



Repairs and Maintenance Handbook

Our guide to looking after your home

Introduction

You tell us that making sure your home is in tip-top condition is the most important service we provide.

It's a challenge planning and carrying out repairs and maintenance to over 8,000 homes. We love doing this work as when we do it well it makes you happy and more satisfied with Bron Afon as a landlord.

'Who is Responsible?' is the most important section in this handbook. We have made it really easy for you to check if a problem with your home is your responsibility or ours.

Here are three other things you will find in this handbook:

- **Accurate information** - When you report a repair the information you tell us can help us fix your home quicker and give a better service. On page eight you will see some of the questions we ask. Make sure you have the answers before you get in touch.
- **Speed of service** - not every repair is an 'emergency' so on pages ten to 12 we explain the maximum length of time a job will take to do.
- **DIY** - There are so many jobs that you can do yourself easily and quickly. Our customer service advisors will do their best to advise you if it's a simple job that will avoid you having to wait up to 30 days for us to visit. Turn to pages 22 to 25 for some tips.

If you have any comments on this handbook and ideas about how we can make it better please let me know.

John Holman

Director of Property and Development

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all you need to know from the different types of repair categories to who is responsible for a repair.

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Repairs

Who is responsible for a repair?

If something goes wrong in your home please give this table a check before you contact us. It shows the common household faults and who is responsible for fixing them.

A-Z of Repairs	Additional information	Who is responsible?	
		Bron Afon	You
Chains and plugs			✓
Chimneys		✓	
Communal areas		✓	
Communal entrance doors		✓	
Decoration (internal)	This includes any decorating. For example, if you stripped off the wallpaper and the wall needed plastering you would be responsible for doing this.		✓
Domestic appliances			✓
Door numbers, bells and draught excluders			✓
Doors (front and rear) including faults with the lock.		✓	
Drain blockages	If you call us out and the blockage was caused by something you put down the sink, bath or toilet you should not have done you will be charged the cost of the job. - Blockages can sometimes be the responsibility of Welsh Water if the problem is in the main drain. - Turn to page 22 for tips on clearing blockages yourself. - Call Welsh Water on 0800 085 3968 and get their advice if the blockage is outside your home.	✓	
Drains and waste pipes	If any of these items need repair please call us. But if there is a blockage please call Welsh Water for advice first on 0800 085 3968 .	✓	

Repairs

A-Z of Repairs	Additional information	Who is responsible?	
		Bron Afon	You
External gullies	Please help by clearing away leaves and stones to stop them getting blocked.		✓
External timbers e.g. soffits, fascias		✓	
Floor coverings - fitted by us		✓	
Lost keys/locked out of your home.	We will not replace any locks or help you get back into your home. If you have lost your keys or left them inside your home you will need to call out your own locksmith. We may carry out this service but you will be recharged.		✓
Fences and gates - installed by us		✓	
Fire grates and surrounds - installed by us		✓	
Fixtures and fittings	Shelving/cupboards installed by you or the previous tenant		✓
Floorboards		✓	
Garages		✓	
Garden maintenance - including trees and hedges			✓
Gas boilers/heating and hot water systems	You are responsible for your appliances such as your cooker. We are only responsible for heating that we have installed.	✓	
Electric fires - installed by us	You are responsible for your appliances such as electric fan heaters.	✓	
Internal doors	You are responsible for fixing any damage you caused to a door and making any adjustments if you're having new flooring fitted.	✓	

Repairs

A-Z of Repairs	Additional information	Who is responsible?	
		Bron Afon	You
Kitchens - installed by us	You are responsible for your appliances such as your fridge.	✓	
Light fittings - installed by us	We are responsible for the fittings but you are responsible for changing the bulbs.	✓	
Outbuildings - built by us.	You are responsible for outbuildings you built yourself or were built by the previous tenant.	✓	
Paths and steps	We will repair paths and steps that go to and from entrances and drying areas	✓	
Plastering	You are responsible for filling small holes and fine cracks at your home for decoration.	✓	
Plumbing - repairs and leaks		✓	
Porches	We will fix them if it was built at the same time as your home. If you or a previous tenant built it any repairs are your responsibility.	✓	
Pest infestations - for example wasp nests and rodents.	If there is a defect in your home that is allowing pests to get in we will carry out a repair but it is your responsibility to remove the pest infestation.		✓
Radiators	We are only responsible for the maintenance of radiators. We will not remove or refit a radiator if it needs to be done because you are decorating your home	✓	
Roofs		✓	
Skirting boards		✓	
Smoke and heat detectors	If you fit extra detectors you are responsible for them. Make sure you check your smoke alarm every week by pressing the button. If it's not working report the fault immediately.	✓	
Stairs		✓	

Repairs

A-Z of Repairs	Additional information	Who is responsible?	
		Bron Afon	You
Switches and sockets		✓	
Taps		✓	
TV aerials/ satellite dishes and sockets	We are responsible if it's a communal aerial in a block of flats. You must have written permission from us to fit an aerial or satellite dish to your home. If we need to move aerials or satellite dishes to carry out work you will have to pay for them to be moved and refitted.		✓
Washing lines in communal areas		✓	
Worktops	We will not do minor repairs such as scratches.	✓	
Windows & window fittings			
Window fittings (including catches)		✓	
Window frames	You are responsible for cleaning and lubricating all the moving parts of your windows.	✓	
Window sills		✓	
Broken glass/glazing	You are responsible for the glass/ glazing in any windows, doors or porches in your home. If one of your windows is smashed we will come and board it up to make it secure. If you are the victim of crime and your home has been damaged, you must report it to the police and ask for a crime number. Please make sure you tell us the crime number when you report the damage. But we may still charge you for the work.		✓
Misted windows/ seals in our double glazed units	This is not a repair but will be done when your home has new windows and frames fitted.	Not applicable	

Repairs

How to report a repair?

Before you contact us, please check the tables on pages three to six to find out who is responsible for the repair and to see what details we need to know.



Online

Visit **bronafon.org.uk** and click on **My Account** to set up an account.

Once you have done this you can report your repair using the form.

We will contact you with an appointment time to do the repair or arrange for an inspection. **Do not report emergency repairs online or by email, please telephone.**



Email

You can request a repair by email to **reporting_repairs@bronafon.org.uk** at any time for less urgent repairs. Please allow 24 hours for a reply. Remember this email account is not checked outside normal office hours so make sure you take this into account when emailing at the weekend. **Do not report emergency repairs online or by email, please telephone.**



Phone

Call **01633 620 111** - Monday to Friday 8am - 5pm. Select Option 1 for repairs

NOTE: If you suspect a gas leak, please call the Gas Emergency Services on **Freephone 0800 111 999**.

You will then have three options:

Option 1 - to report a new repair or talk about an existing repair.

Option 2 - if you already have an appointment for your repair but need to cancel or change it.

Option 3 - for gas servicing enquiries.

Emergencies outside office hours

Call **01633 620 111** if you have an emergency repair.

You should report all other repairs on the next working day.

Repairs

What happens when you report a repair?

We will ask you some questions to find out:

- Your name, address and phone number.
- The answers to the security questions we have for your account.
- Your rent balance. If you are in debt without an agreement in place, before we record your repair we will help you to set up a payment agreement to clear your arrears.
- As much information as possible about the problem.
- If the problem is also affecting a neighbour's home. We will need the address of your neighbour.
- A time when someone is home so we can arrange the appointment.
- Anything else you think we need to know. For example, if you have a disability.

When we have logged your repair, we will give you a job number and details of when the work will be carried out or inspected so our surveyor can check out the problem.

Where possible we would like you to agree an all-day appointment, which means we will visit you on the agreed day anytime between 8am and 5pm to complete the work.

If you are not available for the whole day we can offer the following appointment times:

- Morning (8am to 1pm)
- Afternoon (12noon to 5pm)
- Avoid school runs (9.30am to 2.30pm)

No-one at home

If there is either no-one home (or no-one over the age of 18) when we call we will leave a card to tell you we visited about the repair and that it has now been cancelled. You will need to contact us to report the repair again if you still require the work to be done.

If the repair was an emergency (24-hours a day) and you are not home when we call the repair will be cancelled and you will be recharged for the cost of the visit.

If the repair required has a health and safety implication such as your smoke alarm is broken, we will not cancel the work, we will leave a calling card asking you to contact us urgently to arrange another appointment.



Repairs

Text message reminders

If we have your mobile number we will send you a repairs appointment confirmation text on the day that you report the repair to us. For repairs that do not need to be done quickly we will also send you a reminder text a few days before the appointment date.

Rearrange appointments

If you cannot keep an appointment, please let us know, so we can arrange an alternative appointment, otherwise we may cancel your repair.

How quickly will the repair be done?

The repair categories

When you talk to us we will use some terms to explain what kind of 'repair' you tell us about. We will tell you the category of your repair and the timescale for when it will be done.

1 Repairs (emergency, urgent and routine)

We do responsive repairs to fix something that is broken.

A responsive repair is usually work to your home that is urgent and needs to be done within an agreed timescale. Turn to pages ten to 12 for the timescales.

It's work that can usually be completed in one visit and fixes the immediate problem.

An example

A patio slab may be broken and could cause someone to trip. We may replace or refix the slab but spot that more work is needed to the rest of the patio. That extra work would be non-urgent and done at a later date.

2 Non-urgent

If your request is 'non-urgent' it will not be done within 30 days. We will log it on our system and contact you when it will be done.

An example

We have had to do several responsive repairs to your roof. A new roof would help us save money by stopping future responsive repair requests.

Your roof would be classed as non-urgent work and we would contact you when we know it is going to be done.

How quickly we carry out a repair depends on all of the following:

- The risk to you and the people living in your home or the public
- The risk of further damage to your home

We may change the priority of a repair if we decide you are vulnerable.

Repairs

Timescales

When you report a repair, we will tell you how urgent it is and agree an appointment date with you. All of these timescales are the longest amount of time it will take. When we ask you questions about your repair we may agree a different timescale to what is in this table.

- **Emergency:**

We aim to visit your home within two hours to make the repair 'safe' and then return to complete it within 24 hours.

- **Urgent:**

We aim to complete the repair within three working days

- **Routine:**

We aim to complete the repair within 30 working days

- **Non-urgent:**

If your request is 'non-urgent' it will not be done within 30 days. We will log it on our system and contact you when it will be done.



Repair category

Emergency

Any defect that puts the health and safety of the tenant, or a third party, at immediate risk of death or injury; or that is an immediate risk to the structure of the building.

Timescale

Aim to attend within two hours - complete within 24 hours (same day).
We may not come to your home after 10pm but will call the next day.

This may include repairs such as

- Total loss of electricity or unsafe electrical fittings
- Total loss of gas - unless due to no credit on the meter
- Gas escape (Contact National Grid Gas Emergency Line on **0800 111 999**)
- Heating or hot water not working (between 31 Oct to 1 May). We may not attend if the outside temperature is above 5°C.
- Broken cistern, toilet pan or overflow.
- Blocked flue to boiler or open fire
- No water - Please contact Welsh Water in the first instance.
- Any severe leak that can't be contained.
- Unsecure external window, door or lock (if your home is unsecure)
- Failure of door entry system for a block of flats - (only if locked in or out)
- Defective heat or smoke detector

Repairs

Repair category	Timescale	This may include repairs such as
Urgent Repairs which seriously inconvenience you or will cause significant damage to your home if left unattended beyond a few days	Up to three working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe roof damage • Blocked, main drains soil pipe or sole toilet. Always report to Welsh Water Sewerage services and emergencies on Telephone: 0800 085 3968 before contacting Bron Afon. • Lift broken • Fire • Lighting to communal stairs, landings and escape routes • Damaged fire doors to communal areas in flats • Serious hazards that could cause slips/ trips or falls. • Serious structural defect.(For example a wall in danger of collapsing). • Partial loss of electricity supplies • Heating or hot water not working (between 1 May to 31 October). We may not attend if the outside temperature is above 5°C. • Roof leak with no danger to life or serious structural damage • Blocked sink, bath, basin • Significant problem with water coming into your home. • Showers (if no separate bath) • Rotten timber flooring or stair tread • Unsecure door-entry systems
Routine	Up to 30 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up repair to leaking roof • Faulty extractor fan • Dripping or leaking taps or shower units • Toilet not flushing if there is more than one toilet in the property • Minor electrical faults

Repairs

Repair category	Timescale	This may include repairs such as
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Radiator leak (containable)• Kitchen cupboard doors• Internal doors that are sticking• Blocked gutters• Cavity Wall Extraction (if causing damp issues)• Minor heating faults or breakdowns

Who will do the repair?

Our own trade staff will normally do the work and will show their Bron Afon ID card. Any contractors that we use also carry ID.

You should always make sure that anyone visiting your property on our behalf shows you their ID. A genuine caller will not mind you checking. If you are not sure whether a person is working for us, do not let them into your home. Please call **01633 620 111** if you have any doubts, or phone the police on **101**.

Rechargeable repairs

We respect and value you as a tenant and in return we expect you to respect and value your home. There are times where we fix something that was caused by misuse, abuse or negligence by you, your family or visitors to your home.

In almost all cases we will charge you for this work.

This is known as a rechargeable repair and is explained in your tenancy agreement.

Here are some examples of repairs you could be recharged for if we do the work:

- Deliberate damage to fixtures, fittings or your home.
- Misuse or vandalism to our appliances in your home.
- Accidental damage caused by your family or visitors to your home. We recommend you take out home contents insurance to cover accidental damage.

Repairs

If repair work is needed for this type of damage, we will not do it unless there is a risk to health and safety or it's covered by the 'right to repair'.

If rechargeable work is carried out we will ask you to sign a letter to confirm you agree to pay for the cost. We will send you a bill as soon as the work has been carried out.

Criminal damage

If you are the victim of crime and your home has been damaged, you must report it to the police and ask for a crime number. Please make sure you tell us the crime number when you report the damage. But we may still charge you for the work.

Moving out

If you move out of your home make sure you do the following work before you hand in your keys:

- carry out any outstanding repairs that are your responsibility.
- clear out any unwanted furniture including items in your loft, shed and garden.
- clean your home.

If you move out and we have to do any work that was your responsibility we will charge you for it.

If you have done work to your home without our permission or it does not meet the required standards you will have to return it to the original state or we will charge you.

Vulnerable tenants

If you are vulnerable our expert staff will ask you questions to find out how we can adapt our service to meet your needs.

Useful information

What to do in an emergency?

Do you know the location of your:

- emergency gas shut off valve?
- water stop tap?
- electric fuse box?

If you don't know where they are spend five minutes right now to find them and check they work.

In an emergency being able to turn them off can save a lot of damage to your home.



Gas

If you smell gas, think you have a gas leak, or are worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from a gas appliance, please call the free Gas Emergency Services emergency line on **0800 111 999**. **The operator will talk you through the next steps to take.**

Fire

- Call 999 and ask for the fire brigade
- Do not try to put out the fire yourself. Leave the immediate area and move to a safe place.
- For more information about fire safety visit **southwales-fire.gov.uk** or **bronafton.org.uk**

Electricity

- If you think that an electrical appliance in your home is dangerous, turn the appliance off at the socket outlet and remove the plug.
- If you have total loss of electrical power to your home, check your fuse board first. If the switch is in the OFF position, turn it back to ON.
- If you still have no power, check with your neighbours if possible as there may be a power cut in your area.
- Call 105 (free of charge) and you will be put through to your electricity operator.

Water

We recommend that you check you can turn off your water supply at least once a year. Please contact us if the stop tap is stuck.

- If you have a burst pipe or any other water leak, turn your mains stop tap off to the right and then call us on **01633 620 111**.

Useful information

- If you have no water supply, check with your neighbours if possible and call **Welsh Water** on **0800 052 0130**.
- Serious leaks from inside flats can affect the flats below. In an emergency we may gain entry to your home if no-one is in. This is explained in your tenancy agreement or lease.

Drains and toilet blockages

- If you have a blockage, it is important to check it out because waste water can back up from the toilet or sink and flood your home. (See Useful Information for preventing blockages on page 22)
- Check with your neighbours if possible to find out if any blockage or flooding is affecting their home as well and follow one of the points below:
 - If the blockage is on the ground floor (such as the ground floor toilet, manhole or gulley) please call Welsh Water on **0800 085 3968**.
 - If your neighbours' homes are also affected, please call Welsh Water on **0800 085 3968**.
 - If the blockage is just in your home, please make every effort to clear it yourself using a plunger. If you are unable to clear the blockage yourself then contact us. If we clear any blockage and see that the blockage was caused by misuse then we will recharge you for the cost of the work.

Dangerous trees

Trees within the boundaries of your garden are your responsibility.

Trees in the communal spaces on our land are generally our responsibility but those close to the highway can often be the responsibility of Torfaen Council.

If you see a dangerous tree call us on **01633 620 111** or Torfaen Council on **01495 762 200**. You can also report them on our website - **bronafon.org.uk**

Satisfaction surveys

We may contact you after your repair has been carried to check that everything has been done satisfactorily. If we don't contact you but you want to make some comments please let us know.

Useful information

Repairs and right-to-buy

If you make a right-to-buy application for your home we will only carry out emergency work. If you tell us in writing that you have decided not to go ahead with your application, we will complete all repairs in the usual way.

Right-to-repair scheme

The Right-to-Repair scheme covers certain repairs which may affect your health, safety or security. By law we must carry out these repairs within a certain time and they are known as 'qualifying repairs'.

Our repair priorities and timescales already take account of these guidelines. Visit **citizensadvice.org.uk** for more information on 'qualifying repairs'.

Surveyor inspections

We may need to inspect your home before we can carry out certain repairs.

We will ask a surveyor to inspect your home for complex issues that previous repairs have not resolved such as structural repairs, reports of damp or where there is an ongoing problem.

We may also ask a surveyor to visit your property to carry out an inspection after repair or maintenance work has been completed.

Home Contents Insurance

Any damage to your belongings such as carpets, curtains, decorations caused by fire, flood or by another person such as a thief, vandal or a visitor to your home will not be covered by Bron Afon insurance. We strongly advise that you have your own home contents insurance.

Your rent does not insure your furniture, belongings or decorations against theft, fire, vandalism and burst pipes. You need to take out your own household insurance. Bron Afon offer a scheme through AVIVA insurance. The cost of insurance is paid every week along with your rent. When you take out this insurance your household goods and contents will be insured whilst in your home. The insurance also covers theft of your keys and the contents in your freezer. There is also cover for personal liability.

You can get £6,000 worth of cover for 60p a week. Call us on **01633 620 111** to take out this insurance.

Useful information

Non-urgent work and improvements

This work includes:

- Kitchen replacement.
- Bathroom replacement.
- Electrical rewiring.
- Roof covering.

If your home is due to have non-urgent work or improvements, we will:

- Write to you in advance of the work.
- Provide you with contact details in case you have a question about the work or want to arrange a more convenient appointment.
- Agree with you what work we will be doing.
- For some types of work you will be able to choose the colour/style of the product used, for example kitchen units and worktops from a range that we offer. We will visit you to discuss in person what options are available in advance of any work taking place.
- Tell you the length of time we need to come into your home.

You need to:

- Contact us if you have any questions or if the appointment we have offered you is not suitable.
- Allow us access to your home at the agreed appointment time so we can ensure that you remain in the programme of work.

We also carry out programmes of work which are repeated at regular intervals to protect health and safety and to maintain buildings and equipment in a good condition. These include items that are required by law.

For example:

- Gas appliance servicing.
- Servicing and maintaining communal boilers and systems.
- Lift servicing.
- Testing electrical installations.



Useful information

Gas safety

Gas servicing and annual safety check

If you have a gas installation in your home we will check it every year to protect you from any potential hazards such as carbon monoxide.

By law we must:

- Repair and maintain gas pipework, flues and appliances in a safe condition. We do not maintain your own appliances, such as cookers but we do make sure they are safe to use. If they are not, we will turn them off and disconnect them for your safety.
- Ensure a yearly gas service and safety check is carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer on each appliance, pipework and flue.
- Keep a record of each gas service and safety check.

When your gas service and safety check is due, we will contact you with an appointment.



If we do not gain access to your home to carry out the gas service and safety check, we will take legal action and recharge you the costs.

It is important that you:

- Reply promptly when you receive your annual gas service and safety check appointment. If it is not a suitable time for you, we will be happy to rearrange your appointment.
- Allow us access to your home at the agreed appointment time to carry out repairs or the annual gas service and safety check.
- Tell us of any faults or damage to any gas appliance immediately.
- Make sure any air vents are not blocked up if you have a gas appliance.
- We will also disconnect any of your own appliances if they are unsafe.

Gas is dangerous!

If an appliance is not working properly it can give out carbon monoxide fumes. You cannot smell, taste or see carbon monoxide. If you are exposed to carbon monoxide even for a short period of time, it can cause serious injury or even death.

Useful information

Home improvements

You must get written permission from us before making alterations or modifications to your home such as fitting a bathroom suite, laying a driveway or adding a porch. In some circumstances you may also need planning or Building Regulation approval.

Call us **01633 620 111** to tell us about the work you want to do. We will discuss your plans with you to ensure the work you propose to do will not make your home unsafe. We may need to visit your home to consider what you are planning.



Sometimes we will not give permission to undertake improvements. This would include the following type of work:

- Structural alteration to the property.
- Any improvements that will adversely affect the future maintenance of your home.
- Work that may make it harder to rent your home to new tenants when you leave.

If we give permission in writing, we will include any conditions related to the permission. It's important that you read these as they include important information about health and safety, responsibility for maintenance and the standards we expect.

After you have completed the work, we may visit to check everything has been carried out satisfactorily. You should also provide us with any electrical or gas certificates and building regulation approvals.

Your rent will not increase as a result of any improvements you made. However, it is important to remember you will become responsible for maintaining any improvement work that you carry out. For example, if you lay a new drive you will have to pay for any repairs it needs.

We may also require you to reinstate your home to its original condition when you end your tenancy. This will be explained to you in our written permission.

Right to compensation for improvements

If you make any agreed alterations to your home, you may be entitled to compensation under a government legal right called the Right to Compensation if you move home. Call **01633 620 111** to find out more.

Mutual exchange

If you swap homes with another Bron Afon tenant you accept their responsibilities. This includes responsibility for any damage they have caused to your new home and any improvements and alterations made by them or any previous tenants. You should make sure you know what you are taking on and if in doubt, please ask.

Useful information

Occupational therapy and adaptations service

Who can we help?

We can help any Bron Afon tenant who:

- Has a long-term disability, and
- Has difficulty accessing different parts of their home and/or essential facilities such as the kitchen, bathroom, living room, toilet, and
- Meets our criteria in line with 'Fair Access to Care Services' guidelines. This means that people who are entitled can receive services and those with the greatest needs are given the highest priority.

How can we help?

The team can recommend equipment and adaptations which may help you to access your home and carry out day to day activities.

Who should you get in touch with?

Some minor works do not require occupational therapy (OT) assessment.

Call **01633 620 111**. For example:

- Handrails
- Lever taps
- Grab rails
- Staircase lighting

For all other requests call Torfaen Council on **01495 762200**.

They will check the referral and may give you advice, equipment and complete minor adaptations at this stage.

You will be placed on a waiting list to be seen by an occupational therapist from Bron Afon or the the council's disabled people's service depending on the type of the referral.

Urgent requests

If your request is urgent it can be placed on the critical waiting list and you will be seen more quickly.

If you feel your case needs to be seen more quickly because your situation has changed since your original referral you should call the Disabled People's Service at Torfaen Council on **01495 762200**.



Useful information

Under 18s

If the referral is for a child under 18 years of age it will be passed to Torfaen Council's Disabled Children's Team and you will be seen by one of their specialist occupational therapists.

What happens next?

Once we have been passed your referral from Torfaen Council we will contact you to arrange the best time to visit your home. With agreement after the first visit we may recommend the following:

- Equipment (for example to help with getting in and out of the bath).
- Minor adaptations (such as handrails, grab rails).
- Major Adaptations (such as ramps, stair lift, level access shower).
- Advice and support to move to a home that better suits your needs.
- Referral to other services.

All adaptations are funded and maintained by Bron Afon.

Important information

We cannot provide equipment and/or adaptations for short-term disabilities which are expected to improve, but we can offer advice.

We will always consider simple solutions first, for example offering bathing equipment before considering major adaptations such as installing a level access shower.

All equipment is requested from Torfaen Council and is provided on long-term loan. Please let us know when equipment is no longer needed so it can be recycled.

Adaptations cannot be provided for privately purchased wheelchairs, scooters and walking aids. We can only offer adaptations for equipment prescribed by the NHS.

What if it is not possible for your home to be adapted?

If it is not possible to carry out the work then your occupational therapist will talk to you about other options. This could include helping you to move to a more suitable home.

DIY and tips for looking after your home yourself

Blockages

Blockages in basins and sinks are usually caused by the build-up of waste in the trap, for example, fat, tea leaves, hair. We advise you to clear waste pipes and traps at least once a month. Do not use caustic soda as it destroys the plastic fittings.

The trap always holds some water which stops air or foul smells coming up the drain. However, waste can build up and become stuck in it.

If more than one fitting (bath, basin or sink) is blocked, the blockage maybe in the soil stack or main drain. If so, please contact us because we will need to clear the blockage.

To unblock a bath, basin or sink

- Scoop out most of the water using a jug or other container
- Hold a rag tightly over the overflow opening and place a plunger over the plug hole
- Pump the plunger up and down rapidly to clear the blockage

After clearing the blockage, it is advisable to rinse out with a household blockage cleaner.

Preventing a blocked toilet

To prevent a blocked toilet, do not flush away sanitary products or nappies.

Damp and condensation

- **Penetrating damp** is usually caused by a fault in the structure of the building, for example, where water enters your home through a crack in the wall, overflowing gutters or a loose roof tile.
- **Rising damp** is usually a problem with the damp proof course and water can rise from the ground into the walls or floor.

Both types of damp will usually leave a watermark, staining or bubbling of paint on the wall or ceiling. If you are concerned about damp in your home, please call us on **01633 620 111** and we will arrange an inspection.

Condensation forms when excessive moisture builds up in the air inside your home and there is no way for it to escape

Condensation will form on cold surfaces like windows and walls and even on clothes and in wardrobes. It is important that you remove this condensation because if you leave it, it will cause mould, mildew and rot, especially if rooms are not adequately heated and ventilated.

DIY and tips for looking after your home yourself

How is condensation caused?

The amount of moisture that can be produced in pints in one day by an average family of four:

- Two people at home for one day = four pints
- Cooking and boiling kettles = six pints
- Having a bath or shower = two pints
- Washing clothes = one pint
- Drying clothes = one pints
- Four people sleeping = three pints
- **Total amount of moisture produced in your home for one day = 17 pints**

How can I prevent it?

Control moisture: keep lids on pans, dry clothes outdoors or in a tumble dryer with ventilation, preferably through walls to the outside.

Control where moisture goes: close internal doors, open windows to let moisture escape, wipe away moisture from windows and walls and remember to keep your extractor fans on. These fans are very cheap to run.

Close bedroom doors at night and open a window slightly to allow ventilation (make sure you close the window when you go out) or keep trickle vents open if they are fitted inside your double glazing frames.

Clean mould away effectively: you can buy mould and mildew sprays from most supermarkets to clean and kill the bacteria present in mould growth.

Increase air flow: move furniture, wardrobes and beds away from cold walls and allow air to flow around in these areas. This will help reduce mould.

Keep your home warm whenever possible: Keeping a low background heat (ideally between 18 and 22 degrees centigrade) is often more effective and can cost less than having the heating on full for several short periods during the day. Do not restrict the radiators from radiating its heat out to reach walls that may have cold spots. Radiators are not meant to dry clothes on. They are designed to make your home more comfortable.

Humidity sensitive fans: They help remove moisture from your home and reduce the likelihood of mould growth. They provide continuous background ventilation and adjust when they detect high humidity, for example when showering, bathing or cooking. These fans are very cheap to run.

DIY and tips for looking after your home yourself

What we will do

We will advise you on what to do to reduce moisture and how this is related to room temperatures. We may need to visit you to find out what is causing the problem. Our surveyor can offer advice and check all fixtures like your fans, radiators, insulation and windows are up to standard. We can also fit monitoring equipment show the level of condensations being produced in your home.

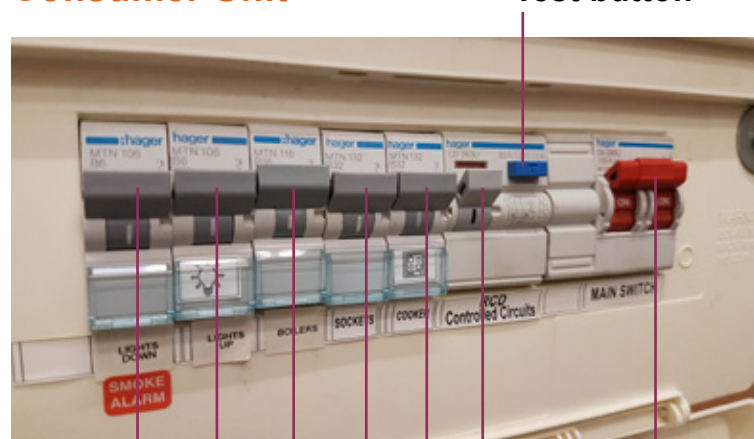
Re-setting a trip switch

If you have an older style 'fuse board' with rewirable fuses, you should not try to repair or replace fuses yourself. Contact us for help.

Many homes now have modern fuse boards called 'consumer units'. These have circuit breakers or 'trip switches'. If an electrical fault occurs, the circuit breakers will switch everything off to prevent injury and damage. If your home has a consumer unit it will be near your electricity meter. It is important you know the location of your consumer unit.

To reset a trip

Consumer Unit



- Open the hinged cover on the consumer unit to show all the trip switches
- Reset the trip by pushing up the trip switch
- Close the trip cover

Trip switches

RCD
(residual
current
device)

Mains switch

DIY and tips for looking after your home yourself

If the trip goes again

This may mean there is a fault in an appliance or light fitting. You will need to find out where the fault is by following these steps:

- Unplug all appliances
- Then reset the 'tripped' switch to the ON position (if it is a button, press it in)
- Turn each appliance on, one at a time
- If the trip switch goes again after you turn an appliance on, then the bulb or light fitting may be faulty
- Plug each appliance in and turn them on, one at a time
- If the trip switch goes again after plugging an appliance back in, there is a fault with that appliance
- Turn the faulty light or appliance off and unplug it. You should then be able to reset the trip switch
- If the switch keeps moving back to the off position, call us on **01633 620 111**.

Asbestos

Why is asbestos potentially a problem?

- Materials containing asbestos in good condition do not pose a risk to your health
- They can, however, become a risk should asbestos fibres become airborne
- This may occur if the materials containing asbestos is drilled, sanded, cut or broken up. It can also occur should the material be in a poor or damaged condition and liable to disturbance. If disturbed, the material may release fibres that can be inhaled deep into the lung, causing possible damage.
- People at most risk are those that work directly with asbestos. These include builders, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and decorators.

What is the likelihood of exposure to asbestos in the home?

- Even if your home contains asbestos products, you are highly unlikely to be affected by it
- We will include a risk assessment if we undertake any repairs or major works to your home. This will assess the potential location of asbestos and likelihood of disturbance during works.
- We will take measures to manage the material safely either by avoiding disturbance, encapsulation or removal by specialist contractors working in a controlled manner

DIY and tips for looking after your home yourself

Doing DIY and avoiding asbestos

- Do not carry out any DIY work on materials that contain asbestos.
- Do not disturb it by banging nails or screwing into it.
- Do not drill into it.
- Do not scrape or use a steam stripper.
- Do not attempt to remove it.

If you are unsure if there are any materials containing asbestos in your home, please contact us to find out more before you do any DIY work. If you have damaged materials that contain asbestos in your home contact us and we will arrange for someone to inspect the damage. Visit **[hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)** for more information about asbestos.

Pest control

Infestations of pests such as ants, wasps, bees, cockroaches, rodents or bedbugs are your responsibility to resolve.

If infestations in your home or garden are causing problems for your neighbours we will recharge you for the cost of pest control if we carry out any work.

If there is a defect in your home that is allowing pests to get in we will carry out a repair but it is your responsibility to remove the pest infestation.

Comments, compliments and complaints

Your views help us to improve our services. It's really easy to share your views with us.

You can:

- Call **01633 620 111**

- Visit, or write to us at:

Bron Afon Community Housing
Tŷ Bron Afon
William Brown Close
Llantarnam Industrial Park
Cwmbran
Torfaen
NP44 3AB

- Email our liaison officer, Mandie Adams, at **mandie.adams@bronafon.org.uk**
- Send us a private message on Facebook via our Bron Afon Community Housing page





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