

What's happening with repairs?



Like all services, the Councils are facing unprecedented pressures on budgets due to inflation, which has affected materials and labour costs. In the past, there has been some flexibility when attending to repairs, but unfortunately due to the ongoing pressures we face, we've had to limit our service to essential repairs only.

What are essential repairs?

We are assessing repairs against our minimum responsibility as a landlord which is defined in legislation as -

- a) Keeping in repair the structure and exterior of the dwelling-house (including drains, gutters, and external pipes).
- (b) Keeping in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling-house for the supply of water, gas, and electricity and for sanitation (including basins, sinks, baths, and sanitary conveniences).
- (c) To keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling-house for space heating and heating water.
- (d) Any repair that contributes to a hazard, as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- (e) Any issues that would be defined as prejudicial to health under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This includes repairs to resolve issues that are injurious or likely to cause injury to health.

Priority 1 Emergency – within 24 Hours

Examples of emergencies include:

- Total or partial loss of gas supply (if not the supplier's responsibility)
- Total loss of heating or hot water
- Total or partial loss of electrics
- Total or partial loss of water
- Water coming from outside the building which can't be contained - from leaking pipes or from a fault in the fabric of the building for example.
- A blocked or unusable drain, toilet, sink, basin, or bath where no other is available.
- Unsafe electrics where there is a risk of shock (e.g., exposed wiring)
- Re-securing/making safe items if they are dangerous, e.g., timber floors, stairs, handrails, kitchen units or temporary repair to a leaking roof etc.
- Security risks, such as being unable to lock your front/back door, or close ground floor windows.
- Lack of smoke alarms (NB battery alarms can be provided as a short-term measure)

There may be other works considered an emergency, and discretion will always need to be used.

Priority 2 Urgent – within 7 Days

Examples of urgent repairs include:

- Containable water coming from outside - from a plumbing leak or from a fault with the fabric of the building for example.
- Clearing gutters and/or downpipes where they likely to cause more damage.
- A door entry phone not working.
- A mechanical extractor fan in the kitchen or bathroom not working.
- A Replacement shower (when there is no other means of washing, such as a bath).

What are our repair priorities?

We have four levels of repair priority which you can see here. As a general rule, Priority 1 & Priority 2 repairs will be viewed as essential repairs.

Priority 3 repairs will need to be considered using the essential repair criteria. Those deemed not essential are being put on a non-urgent list for next year.

Priority 4 repairs will be put on non-urgent list to be progressed when budgets permit. Note: tenants with these repair priorities are asked to

advise the repairs service if the issues worsen.

Rest assured, due consideration is always given to tenants with medical conditions or circumstances that mean that they would be at a higher risk of harm should a repair not be undertaken, and a flexible approach is taken when prioritising these issues. For example, if there was damp and mould, and a tenant has pre-existing medical conditions that might be worsened by the presence of mould, an urgent mould wash might be arranged.

Priority 3 Routine – within 28 days

Examples of routine repairs include:

- Repairs to kitchen units (other than the emergency repair in Priority 1)
- Repairs to floorboards (unless dangerous and covered under Priority 1)
- Electrical remedial works (other than those causing an immediate risk, which is Priority 1)
- Fencing repairs
- A new cold water storage tank
- Repairs to walls and chimneys
- Outside door and window repairs (other than emergency repairs – Priority 1)
- Repair or replacement, sinks, baths, basins, or taps (other than those considered an emergency)
- New kitchen units/worktops
- New paths (unless reported as dangerous and requiring more urgent attention)
- New gutters and downpipes

Priority 4 Planned – within 85 days

Examples of planned repairs include:

- Complete replacement of fencing
- Replacement doors & Windows
- Non-urgent external brick works.
- Replacement Porches



How do I contact Homes First?

There are many ways you can report issues or find information on our services. Many things can be reported online using the website:

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Simply type in 'report a problem' in the enter search text field and press return to see a range of options. Another way to find what you are looking for is to type in a key word. For example, if the grass verges need cutting, type in the word 'overgrown' or 'grass' and press return. Some of the online reporting forms need you to register a 'My Account' first, but you only need to do that once.

The online forms are a quick and easy way to report many issues including:

- Repairs to your home and, for blocks of flats, repairs to communal areas
- Missed bins and waste and recycling issues
- Dog and animal problems
- Litter and fly tipping
- Graffiti and vandalism
- Noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour

Chat with ELLIS and online chat are available during office hours on the website. Look for the icon on the bottom right-hand corner of the screen.

If ELLIS is unable to answer your query, customer advisors are on-hand to help.

Changes to the distribution of Tenants' Open Voice



From the summer, we'll be sending out Tenants' Open Voice to most tenants by using their email address. This change in approach will help us to save money and allow us to increase the frequency of the magazine. Plus, many of you have made us aware through tenant surveys that we need to do more for the environment by saving paper for example.

However, we also recognise that some tenants prefer a posted copy for many valid reasons. If this is you, simply let us know you want Tenants' Open Voice posted to you by emailing us at: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk or by calling: 07595 460334 and leaving a message with your details.

