



**southessexhomes**

working together



## **Repairs and Maintenance**

## Section 3

# Repairs and Maintenance

### Who is responsible for repairs?

South Essex Homes, on behalf of the Council is responsible for keeping the 'common parts' of your block in good repair. This means we will look after the structure of the building and the landings and hallways including lighting, controlled door-entry systems and so on.

You have the right to ask your landlord through South Essex Homes the Arms Length Management Company, to keep the 'communal parts' such as hallways, landings, gardens, etc of your block in a fit state of repair. You also have the right to be consulted about major repairs to your block for which you will be expected to contribute your share of the cost.

### Repairs for which the Council is responsible include

#### Structure

- Roofs, drains, gutters and pipes on the outside of your home;
- Outside entrance doors (but not front doors of individual flats);
- Window frames and sills (not including glass) unless replaced by you or a previous leaseholder;
- Outside paintwork; Paths and steps (back and front) shared with other dwellings;
- Boundary fences (except some where you or a neighbouring owner are responsible);
- Chimneys and chimney stacks;
- Stairs and landings; Garages and outbuildings, including drying areas.

#### Installations/Fixtures and Fittings

- Shared water pipes, water tanks, gas pipes and electrical wiring;
- Light fittings in shared areas;
- Controlled door-entry systems (where fitted);
- Decoration in shared areas.

### Repairs for which you as leaseholder are responsible

- All repairs to the inside of your flat;
- Glass in your windows and fixtures & fittings but not the frame (unless you or a previous leaseholder has installed double glazing);
- Your front door, and all fixtures and fittings but not the frame;
- Any damage to the common parts and services caused by you, members of your household, or your visitors;
- Chimney sweeping.

### How to report a repair, which is our responsibility

There are many ways you can report a repair, which is **the Landlord's responsibility**

- You can telephone the Repairs Section on 0800 833160/1/2/3. This is a Freephone number, and can also be called out of office hours but only in the case of an EMERGENCY;
- If an emergency situation arises where there is a danger to life or limb, or damage to other properties we may need to force entry to make safe. Eg water leaks. If forced entry is required Leaseholders may be recharged for this and any damage to other properties.
- You can write to the Repairs Section at South Essex Home, Tickfield Depot Tickfield Avenue, Southend on Sea SS2 6LL
- You can call in at the Area Housing Offices in Delaware Road, Shoebury, Mendip Road, Westcliff or Alexandra Street, Southend during normal opening hours. See back of handbook for full address and contact details

## What happens when you report a repair?

We will ask you for

- Your name and address;
- As much detail as you can give about the problem and the repair that is needed;
- When you will be home to let the operative in (if necessary).

## When will the job be done?

We give all repairs a priority rating depending on how urgent they are. We will tell you which category this repair is in and how soon it should be done.

### **Priority**

Situation	Detail	Response Time
Emergency	Where life is at risk	Within 1 hour to make safe, to be completed within 24 hours
Urgent	No immediate danger to life or limb	Within 3 working days
Semi urgent	Where a repair is necessary but no danger	Within 6 working days
Non urgent		Within 21 calendar days
Minor repairs		Within 2 calendar months

## Making sure you get a good service

Don't forget that the cost of repairs will normally be shared between you, the Council and other leaseholders in your block. When repairs are carried out by our contractors, it is important that we all get value for money. If the job is not done properly, or is not done within the time set out above, please let us know by contacting the Repair Line on Free phone freephone numbers 0800 833160/1/2/3. Or by using the freephone in the local area housing offices. See back of handbook for full address and contact details.

## Repairs to your own flat

You are responsible for repairs to the inside of your flat, including your front door and the glass in your windows. You should make your own arrangements to get someone to carry out the repairs for you.

If you, or someone you have employed, are carrying out repairs inside your flat, you must make sure that no damage is done to shared services or the structure of the block. You will be liable for any damage caused to the Landlord's property and you will have to pay to have it put right. If you are in any doubt about any work you intend to carry out please contact the Estate Officer at the Area Housing Office and explain the situation. See back of handbook for full address and contact details. Based on the information you provide, it will be decided if an inspection is needed prior to the commencement of any work. You must not continue with the work if you are instructed not to. There may be a charge for this inspection.

You must not carry out repairs on landings, stairways and other shared areas. You would not be covered by our insurance if you had an accident or caused damage. If you, or your visitors or members of your household, cause damage to communal areas you will have to pay for the repairs.

<b>Always report repairs in shared areas to the Repairs Office on Freephone number 0800 833160/1/2/3</b>
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## Carrying out your own alterations

As a leaseholder you have the right to improve your home, but in some circumstances you will need written permission from us. This is because, as the landlord, we have an investment in the block and a responsibility to the other residents, but we will not refuse permission unless we have a good reason. You may also need to get planning permission and building consent before starting work.

We do not need to know about minor works such as decorating, but we do need to know about any alterations which affect walls, windows, doorframes, plumbing and electrical services before any work is started.

You have the right to make alterations to the interior of your flat, so long as you do not remove structural walls or cause damage to the exterior or shared parts of the building. Some alterations may require a variation of your lease i.e. installation of an extra room in the roof space, and there will be a charge for this. For major alterations you must ask our permission before starting on any work. We may advise you that you need planning permission and building regulations approval. Such permission should be obtained from Southend Borough Council who will not unreasonably withhold or delay this process.

You must not do anything which is likely to cause damage to the structure of the building or to shared services, such as plumbing to the roof tank, electricity/gas/water/sewerage supplies.

### **For what sort of alterations do I need permission?**

- Any addition or change to the services in your home, including fixtures and fittings such as heating and kitchen units;
- Dropped kerbs and hard standing;
- Aerials or satellite dishes;
- Outside decoration. The type of paint may need to be approved so that it is compatible with future paints that may be used by us.

### **How do I get permission?**

You should write to the Right to Buy & Service Charge Officer at South Essex Homes, or contact your Area Housing Office. See back of handbook for full address and contact details. You will need to say exactly what you want to do and include a drawing or plan.

A building surveyor may need to visit your home to see what you intend to do before making a decision. There may be a charge for this.

**We will normally give you an answer within two weeks of receiving your request. If we refuse permission we will tell you why. You then have the right to appeal.**

The permission we give you to go ahead is not the same as planning permission. You are responsible for getting any necessary planning permission or building regulations approval. We will normally make it a condition that you do this when we give you permission for the work.

### **Home Improvements Loans**

You may obtain a loan from your mortgage company to carry out home improvements. If you obtain such a loan within the first three years after you have bought the flat under the Right to Buy, your mortgage company will ask the Council to postpone its legal charge (the discount which you received on the purchase price and which should be repaid if you sell your property). The Council will require quotations for the works you propose to carry out and the Legal Department will consider whether it is appropriate to agree to postpone the Council's Legal Charge. If it is appropriate you will be required to sign a form agreeing that the works will be carried out within 6 months. An appropriate letter of postponement will then be sent to your mortgage company. A fee can be charged for this service.