

Reporting Repairs

How to report a repair

You can report a repair to your home by using one of the following:

Telephone - call us free on **0800 121 4422**

Website - www.englishrural.org.uk/_repairs

Email – info@englishrural.org.uk

Emergencies

If you have an emergency repair during office hours (9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday) please contact us on the freephone number **0800 121 4422**.

After 5pm and over weekends and public holidays you should contact Homeserve on **01772 757 874**. The out of hours service should only be used if your repair needs immediate action, all other repairs should be reported when our office re-opens.

Repair Responsibilities

English Rural is responsible for maintaining the structure of your property and any internal fixtures and fittings provided by us. This includes

- Roof, drains, gutters and external pipes
- External walls, doors and windows including external painting and decorating
- Chimneys, stacks and flues but NOT the sweeping of chimneys
- Steps and pathways providing access to the property.
- Boundary walls and fence panels (but only those panels provided by us)
- Internal walls, floors, ceilings, doors and frames, skirting boards but NOT internal painting, decorating and minor cracks to plasterwork
- Basins, sinks, baths, toilets and cisterns, taps but NOT washer replacement
- Hot water cylinders, water storage tanks, internal pipework and waste pipes.
- Heating systems – oil, gas and electric boilers, associated pipes and radiators, storage heaters, solid fuel installations, open fireplaces, wood burning stoves, oil storage tanks
- Electric wiring including sockets and switches, smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors but NOT battery replacement

As a tenant you also have a responsibility to ensure your home is well looked after and maintained. If you do have any repairs these must be reported to us as soon as

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

possible before any further damage or deterioration is caused. You are also responsible for the following:

- Any fixtures or alterations added by a previous tenant unless stated otherwise at the start of the tenancy
- To keep your property clean and in good decorative order, including the repair of minor cracks and holes in walls and ceilings
- Take action to prevent waste pipes and drains becoming blocked and to prevent pipes from freezing or bursting
- Blocked sinks, drains or toilets when caused by negligence or misuse will be your responsibility to rectify
- You must allow access to your property to carry out repairs, annual safety checks and any necessary inspections
- To repair and maintain any fixtures, fittings or appliances you have installed, including waste/supply pipes and vents for washing machines, dishwashers and tumble driers
- Take action to prevent and control condensation
- Infestations – including mice, wasps nests and any other common household pests
- Adjusting internal doors following carpet fitting
- Replacing bath and basin plugs, toilet seats, light bulbs, fuses, smoke alarm batteries
- All internal decorations, including the repair of minor cracks and holes
- Washing lines, rotary driers, garden sheds and store cupboards
- Broken panes of internal glass. You are also responsible for repairing external panes where damage has been caused by misuse
- Lost or stolen keys
- Hard surfaces e.g. tarmac/concrete, damaged by leaking vehicle oil
- Any trees that are within your garden or overhang into your garden from neighbouring properties or land.
- Any damage due to misuse or negligence by anyone who lives in, or visits your property

Responding to Repairs

All repairs you report to English Rural will be given a response time determined by the urgency of the repair. These are detailed below.

Emergency – response within 24 hours and generally the same day as reported. The contractor will make safe any fault but it may be necessary that they return to carry out further works including fitting of parts on another day.

Urgent – to be completed within 7 days

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Routine – to be completed within 30 days

The designated contractor will contact you by telephone to arrange an appointment. If you fail to keep this pre-arranged appointment you will be charged for the cost of the visit.

In response to any repair you report, you will receive a Satisfaction Survey form. When your repair is complete you should fill in this form and return to us. The information you provide enables us to ensure contractors are performing well and meeting the standards we expect from them, it is therefore important that you do return this form to us.

Gas Safety Inspections

If your property has a gas supply, English Rural has a legal responsibility to carry out an annual service and safety check to the gas boiler. These inspections are for your own safety and failure to allow access is a breach of your tenancy agreement. Legal action will be taken against you if you do not provide access.

Cyclical and Planned Maintenance

External Decorating

Painting and decorating of the exterior of your property is undertaken on a cyclical programme, usually every 5-6 years, depending on its condition. This will include redecorating any external fittings such as windows and doors, soffits, rendering and any other externals. Fencing will not be covered under the cyclical programme and it is your responsibility to ensure any garden fences are repainted regularly.

Planned and Major Work

English Rural operate a long term major works programme which cover replacement of major components in your home such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors and heating systems. The programme is based on the age and condition of these components. We will let you know of any proposed work in advance and will consult with you on choice of fittings.

Adapting Your Home

English Rural understands that residents' needs change throughout their time as a tenant and we are committed to helping those with a disability remain in their home. If you do require any aids or adaptations to your property your request should be made in writing to the Association with the support and recommendation of an Occupational Therapist. A limited budget is available to assist with adaptations but funding is often also available through your Local Authority.

Improvements

You may in future wish to make improvements to your home. Any improvement you do make must have written permission from English Rural before any work is undertaken. At the back of this handbook you will find a form to complete and return to us with details of any improvements you wish to make.

Any improvement work must be carried out by a suitably qualified contractor and any appropriate Building Regulations are met. You will become responsible for any future maintenance relating to the improvement you have made and you may be asked to return the property back to its original standard should you choose to move in future.

Certain improvement works are eligible for compensation if you vacate the property. Further information is available on request and covered under English Rural's Compensation Policy.

Useful Information

Blockages

Blockages are usually caused by a build up of waste such as fat, tea leaves, hair, soap and detergents. It is a good idea to clear waste pipes and traps regularly by treating them with a suitable product such as a drain cleaner or plug-hole unblocker. This will prevent the build-up turning into a blockage which may need the services of the plumber.

Condensation

This results when warm moist air meets a cold surface and turns to water. If this happens regularly mould will begin to appear on the affected surfaces. In order to prevent condensation you should follow the steps below:

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

- Closing kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam going into colder rooms
- Open kitchen and bathroom windows when cooking or washing so steam can escape
- Use extractor fans and keep window trickle vents open
- Do not use bottled gas heaters or block air vents
- Open windows in other rooms to allow a change of air
- Cover pans when cooking
- Vent tumble driers externally
- Dry clothes outdoors whenever possible. If drying indoors, ensure there is sufficient ventilation
- Do not allow the property to get too cold

A copy of English Rural's Damp and Condensation advice leaflet is provided at the back of this handbook.

Preventing Burst Pipes

In very cold spells water in the pipes in your home can freeze. When the weather becomes warmer and the water melts it can cause damage to the pipes, often causing them to burst. To prevent this happening you should keep your home warm at all times and run taps on a regular basis. If you are leaving your property empty for any length of time during cold weather you should:

- Turn off the water supply using the mains' stopcock.
- Turn off the immersion heater and drain all the water from the system by turning on all the taps until the water stops running. Then turn off the taps.
- Flush the toilets to empty the cisterns and put salt into the toilet pan to prevent the water freezing.
- When you come back, turn the stopcock on and give the tanks and cylinder time to fill. Turn on the taps to ensure there is an adequate flow of water before turning them off again; this will ensure there are no air locks, then turn the immersion heater back on

If you do have a burst pipe you must turn off the water immediately at the stopcock, turn off the immersion heater and turn on all taps to drain the water from the pipes as quickly as possible. As soon as you notice the leak, try to identify where it is coming from and bind any cracks or splits with a piece of rag. You must contact us or the out of hours repair line immediately. If the leak is close to any electrical fitting do not switch it on!

Gardens

It is your responsibility to ensure that your garden, at both the front and back of your property is well maintained and kept tidy at all times. Grass should be cut regularly and no items of rubbish dumped in the gardens. You may wish to erect new fencing to your

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

rear garden in place of the chain link fencing provided. If you choose to do this any future maintenance of the fence will be your responsibility. Front gardens should not be enclosed by either fencing or other means. If you do wish to do this, please contact your Housing Manager for permission.