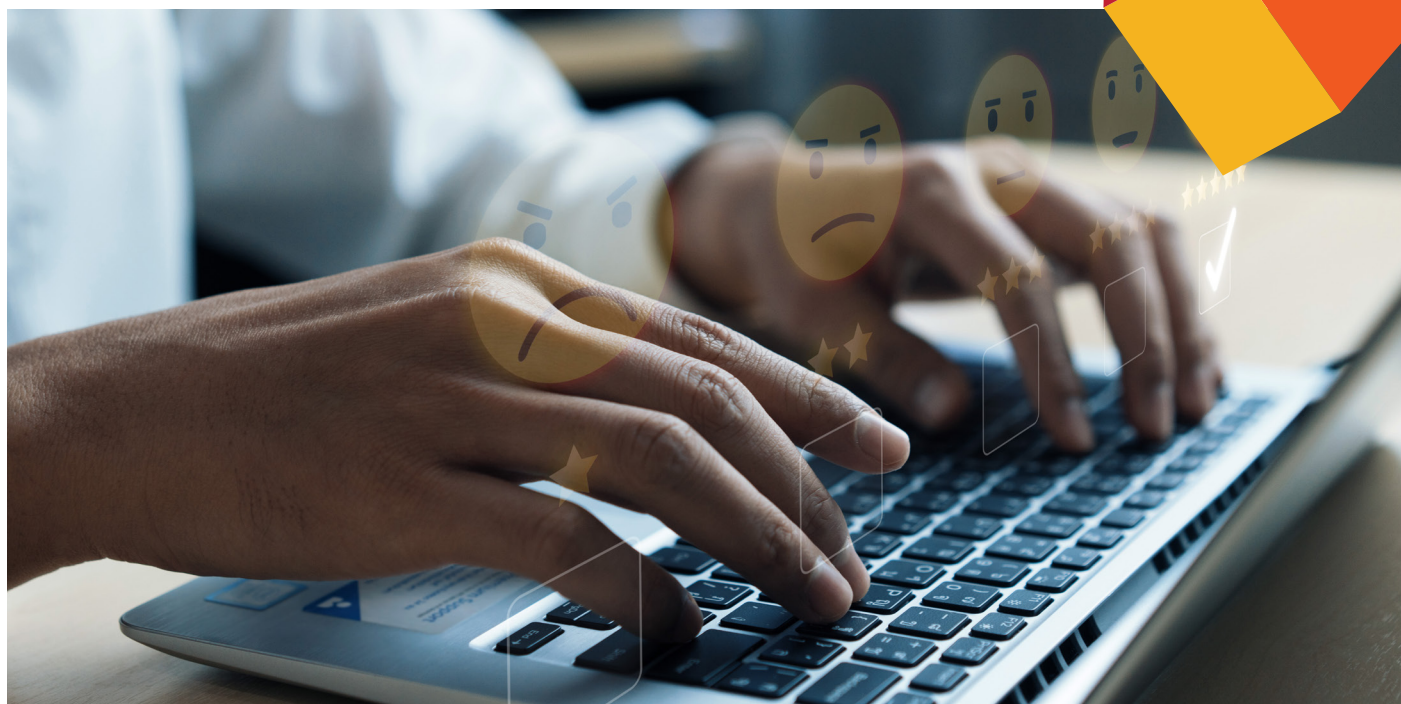
If you need to move out of your home while the repair takes place

Sometimes we may think it's necessary for you to leave your home while we carry out a repair – usually for your safety or where work may be particularly disruptive. This could be either for a short-term emergency or for a longer period for major work and could include overnight work. If this happens we will provide you with suitable alternative accommodation for as long as necessary.

Once we have a completion date for the work we will agree a return date with you. We know this isn't a nice thing to have to go through so we will avoid it wherever possible. We also have dedicated staff who will help you through this process.

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with any element of the repairs service you can make a formal complaint to us, details can be found [here](#).



Health & Safety and compliance

Safety testing



As your landlord we legally have to make sure that your home is safe. This means that we will carry out annual safety checks at set periods on certain parts of your home. **This includes:**

-  Central heating - we will contact you every year to organise for your boiler to be serviced.
-  A check of your home electrical systems every five years.
-  Other safety checks such as testing water, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, or servicing open fires (if you have one).

It's essential that you give us access to your home to carry out these checks. It allows us to check your home is safe and free from any potential hazards.

If you persistently refuse to allow us to make necessary visits related to home safety or compliance, we may be forced to take legal action to enter your home.

Gas servicing and safety

Taking care of your gas appliances is crucial. If they're not set up or maintained correctly, they can be dangerous. They might leak gas, cause fires, explode, or release a poisonous gas called carbon monoxide (CO). CO is especially dangerous because you can't see it, taste it, or smell it, but it can make you very sick or even be deadly. **Here are some simple steps to ensure your gas appliances are safe:**

-  Keep an eye out for signs that your gas appliances might not be working right. Look for flames that aren't blue, odd messages or sounds from your boiler, or dirty marks around the appliance.
-  Learn the six main signs of carbon monoxide poisoning: headaches, dizziness, trouble breathing, feeling sick, passing out, and losing consciousness.
-  Never try to fix or install gas appliances yourself or block any vents. Doing this could make things unsafe. If you're worried about an appliance, call the free 24-hour national gas emergency number immediately on 0800 111 999.
-  Before hiring an engineer, make sure they're Gas Safe registered and qualified for the work you need. You can find this info on the Gas Safe Register website or on their Gas Safe ID card. A good engineer will show you their card without you having to ask.
-  **Always let us in for your annual gas safety check. It doesn't take long, and it's there to keep you, your home and your family safe.**



If you think you can smell gas



You must call Cadent immediately on 0800 111 999 and take the following actions:

- ❏ Open doors and windows to let the gas escape.
- ❏ Turn off the emergency control valve next to the gas meter. There should be a yellow label attached to the pipe above the emergency control valve that shows the on and off position of the handle.
- ❏ Don't use electric switches or naked flames (eg candles, lighters, matches or gas cookers).



Asbestos

Asbestos has not been used in the UK as a building material since the early 1980s. It is not dangerous if it is in good condition but can cause serious illness if it is broken up and inhaled.

Most asbestos has either been removed from our properties or is contained safely in:

- ❏ gutters and rain water downpipes
- ❏ soffit boards, boarding under canopies
- ❏ textured paints and Artex
- ❏ flat corrugated roof or wall sheets, especially garages
- ❏ cold water tanks
- ❏ roof slates, felts and linings



-  bath panels
-  roof and wall cladding
-  some storage heaters
-  internal partitions.

We have carried out a thorough asbestos survey of all our homes and keep a register of any which contain asbestos.

If any asbestos materials, or materials that you think may contain asbestos, become damaged or you wish to carry out DIY work that could disturb asbestos, please contact our Asset Management team immediately on **0300 456 2531**.



Legionella



As part of our commitment to keeping your home safe, we are legally required to assess the hot and cold water systems in your home every five years. This is a visual inspection to identify any water systems which might create a risk from exposure to Legionella bacteria. Legionella can cause a serious illness, Legionnaire's disease, and is sometimes found in standing water.

During the check we will need access to all rooms where water is stored or heated and where there is an outlet (such as a tap). We may also need access to your loft space. If we make a water safety appointment please allow us access, it's important for your safety.

Damp and mould

If you notice any damp or mould in your home, no matter how small, please contact us for some advice. We will visit to see what we can do to help fix the situation. There are also some things you can do to help, specifically where condensation is a problem.

Condensation is produced when warm humid air touches a cold surface. It can be caused by everyday activities in your home such as having a shower, washing and drying clothes or boiling a kettle.

If condensation forms where there is little or no ventilation, it can cause a black mouldy-looking growth to form. Don't worry if this happens, just follow these simple steps to prevent and treat it:

Produce less moisture:

- use lids on saucepans to reduce steam
- avoid using radiators to dry clothes
- vent tumble driers to an open window or outside.



Stop moisture spreading:

- open windows or use an extractor fan when you are cooking or washing
- keep windows open for 20 minutes after this kind of activity - until the damp air has cleared away
- wipe away condensation when it appears.

Let moisture out of your home:

- open your window vents when inside a room
- leave gaps between furniture and walls
- avoid overfilling wardrobes and drawers.

Keep your home evenly heated:

- keep your home warm to prevent condensation forming
- leave your heating on lower for longer
- keep all rooms heated, including ones you don't use.

Treat mould caused by condensation:

- act straight away to prevent it spreading
- sterilise the affected area with a fungicidal wash and keep an eye on it – if it comes back, treat it again.
- paint the affected area with some fungicidal paint after it has cleared or, if using wallpaper, use paste with fungicidal properties
- dry clean carpets or clothes with mould growing on them (vacuuming or brushing the mould can be hazardous to your health).

Prevent mould from forming by wiping up any condensation you see in your home.

Smoke alarms

We may make an appointment to change the smoke alarms in your home. This is because some units are wired in to your mains electrical supply and some parts expire. If we need to do this we will contact you to book an appointment. Please allow us access for this work – it helps ensure that the fire alarms are working as they should and this could help save lives if there is a fire in your home.





Thank you



0300 456 2531



www.futureshg.co.uk



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