



**STAFFORD**  
**and rural homes**

OPENING DOORS TO BETTER HOMES

**repairsfirst**  
Stafford and rural homes

# The Repairs Charter



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## What is a Repairs Charter?

It is the guide to repairs, service and standards for customers at Stafford and Rural Homes

We aim to provide a repairs service that:

- Meets the high standards you expect
- Is cost effective and within budget
- Safeguards the future of your home
- Protects the environment

To do this we will:

- Consult with customers about our service
- Carry out repairs quickly and in one visit whenever possible
- Arrange appointments to carry out work at a time to suit you
- Set a high standard of workmanship
- Listen to any problems about repairs and try to put them right
- Keep our spending within the budget agreed by SARH's Board
- Consider the environmental impact of products we use

Our repairs duties are included in your tenancy agreement.

Stafford and Rural Homes will:

- Keep in repair the structure and exterior of your home, the supply of water, gas and electricity and facilities for heating, hot water and sanitation.
- Decorate the exterior of the property when necessary, unless (with our written permission) you wish to do this.

Repairs services are available to all our customers

## How will the repair people behave in my home?

We understand the importance of respecting your home and belongings and we have adopted a code of conduct as follows:

The person inspecting or carrying out repairs will:

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- Treat you and your home with respect and be polite and courteous to you at all times
- Introduce themselves and provide identification, before entering your home
- Wear a uniform with a badge with their name and the Repairs First logo on it
- If a nominated sub contractor, ensure their vehicles display a sign that identifies the contractor's company
- Check for special arrangements e.g. pets, children etc
- Explain the nature of the work to be carried out and explain the safety issues involved
- Not enter your home if there are unsupervised children of less than 18 years of age (exception is where tenant is 16 or 17)
- Keep your home safe
- Work tidily and clear away all unused materials at the end of each working day
- Only use your electricity, gas, telephone or water if you have given us permission
- Provide a temporary supply of heating and water when necessary
- Use clean dustsheets on all occasions and clean away all rubbish upon completion of works and vacuum where necessary
- Not smoke in your home, use radio equipment or leave tools and equipment where they are a hazard
- If scaffolding is necessary it will be erected safely
- Respect your privacy and confidential information

### How do I report a repair?

You can report a repair or make enquiries by:-

- Calling our Customer Services Team on Freephone 0800 111 4554
- Go to our website at [www.sarh.co.uk](http://www.sarh.co.uk)
- Email us at [repairs@sarh.co.uk](mailto:repairs@sarh.co.uk)
- Request a repair in writing or visit our offices.
- Tell any member of staff.

When you report a repair, our Customer Services staff will need to know as much detail as possible, so that we can provide a quick solution for you.

For repairs inside your home we will need to know when you will be available. If you report your repair by telephone, an appointment will be agreed with you during the call. If you report the repair by another method, we will call you to arrange an appointment. Please let us know about any special arrangements to gain access to your home.

## **What are Stafford and Rural Homes' repair responsibilities?**

We are generally responsible for maintaining your home. This includes looking after:

- Walls, floors and ceilings
- Window frames and external doors
- Roofs, drain pipes and gutters
- Toilets, baths, sinks, gas pipes and water pipes
- Fires, boilers, radiators, storage heaters and immersion heaters
- Light switches, light fittings, sockets and wiring
- Communal stairs, lifts, landings, pavements and rubbish chutes

## **What are my repair responsibilities?**

These include:

- Fittings that you have installed or accepted at the start of your tenancy. These can include shelves, wardrobes and laminate flooring
- Fitting additional locks
- Bleeding radiators
- Tripped switches, fuses and light bulbs
- Attempting to clear waste pipe blockages
- Repairing minor cracks and holes in walls and ceilings
- Television aerials and your own reception equipment

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- Fences and gates that do not form a boundary with a public road or footpath
- All internal decoration
- Gardening

Although you are also responsible for the following repairs we will give help and advice in getting these done. We may also be able to complete the work for you if you agree to pay for it:

- Replacing broken or cracked glass
- Gaining access and replacing keys
- Dealing with dampness caused by condensation

You should also:

- Report criminal damage or vandalism to the police (you will be given an incident number)
- Keep the property clean and in good order
- Take steps to stop further damage once a fault has been identified
- Take reasonable steps to prevent condensation
- Obtain written permission before making alterations to your property
- Put right any damage caused by you, your family or visitors

## Do I have to allow you in my home?

You must allow us reasonable access to your home to carry out safety checks on gas appliances. If you do not do this, we may seek legal authorisation to gain entry.

## What about rubbish chutes in flats?

Some blocks of flats have refuse chutes to help you dispose of your household refuse more conveniently. You must take care to avoid blocking the refuse chute by not using it to dispose of bulky items. You should not put disposable nappies, or any other items, which may cause a health hazard, in the refuse chute.

## What happens after I move in to my home?

A list of any outstanding repairs will be agreed and signed by a new customer and a Neighbourhood Services Officer before the customer moves in. The officer will arrange for these repairs to be done within an appropriate timescale.

## What happens when I move in?

If you have any questions about these repairs, or additional repairs, the Customer Services Centre, on Freephone 0800 111 4554, will be pleased to answer.

At the start of your tenancy you will be shown where the electricity fuse-box, water stopcock, and gas stopcock (if the property has gas) are located and you will be shown how to turn these off in an emergency. You will also be given some general advice on how to prevent some faults from occurring and shown how to fix minor faults yourself. This information is also included at the back of this booklet. The following items are supplied at the start of a tenancy but after that it is your responsibility to repair or replace them:

- Bulbs, fluorescent light tubes and starters
- Door and window lock keys
- Plugs and chains for baths, sinks and wash hand basins
- Door numbers and letter plates

## Do I have a 'Right to Repair'?

The 'Right to Repair' scheme gives you the right to have a small emergency or urgent repair done quickly and to be paid compensation if we fail to do it.

To qualify for this, a repair must be what is known as a 'Qualifying Repair'. This means a repair:

- Is classed as an emergency or urgent repair
- Has an estimated value of less than £250

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If any of the repairs listed below are not completed within the set time, you are entitled to £10 compensation immediately plus a further £2 per day for every working day the repair remains outstanding, up to a maximum of £50.

The Right to Repair does not apply if:

- You choose to have the repair completed by appointment outside the target date
- The repair has an estimated value of £250 or more
- You have not provided access for inspection or for the repair to be carried out, having been given a reasonable opportunity to do so

The qualifying repairs are listed on the below:

<b>Defect</b>	<b>maximum period for completion in calendar days</b>
Unsafe access path or step	1
Leaking roof	5
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked leaking or foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans (where there is no other toilet in your home)	1
Blocked sink, bath or drain	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Unsafe power, lighting socket or electrical fitting	1
Total Loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Loss or partial loss of space/water heating, no alternative available	1
Extractor fan in kitchen or bathroom not working	5
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Toilet not flushing (where there is no other toilet in your home)	1
Loss of water supply	1
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Door entry phone not working	5

## What are emergencies?

As your landlord, we have responsibilities to carry out work in the event of an emergency. These are when there is:

- A loss of water
- A burst pipe
- Flooding
- Severe storm damage
- Total loss of the electricity supply
- A major fault with the electricity supply
- An unsafe electrical fitting
- A breach of security to outside doors and windows
- A loss of gas supply (where this exists)
- A gas leak
- A blocked flue
- A blockage in the main drains, soil pipe or toilet (if there is no other toilet in your home)
- Space heating or hot water loss for elderly or vulnerable customers
- Lift failure
- A community alarm or call system failure
- Fire damage
- Offensive or racist graffiti
- Any other event that needs immediate action to ensure your safety or security

Emergencies should be reported by telephoning the Customer Service Centre on Freephone 0800 111 4554. We will make the fault safe and, if any further work is needed, an appointment will be agreed with you.

We provide this service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including bank holidays. If a serious fault occurs outside normal working hours, and you believe it is not safe to wait until the next working day, it should be reported to the out-of-hours emergency repairs service by telephoning 0800 111 4554.

If you deliberately use the emergency call out service for a fault that is not a genuine emergency, or is a result of misuse, you may be charged a call out fee. You could also be charged a call out fee if you are not at the property when we respond to an emergency repair

### What are urgent repairs?

These are repairs that may cause discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to you or a third party. We will complete these repairs within 5 calendar days of the request:

- Plumbing leaks or defects (not bursts)
- Blocked drains, sinks, basins, baths or toilets (where there is a second toilet)
- Defective cistern or overflow
- Heating faults or breakdowns
- Hot water faults or breakdowns
- Minor electrical faults
- Significant roof leaks
- Breaches of security or safety to internal doors
- Failure of entry phone
- Graffiti
- Faulty extractor fan
- Faulty shower
- Defective flooring (unless it is a trip hazard, when there will be an immediate response)
- Faulty communal TV aerial
- Damage to stair treads, handrails or banisters (unless unsafe)

### What are routine repairs?

These are defects that are **not** likely to cause any serious discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to the customer or third party if not given an immediate or urgent response. We will complete these within 21 calendar days of your request. There will not be any obvious consequential cost of not undertaking this work sooner

- Isolated repairs to doors, windows and floors
- Isolated repairs to external walls, fences and paths
- Isolated repairs to walls
- Isolated repairs to roof coverings (no significant leak evident)
- Isolated repairs or clearing of gutters and downpipes
- Isolated repairs to kitchen fittings (doors, drawers, handles etc)
- Isolated repairs to plasterwork (patch plastering)

- Isolated repairs to glazed tiling
- Dripping or leaking taps and shower units
- Other minor plumbing repairs

## What are “planned repairs”?

External works such as fencing, gates, paving, larger roof or brickwork repairs that do not represent a health and safety risk, and are not immediately affecting the integrity of your home or quality of life, will be put into a planned programme of work. We will carry out these repairs on an “area-based” approach and will visit each area at least 3 times a year. We will publish on our website details for each area including when we will be attending.

## What is planned investment and how will this affect repairs?

If your home is due to have planned investment work done in the next year (such as a new kitchen and bathroom), repairs will only be ordered if the fault:

- Is an emergency
- Poses a health and safety risk to you
- Is covered by the ‘Right to Repair’
- Is unrelated to the planned works
- Is causing serious inconvenience to you

## What are the arrangements for servicing heating systems?

Each year servicing works will need to be carried out on gas, electric and solid fuel appliances within your home. At the time they are required we will contact you to arrange a convenient appointment date and time. Under current law we have a duty to inspect and ensure all gas appliances within the property are safe to use annually. **You must allow your landlord reasonable access to the property to carry out safety checks.**

## Can I make appointments for work to be done?

We aim to offer appointments at the first point of call to have the repair done.

Wherever possible we'll complete repairs on our first visit however, sometimes specialist parts may be needed, or measurements may need to be taken. When this happens, any arrangements for follow-on visits will be made with you directly. If we miss an appointment, we will contact you by phone, to

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explain the reason for missing the appointment and offer you an alternative.

If you're not in when we arrive, we will leave you a calling card. You should contact us to arrange another appointment for the repair to be completed.

If we do not need to make an appointment we will advise you of this when you report the repair e.g. if the work is external.

### Do you charge for any repairs?

You are responsible for any damage caused by yourself, your family or visitors other than by fair wear and tear. If the fault was not caused by fair wear and tear, we will tell you, at the time of reporting the fault that you may be charged for the repair, and the estimated cost. If this is more than you can afford to pay at once, arrangements can be made for it to be paid in instalments.

You may prefer to make your own arrangements to correct the fault. However, you need to make sure that the work will be completed to a good standard. You should also note that any repairs not completed to the required standard at the end of your tenancy will be put right by us and the full charge will be passed on to you.

### Are there any restrictions on the repair service?

There are a number of circumstances where the Repairs Service may be limited they include where:

- You have missed 6 consecutive appointments for repairs in the past 6 months
- The repair is due to be completed as part of a planned investment programme
- You have a proven history of violent or abusive behaviour towards SARH staff or its representatives
- You have started the right to buy process
- An abandonment notice has been issued

You have the right to appeal against any decision to limit repairs through the comments, compliments and complaints process.

We recognise that most tenants take pride in their home, pay rent on time and are good neighbours. However, there are a small number of tenants who damage things deliberately or thoughtlessly, make no arrangements to pay rent and are a general nuisance to their neighbours. We don't want good customers to have to pay extra for this minority, so some restrictions on the repairs service have been introduced.

We may limit your use of the service to emergencies and 'Right to Repair' if you:

- Have not paid your rent on time for at least 12 weeks
- Have rent arrears, unless a repayment arrangement has been kept to for at least 12 weeks
- Have any breaches of tenancy such as an antisocial behaviour order or notice of possession
- Owe the landlord any other money, such as for rechargeable repairs or other services

## What if I have special needs?

If you have special needs or are a vulnerable tenant, we may schedule the repair faster than normal. We encourage you to tell us about any special circumstances when you report a fault so that we can prioritise it correctly.

You should ensure that any disability, such as a hearing impairment or mobility restriction, is communicated to staff so that they can make special arrangements (e.g. knock loudly, allow extra time for the door to be answered, or make contact via a third party such as support worker). We can record this information for any future repairs only if we are specifically asked to, by you.

The repairs service now includes a handyman service that is able to provide more of a support service for those customers who suffer from a disability or are otherwise vulnerable. The type of work our handyman will be able to help you with includes: changing light bulbs, smoke alarm batteries, curtains and other small jobs that can be completed with one hour. For works that will take more than one hour and are outside our normal repairs service, we will consider carrying out the work but there may be a charge.

## Who is responsible for which repairs?

Type of repair	Who is responsible?	Maximum time for completion or make safe (calendar days)
<b>Doors</b>		
Make safe or secure external doors	SARH	24 hours
Gain access - lock not working	SARH	24 hours
Gain access - lost or damaged keys / fobs	Customer	
Repair door entry systems	SARH	5
Usable but sticking lock	SARH	21
Replace glazing to external doors	SARH	5
Repair replace doors/ door linings and associated beadings, architraves and furniture	SARH	21
<b>Electricity</b>		
No electricity at all	SARH or utility provider	24 hours
Repair or replace unsafe electrical fitting or dangerous / exposed wires	SARH	24 hours
No lights at all	SARH	24 hours
Replace bulbs, tubes and starters	Customer	
Lights and/or power to only part of the property	SARH	24 hours
Resetting trips or replacing fuses	Customer	
Repairs to hard wired smoke detectors	SARH	24 hours
Check electrics after water penetration	SARH	24 hours
Partial loss of electricity	SARH	5
Repair / replace extractor fan	SARH	5
Repairs to Customer's own white goods i.e. cookers, washing machines etc	Customer	
Repairs to communal lighting	SARH	5

**Type of repair****Who is responsible? Maximum time for completion or make safe (calendar days)****External repairs**

Unsafe access path, steps or garden area	SARH	24 hours
Blocked flue	SARH	24 hours
Clear blocked refuse chute	SARH	24 hours
Dangerous chimney – inspect and make safe where required	SARH	24 hours
Storm damage – inspect and make safe where required	SARH	24 hours
Rain penetration	SARH	5
Repairs to roofs, chimneys, gutters or rainwater	SARH	21
Manhole cover	SARH or utility provider	21
Fences and gates	SARH	21
Communal clothes line or rotary dryers	SARH	21

**Floors and panels**

Unsafe timber, flooring or stair treads	SARH	5
Repair / replace floorboards and skirtings	SARH	21
Repairs to concrete floors	SARH	21
Repair replace floor covering	SARH	21
Repair / replace bath panelling or pipe boxing and frame	SARH	21

**Fireplaces**

Repair / replace fire grates and other parts (dependent on time of year)	SARH	21
Repair / replace tiled surrounds	SARH	21
Repair / replace solid fuel heaters (depending on time of year)	SARH	21
Sweeping chimney	Customer	

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Type of repair	Who is responsible?	Maximum time for completion or make safe (calendar days)
<b>Gas</b>		
Gas escapes	National Grid	Report immediately to National Grid on 0800 111 999
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	National Grid	Report immediately to National Grid on 0800 111 999
Gas cookers, connection pipes and other Customer appliances	Customer	
<b>Heating</b>		
Total heating failure no alternative heating available	SARH	24 hours
Partial heating failure alternative heating available	SARH	5
Total water heating failure no alternative water	SARH	24 hour
Partial water heating failure alternative water heating available	SARH	5
Bleeding radiator	Customer	
<b>Plastering and Decoration</b>		
Internal plastering (patches)	SARH	21
External decorations after repair disruptions	SARH	21
Mould growth reasons unknown	Inspection to determine	
Mould growth due to condensation affecting more than 25% of a room	SARH	21
Mould growth due to condensation	Customer unless a defect is at fault	
Internal decoration	Customer	
Replace / re-grout ceramic tiles	SARH	21

## Type of repair

## Who is responsible?

## Maximum time for completion or make safe (calendar days)

### Plumbing

No water	SARH or Seven Trent	24 hours by SARH
Partial loss of water	SARH	5
Significant water leaks	SARH	24 hours
Toilet not flushing or blocked (only toilet)	SARH	24 hours
Toilet not flushing or blocked, 2nd toilet available to use	SARH	21
Blocked foul drains (sewers)	SARH	24 hours
Blocked rainwater drains	SARH	21
Blocked sink / bath / wash hand basin	SARH or Customer	5
Repair / replace baths / sinks / toilets / wash hand basin / taps	SARH	21
Minor plumbing repairs and leaks	SARH	21

### Windows

Secure window (ground floor)	SARH	24 hours
Window can't be closed and poses a security risk (ground floor)	SARH	24 hours
Window can't be opened or fully closed	SARH	5
Ease and adjust sticking windows	SARH	21
Replace broken glass previously boarded up	SARH or Customer	21
Repair / replace window board or sill	SARH	21
Repair replace window catches	SARH	21

### Common faults – Gas

Below are some general guidelines on what you should do if you discover a fault with gas systems or appliances.

#### Gas Leak/Smell of Gas

- Don't turn electric switches on or off.
- Don't smoke.
- Don't use naked flames.
- Do turn off the gas supply at the meter.
- Do open doors and windows to get rid of the gas.
- Do call the National Gas Emergency number on 0800 111 999
  
- If you have no gas, high or low pressure phone the National Gas Emergency number on 0800 111 999

#### If you have no heating or hot water

- Check the pilot light has not gone out.
- Check the timer is set correctly.
- Check the thermostat is set correctly.

If the pilot light has gone out press the reset button on the boiler. If your radiators are not very hot check the timer is set correctly. For other enquiries call the Customer Services Centre for advice on 0800 111 4554.

### Common faults – Electricity

If you have no electricity to all or part of your property the first thing you should do is check the trip switch.

The trip switch/fuse box is typically next to your electricity meter. If any

switches are off push them to the up position. The main switch may need to be turned off then on again to reset the system.

If this does not fix the problem, you should then try the following:

### **If you have no electricity at all**

If you have a card meter the power will be cut off if you do not have enough credit on your card meter, you will need to get more credit to reinstate the supply.

Check if your neighbours are affected?

If **yes**, call the Power Loss Help Line on 0800 328 1111.

If **no**, it is likely that the fault originates from inside your home, telephone the Customer Services Centre on 0800 111 4554, stating that you have no electricity at all. An emergency electrician will come and investigate the problem further, within 24 hours.

### **If you have no electricity to part of the property**

Are all appliances affected?

If **yes**, call the Customer Services Centre on 0800 111 4554, stating that you have a partial loss of electricity. They will arrange an appointment for an electrician to call, within 5 calendar days.

If **no**, the fault may be with a specific appliance rather than the supply. Identify and unplug the appliance and do not use it until a qualified electrician has checked it.

### Common faults – Plumbing

#### Stopcock

This is a tap that controls water flowing from the mains into your home. If you have a leak you should turn the water off at the stopcock to prevent any more water leaking.

A leak may not stop immediately because water is still flowing from the header tank or the hot water tank, you should turn on other taps to drain-down the tank. Stopcocks are often located in downstairs toilets, hallways or under the kitchen sink. Sometimes there is more than one stopcock to allow you to turn water off to part of the property.

#### Frozen pipes

If the temperature inside a property drops below freezing, water may freeze inside the pipes and cause the pipe to burst. When the ice thaws the water will start to leak out.

If the property is going to be unattended for long periods during the winter months it is recommended to turn the water mains off at the stopcock and leave the central heating on.

#### No cold water or reduced flow

Check the stopcock and then check to see if your neighbours have water. If they don't there may be a burst mains, contact Severn Trent Water on 0800 783 4444 to report it, otherwise call the Customer Services Centre on 0800 111 4554 for advice.

#### Taps will not turn off

Contact us and we will arrange an appointment to repair it. If the water is running very fast you may need to turn the water off at the stopcock (sometimes there is a separate stopcock for the kitchen sink; this is

usually under the sink). You will be able to turn the stopcock on if you need water in the meantime.

## **Water discolouration**

If your water is a different colour to normal, there may be a problem with the water supply. You should contact Severn Trent on 0800 783 4444 for further advice.

## **Blocked toilet**

As a responsible tenant you should ensure that your toilet does not become blocked due to objects being flushed down it.

Common examples are:

- Children's toys
- Nappies
- Entire toilet rolls
- Kitchen roll
- Paper
- Plastic toilet fresheners

If an object causes a blockage, the cost of the repair will be charged to you. If an object accidentally falls into the toilet, you should always remove it by lifting it out; NEVER try to flush it away.

## **Blocked sink / bath**

Using a plunger or sink unblocking agent can often clear blocked sinks or baths quickly and easily. Some blockages will also clear themselves if they're left for a few hours.

### Toilet will not flush

If this is your only toilet, we will rectify the fault by the end of the next calendar day. In the meantime toilets can be flushed manually by pouring a bucket of water down it after each use.

### Water from above

If you are on the top floor, it could be a leaking roof. We will arrange for a temporary roofing repair. Please be aware that we cannot go onto a roof in the dark, during high winds or when it is raining for health and safety reasons.

If there is another flat above you, try speaking to the occupier and get them to turn off their water. If they're not in check the flats on either side or the floor above, sometimes the leak can travel some distance before it becomes noticeable.

We cannot force entry to an occupied property when people are not in to repair a leak without going through legal processes. This can take some time.

### Common faults – Dampness

Condensation dampness is caused by moisture in the air, often causing a black mould to grow on walls. Reducing the amount of moisture in your home can help prevent mould growth. Ways of reducing the amount of moisture include:

- Drying laundry outside
- Covering pans when cooking
- Leaving air vents open and unblocked
- Using extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms every time the rooms are in use
- Making sure all rooms are aired every day

- Opening windows as often as possible
- Heating all rooms sufficiently
- Moving furniture away from walls so air can flow at the rear

## What if I lose my house keys?

To avoid this we strongly recommend that you leave a spare set of keys with family, friends or neighbours.

If you lose your keys, or get locked out you will be charged for any costs associated with gaining access to your home. This will include:

- A call-out fee
- Cost of replacing all locks
- Cost of repairing any associated damage to the door
- Cost of repairing any associated damage to the door frame
- An administration charge

We must attend other emergency repairs before attending to anyone who has lost their keys and are unfortunately locked out.

This means if you would like us to attend you may have to wait until priority repairs have been attended.



“The Repairs Charter” leaflet is available in alternative formats by telephoning us on 0800 111 4554. All of our policies and leaflets are available on our website at [www.sarh.co.uk](http://www.sarh.co.uk).

**For further information about The Repairs Charter contact Stafford and Rural Homes by:**

calling us on

0800 111 4554 or 01785 216789

or by e-mailing us at

[repairs@sarh.co.uk](mailto:repairs@sarh.co.uk)

or by writing to

The Rurals,  
1 Parker Court,  
Staffordshire Technology Park,  
Beaconside,  
Stafford,  
ST18 0WP.

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