

## Albanian

Shërbimi për Riparimet e Strehimit  
Kërkoni përkthimin

## Arabic

خدمة إصلاحات المساكن  
اطلب الترجمة

## Cantonese

房屋修補服務  
要求翻譯

## Bengali

গৃহ মেরামত পরিষেবা  
অনুবাদের জন্য অনুরোধ জানান

## French

Services de Réparation  
Demandez la traduction

## German

Reparaturdienst für Wohnungen  
Bitten sie um Übersetzung

## Russian

Служба ремонта  
попросите перевод

## Spanish

Servicio de Reparación de Viviendas  
Pida la traducción

## Turkish

Konut Tamir Hizmeti  
Tercüme için sor

## Urdu

گھریلو جاتی مرمت کی خدمت  
ترجمہ کیلئے کہیں

# Colchester Borough Homes

# Repairs Guide

## 2011



'Proud to serve our customers and communities'

## Building Trust

Delivering Tenant Led Services

Commitment To Our Communities

Delivering Professional Services

Providing Value For Money



[www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk](http://www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk)

# Contents

• Aims of the repairs service	3
• How to report a repair	3
• Your right to repair – landlord and tenant obligations	4
• Customer care – our service standards	5
• Repairs – out of office hours	6
• How we prioritise repairs	8
• Who is responsible for repairs?	10
• Gas	16
• Repairs you pay for	11
• Letting us into your home	18
• Checking faults and repairs (inspections)	18
• Insurance	19
• Home improvements	19
• Planned maintenance and improvements	20
• Adapting your home	21
• Keys and fobs	21
• Asbestos	22
• Condensation and ventilation	23
• Your right to compensation for improvements	24
• About us	26

This guide is about repairs. If you would like this guide in another language, in large print or on audio tape, please phone us on 01206 282514 or email: [cbh@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:cbh@colchester.gov.uk).

# Aims of the repairs service

We aim to provide a high-quality repairs and maintenance service. We aim to achieve this by:

- Developing and publishing standards for the service
- Making sure all our homes are maintained to a satisfactory standard

- Making sure our services are good value for money
- Regularly reviewing and improving our services
- Developing local employment opportunities.

## How to report a repair

If you need us to repair something, you can report it to us in the following ways:

- By telephone on (01206) 282525 – normal charges apply
- By email to [housingrepairs@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:housingrepairs@colchester.gov.uk)
- Online at [www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk](http://www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk)
- In person at the area housing office in Greenstead or Angel Court in Colchester's town centre. There are also phones at these offices that you can use free of charge to report repairs.

We record all calls so we can check the quality of our service and keep a record of your report.

If your repair is an emergency, please phone us on (01206) 282525.

When you report a repair, please tell us:

- Your full address
- As much information about the repair as you can give
- How our staff can contact you to arrange to do the repair.



# Your Right to Repair

As part of a tenant's 'right to repairs', the Government has set out a list of repairs that have to be done within a time limit. These repairs are called 'qualifying repairs'.

The law says that tenants can claim compensation if we do not carry out a qualifying repair within the time limit. This doesn't mean you can do the repair yourself and then claim compensation. Also, in order to carry out the repair you have to provide access to our contractors.

Examples of right to repair jobs and their time limits:

- leaking water or heating pipe, tank or cistern **1 working day**
- toilets that do not flush (if you have only one toilet) **1 working day**
- total loss of electric power **1 working day**
- blocked sinks or baths **3 working days**
- broken handrail or banisters **3 working days**
- leaking roofs **7 working days**
- door entry phone not working **7 working days**

If we do not finish these types of jobs within the set time limits you can tell our staff to finish your repair, or tell a contractor to do it, although they will have the same amount of time that our staff had to do the job.

If this contractor still does not finish the job, you may be entitled to compensation of between £10 and £50. This only applies to work costing less than £250 and if you have provided reasonable access.

For more details about your right to repair, please see "A better deal for tenants: your right to repair", which can be found at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

If you think you have the right to have qualifying repairs carried out that have not been done or if you think that your home is not in good condition you (or your legal representative, such as a solicitor) can write to Colchester Borough Homes. You should tell us in your letter about the condition of your home and whether you wish to claim for compensation for any qualifying repairs that you state have not been done. Before you write to Colchester Borough Homes you must tell us about the disrepair and give us a chance to carry out repairs.

# Customer Care – our service standards

## How you can contact us

You can phone us on (01206) 282525. We aim to answer calls within 25 seconds. During busy times you may have to wait in a queue before we can answer your call. Monday mornings are our busiest time. If you phone when we are closed, your call will automatically transfer you to our out-of-hours service.

Email us at [housingrepairs@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:housingrepairs@colchester.gov.uk). We will respond to you as quickly as possible, usually within one working day.

You can register to report your repair online on our website [www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk](http://www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk). We will acknowledge your request and confirm our attendance by email to you. Or you can call into the Greenstead Housing Office or Angel Court.

## Appointments

We make appointments for most repairs for your convenience. If you do not keep the appointment, we will cancel the job and you will have to report it again if you want us to do it. If we need to inspect a repair that has already been completed, we will make an appointment so that you know when somebody will come to see you. If you need to change an appointment please let us know.

## Repair receipts

When you report a repair, we will send you a letter with the following information:

- The details of your repair

- Its priority for completion
- Who will carry out the work
- The date of your appointment
- The time slot (morning, afternoon or all day).

## Code of conduct

All our contractors and maintenance staff follow a code of conduct, which sets out the standards we expect them to work to. The code of conduct also tells you what you can do if staff or contractors do not keep to the code. You can get a copy of the code of conduct from our website or by phoning us on (01206) 282514.

## Customer surveys

We ask all customers who have had a repair to their home to check whether they are happy with the service they have received. We check whether you were happy with how we responded when you reported the repair, how well and how quickly we carried out the repair, and so on. We will send you a questionnaire by post. You will not have to pay for a stamp to post the questionnaire back to us.

## Customer feedback

Your feedback is important as it helps us to improve our services. If you are not happy with any part of our service, please tell us.



# Repairs – out of office hours

If you need a repair and our offices are closed, please phone (01206) 282525. We record all calls to the out-of-hours service so we can check the quality of our service and keep a record of your report.

Not all repairs are an emergency. We will treat a repair as an emergency if waiting until the next working day to deal with it would:

- Put people in danger or make your home unsafe
- Damage the property or make existing damage worse
- Create unreasonable risk, suffering or difficulty.

Below are some examples of emergency repairs:

## Heating

We only do out-of-hours repairs to central heating systems for total heating loss between 1 November and 31 March if there are children under five years old, elderly or sick people living in your home and we get your phone call before 9.00pm (Monday to Friday). If we get your call after 9.00pm, we will deal with it the next working day.

We may deal with a repair as an emergency at any time of the year if the next working day is more than 24 hours away (for example, on a bank holiday) and you have no other way to heat water, or if the weather is particularly cold.

## Hot water

We only do out-of-hours repairs to hot water systems if you have very young, elderly or sick people living in your home, or if the next working day is more than 24 hours away (for example, on a bank holiday) and you have no other way to heat water.

## Leaks

The out-of-hours service will arrange for a temporary repair to burst pipes, leaking tanks or cylinders as well as leaks from toilets and soil pipes. We won't treat overflows or leaking gutters as emergencies unless the water is getting into your home. If there is a small leak, place a container underneath it and turn the water off at the stop tap. We will assess the repair on the next working day.

## Leaking roofs

The out-of-hours service will arrange for a temporary repair to a leaking roof, if the weather is suitable. However, if there is a small leak, place a container underneath it and we will repair it on the next working day.

## Toilets

If your toilet will not flush, or the outlet pipe from the only working toilet in your home is blocked, we will treat this as an emergency. However, if you have at least one other working toilet, we won't treat the repair as an emergency. We will contact you on the next working day to arrange an appointment to do the repair.

## **Gas Repairs**

Repairs to gas appliances that are our responsibility will be treated as emergencies where they put people in danger or could cause further damage to your home. Where gas is your only form of heating or cooking we will aim to provide you with alternatives and then return to complete the repair the following working day.

## **Electrical Faults**

Major faults with the electricity supply and unsafe electrical fittings will be treated as emergencies. However, the response may involve isolating the danger and then returning to complete the repair. Please always seek our advice on any electrical faults.

## **Broken Windows**

Breaches of security to outside doors and windows will be treated as emergencies, although the emergency repair may involve boarding with reglazing being carried out at a later date. You will be charged if the broken window is the result of action by you or someone in your household.



# How we prioritise repairs

There are different types of repairs:

## 1. **Emergency repairs** – we aim to deal with your repair within 24 hours.

We carry out emergency repairs when there could be a risk to someone's life or serious damage to your home. Examples of emergency repairs include:

- Total loss of water
- Burst water main
- Flooding
- Severe storm damage
- Major fault with the electrical supply
- Unsafe electrical fittings
- Breaches of security to outside doors and windows
- Gas leak
- Blocked flue
- Blocked mains drains, soil pipe or sole WC
- Offensive or racist graffiti
- Defective communal stair tread
- Failure of lift
- Failure of warden/alarm call system.

## 2. **Urgent repairs** – we aim to deal with your repairs within 3 working days.

We will make an appointment with you for these repairs. Urgent repairs are repairs that need to be carried out fairly quickly to stop a problem getting worse or to stop the problem affecting other people. Examples of urgent repairs include:

- Minor plumbing leaks or defects
- Blocked drains, sinks, basins, bath or toilet
- Minor electrical faults
- Roof leaks
- Failure of entry phone
- Non-offensive graffiti
- Damage to stair treads, hand rails or banisters.

## 3. **Routine repairs** – we aim to deal with your repair within 21 working days (depending on what work we need to do).

We will make an appointment with you for routine repairs. Work that we do not consider to be a danger to people's health may be carried out as part of routine maintenance. Examples of routine repairs include:

- Repairs to doors, floors and windows
- General joinery repairs
- Plaster work
- Minor plumbing repairs
- Easing doors and windows
- Blocked gutters
- Repairs to gutters and downpipes
- Repairs to tiling
- Repairs to kitchen fittings
- Defective flooring.



#### 4. **Prearranged Repairs.**

These are repairs where an alternative timescale is agreed with the resident to make it more convenient for them or where it is appropriate to arrange a specific appointment outside the normal response times. An example of this might be works outside where it is sensible to wait for improved weather. These repairs will not cause significant inconvenience to the resident or contribute to further deterioration of the property.

#### 5. **Major structural repairs, repairs to underground drains and repairing fire damage.**

Before we can do these repairs, we will usually need to arrange a survey to see exactly what needs to be done. If there is structural damage to a building, we may need to monitor the building for a period of time to find the cause of the problem.

In serious cases like these, we do not set targets for completing the repairs, but we will carry out the repairs as quickly as we can and give an estimated completion date.

#### *Flexibility for vulnerable tenants*

Where additional flexibility to repair priorities and services is required, we will take into account the needs of your household and the severity of the situation to vary the service offered. Vulnerable tenants are defined generally as those who are:

- Elderly
- Severely sick
- Severely disabled
- Caring for newborn children
- In Extra Care.

This is a general guide and the list is not exhaustive.



# Who is responsible for repairs?

We are responsible for keeping the structure and outside of your home in good condition. We are also responsible for the main services, such as plumbing, heating and electricity.

In flats and maisonettes we are responsible for repairing shared entrances, halls, stairways, lighting in shared areas, shared aerials and fire-safety equipment.

As a tenant, you are responsible for the following:

- Looking after your own fixtures, fittings and appliances
- Replacing any lost keys
- Plumbing-in washing machines and dishwashers
- Adjusting doors if you are fitting carpets
- Maintaining the internal decoration of the property.

You do not need our permission to carry out small repairs, but you must get our permission if you want to make improvements or alterations to your home (for example, fitting a shower). You must write to the following address to ask our permission:

**Projects Team Manager  
Colchester Borough Homes Ltd  
123 Gosbecks Road  
Colchester  
Essex CO2 9JT**

We will respond to your letter within 10 working days and, if necessary, will contact you to arrange a visit.

## **Leaseholders**

Leaseholders must pay for repairs to their home (for example, a repair to their door-entry handset). We will add the cost of these repairs to the service charge. The costs will be shown on the leaseholder's service charge invoice.

We are responsible for repairs to shared areas and the outside of flats and maisonettes. This includes the following:

- Window frames and sills (not including glass)
- Entrances to shared areas
- Shared halls
- Stairways
- Roofs
- Gutters
- Drainage
- Lighting in shared areas
- Door-entry systems.

# Repairs you pay for

We will charge you if we have to repair something that is your responsibility, for example, damage that was done on purpose.

We may also charge you for doing a repair at your request outside of office hours, if it was not an emergency repair.

The table below shows what you (as a tenant or leaseholder) and the landlord (Colchester Borough Homes working on behalf of Colchester Borough Council) are responsible for. The star indicates who is responsible.

	Landlord	Tenant	Leaseholder
<b>1. Outside your home</b>			
<b>Shared areas</b>			
Shared areas such as lifts and stairs, rubbish chutes and shared TV aerials	★		
<b>Roof</b>			
The structure and covering of the roof, the chimney, gutters, drainpipes and their clips, and wood or plastic boards on the outside of the building	★		
<b>Outside walls</b>			
Outside walls and rendering	★		
Foundations	★		
<b>Fencing</b>			
Fencing where we have a legal responsibility to maintain the boundary	★		
Fencing where we do not have a legal responsibility to maintain the boundary		★	★
<b>Windows</b>			
Window frames and outside sills	★		
Glass	★		★
Window catches and handles	★		
Window vents	★		

## Repairs you pay for - continued

	Landlord	Tenant	Leaseholder
<b>Doors</b>			
Outside doors (if the damage was caused by fair wear and tear)	★		
Outside doors (if the damage was done on purpose or by lack of care)		★	★
Faulty outside locks and hinges	★		
Replacement (or extra) keys to your home		★	★
Door-entry systems	★		
Replacing door numbers and letterbox plates	★		
<b>Pipes and drains</b>			
Soil and vent pipes	★		
Blocked sinks and basins	★		★
<b>Gardens and boundaries</b>			
Shared gardens	★		
Your own garden		★	★
Gates, including catches and hinges	★		★
Paths, steps and other means of access that are owned by the landlord	★		
Shared washing lines and posts	★		
Your own washing lines and posts		★	★
Dustbins and removing household rubbish		★	★
<b>Garages and outbuildings</b>			
Garages and outbuildings owned by the landlord	★		
<b>Locks and keys</b>			
The cost of replacing locks or keys to homes or garages		★	★
Repairing faulty locks	★		★
<b>Fences</b>			
Repairing boundary fencing owned by the landlord	★		
Repairing or providing new fencing to divide gardens		★	★

	Landlord	Tenant	Leaseholder
<b>2. Inside your home</b>			
<b>Doors</b>			
Inside doors, door handles	★		★
<b>Walls and ceilings</b>			
Structural walls inside your home	★		★
Plasterwork, plaster air vents	★		★
<b>Floors</b>			
Concrete floors (not including floor tiles)	★		
Replacing vinyl floor tiles, but only in bathrooms and kitchens (we will match your existing tiles if possible)	★		★
<b>Staircase (inside your home)</b>			
Staircase, banisters and handrails	★		★
<b>Bathroom</b>			
Bath panels	★		★
Shower curtains and rails, shower hose and spray head		★	★
<b>Kitchen</b>			
Kitchen cupboards (we will replace cupboards that are beyond repair, but may not be able to match your existing cupboards)	★		★
Cupboard drawers	★		★
Cupboard-door catches, handles and hinges, and drawer handles	★		★
Worktops (we will replace worktops that are beyond repair but we may not be able to match existing units)	★		★
<b>Electrical items</b>			
Standard electrical wiring, sockets and light fittings	★		★
Electric shower units, but only if they are owned by the landlord	★		★
Mains-operated smoke alarms	★		★
Electric consumer unit (fuse box)	★		★



## Repairs you pay for - continued

	Landlord	Tenant	Leaseholder
<b>Electrical items - continued</b>			
Electric storage heaters, but only if they are owned by the landlord	★		★
Electricity meter and electricity supply	★		★
Immersion heater, but only if they are owned by the landlord	★		★
Disconnecting and reconnecting cookers, unless they are owned by the landlord		★	★
Extractor fans, but only if they are owned by the landlord	★		★
<b>Plumbing</b>			
Water pipes, overflow pipes and water tanks	★		★
Plumbing-in washing machines		★	★
Taps and stopcocks	★		★
Shower trays, but only if fitted by the landlord	★		★
Toilet flushing systems	★		★
Toilet seats		★	★
Sink plugs and chains		★	★
Bath, wash and hand basin and toilet, but only if fitted by the landlord	★		★
Repairing cracks or chips in bathroom furniture		★	★
The bath seal and three rows of splash back tiles	★		★
The sink seal and one row of splash back tiles	★		★
Bleeding the radiators		★	★
<b>Gas</b>			
Gas pipework inside your home	★		★
Gas meter and the gas supply	★		★
Gas fires, but only if fitted by the landlord	★		★
Gas warm-air units	★		★
Cleaning gas warm-air unit filters (if this is possible)		★	★

	Landlord	Tenant	Leaseholder
<b>Gas - continued</b>			
Radiators, valves, timers and thermostats	★		★
Disconnecting and reconnecting cookers (service may be available as part of the recommission process)		★	★
Servicing of gas appliances every year, if owned by the landlord	★		★
<b>3. Home security</b>			
Extra locks for doors or windows		★	★
Security chains and spy-holes for doors		★	★
<b>4. Home energy efficiency</b>			
Advice on energy efficiency in the home and getting energy-efficiency grants	★		
Cavity-wall insulation	★		
Draught proofing outside doors	★	★	★
New hot-water cylinder jackets (we will supply the first jacket)		★	★
<b>5. Deliberate or accidental damage</b>			
Any deliberate or accidental damage – please see the recharge section		★	★

# Gas

## Phone (01206) 282525 and press option 1

Morrison Facilities Services Limited carry out all gas servicing and gas/heating repairs on behalf of Colchester Borough Council. Colchester Borough Homes acts as the administrator of the contract.

All Morrison staff will be wearing a uniform of a black polo shirt or sweatshirt and black trousers, all with the Morrison logo clearly visible. Every Morrison employee will also be wearing a Morrison ID badge.

Hours of operation are:

Monday to Friday 8:00am to 8:00pm

Saturday 8:00am to 1:00pm

Out of hours service applies all other times.

If you phone for advice about a gas leak in your home, **do not use a phone inside your home**, not even a mobile phone or your intercom system. It could make a spark that could cause an explosion.

If you smell gas, phone National Grid (Transco), the gas-leak emergency service, on 0800 111 999, and then phone us on (01206) 282525, press option 1 and Morrison will arrange for a gas engineer to carry out the required repair (should it be possible).

If you can, you should do the following:

- Turn off the gas at the meter by putting the lever in the horizontal position
- Open the windows and doors to let fresh air in

- Not smoke, use a lighter or switch anything electrical on or off (including lights) until the problem is fixed
- Get out of the building if you can still smell gas.

## Gas supply

When you move into your home, you will need to arrange for your gas supply to be connected. There will already be a gas supply (in most cases and where a mains supply exists) but you can choose to have a different supplier if you want to.

## Gas servicing

Morrison will send an engineer to your home once a year to service your gas appliances, such as boilers and fires. You must let the engineer into your home to do the service. Faulty appliances can be dangerous. If you do not have your gas appliances serviced every year, you may be putting your life, and your neighbours' lives, at risk.



If you do not let the engineer service your gas appliances, we will get permission from the court so we can get into your home to carry out the gas service. We will charge you if we have to do this, together with the cost of the court order, which is currently over £350.

If you are a leaseholder it is your responsibility to have your gas appliances

serviced once a year and to supply Colchester Borough Homes with valid certification (CP12).

All tenants and leaseholders should make sure that their appliances are checked every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer.



**All Morrison staff wear a black uniform and carry ID**

# Letting us into your home

Your tenancy agreement says that you must let us into your home to do repairs and inspections, and to service your gas appliances.

Always ask the person who comes to do the work to prove they work for us or our contractors. They should show you their identification card. Don't let someone you don't know into your home. Our staff and contractors don't mind waiting while you check their identity. The receipt we send you

(when we make the appointment for the repair) will tell you who will do the work. If you are not sure who the person works for, please phone us on (01206) 282525.

It is your responsibility to move carpets, laminate flooring and furniture away from the area where we will be doing the repair.

# Checking faults and repairs (inspections)

Sometimes we will need to do an inspection to find out what kind of repair you need. We will make an appointment for the surveyor (the person who will do the inspection) to visit. We will be able to offer you a morning or afternoon appointment.

After we have done a repair we may inspect it so we can check the standard of work and value for money. If you are not happy with the standard of repair, please tell us.

You will not have to pay extra for the contractor to come back to put things right.





# Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out home contents insurance. If you are a tenant, we insure the building but you are responsible for insuring your belongings, decorations and furniture.

If you are a leaseholder it is your responsibility to insure your furniture, belongings and decorations against fire, theft, vandalism or water damage (such as damage caused by burst pipes).

# Home improvements

If you are a secure tenant, you have the right to make improvements and alterations to your home but you must get our permission in writing first.

Leaseholders may also have to ask for our permission in writing for some home improvements.

We will not refuse permission for you to improve your home if we think the improvements are reasonable, but the work must meet our standards. These standards will be brought to your attention in our reply giving permission.



# Planned maintenance and improvements

If you are a leaseholder, you will have to pay towards the cost of planned maintenance. We add the costs of this work to your service charge.

The most efficient way to do repairs is as part of a planned maintenance programme, which is better value for money. This means that sometimes we may not do your repair straight away because it is part of the maintenance work we have already planned to do. We will tell you the month and year we intend to do this work.

Also, we may not do your repair straight away because we are planning to do it as part of 'Decent Homes'. This is a programme to improve all of our homes to bring them up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2012. You can get more information on the Decent Homes Standard from our website [www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk](http://www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk). We will advise you if this is the case with your repair.



## Adapting your home

If you or a member of your family is finding it difficult to get into your home or move freely inside, help may be available. Your home may be suitable for adaptations, which will allow you to retain your independence. If you think your home needs adaptations, you need to contact the Aids and Adaptations Officer on (01206) 282971

and ask for an assessment of your needs from an Occupational Therapist. Once we have received the Occupational Therapist's report, we can liaise with you in relation to carrying out any adaptations required.

## Keys and fobs

We do not keep spare keys to your home. When you sign your tenancy agreement, we will give you two sets of keys. You are responsible for them. We strongly recommend that you leave a spare set of keys with someone you trust, such as a member of your family, a friend or a neighbour. If you lose your keys, we will not replace them and will only change your locks in an emergency, for which you will be charged. If your keys are stolen, you must report the crime to the police and get a locksmith to change the locks for you. If you have home contents insurance, you may be able to claim back the cost of this work, depending on the excess (the first amount of an insurance claim that you have to pay) on your policy.

If you lose your fob, please phone (01206) 282525. We need to know if you have lost your fob in case someone finds it and uses it to get into the block. If you haven't told us that you have lost your fob, we won't let you into the block.

You will have to buy a new fob from Colchester Borough Homes.



# Asbestos

Asbestos was used in the building trade for many years, so it can be found in many homes. Asbestos is not a risk to health if it is in good condition and is not disturbed, for example by drilling or sawing. Most materials containing asbestos in our homes are in good condition and contain only small amounts of asbestos.

You are most likely to come across asbestos in the following:

- Floor tiles
- Bath panels
- Water heaters
- Garage roofs
- Soffits (under the eaves of your roof)
- Gas appliances
- Boxing-in around pipework
- Flues
- Water tanks
- Boilers
- Textured coatings, such as Artex.

Dust from asbestos can be harmful if you breathe it in.

We will carry out a risk assessment if we know there is asbestos in a building. After the assessment a trained surveyor will decide whether to:

- Leave the asbestos in place and make a record of where it is (if it is in good condition)

- Seal it with a special coating to stop it breaking down (this is safe as long as the asbestos is not flaking and there are no fibres escaping)
- Have the asbestos removed by a specialist contractor.

We will let you know where the asbestos is and ask you to tell us straight away if you think it has been disturbed. If the asbestos has been disturbed or you are planning to do something which may disturb it, we will remove it and replace it with a material that does not contain asbestos.

If you are planning to do anything (for example, repairs or decorating) that could disturb the asbestos, please tell us by phoning (01206) 282525. We may have it inspected and we will carry out a risk assessment.

Do not repair or remove any material that you think may contain asbestos.

# Condensation and ventilation

Every building gets condensation (for example, windows steam up). It is thought that a person produces almost two litres (four pints) of condensation a day from things such as bathing, showering, cooking, washing and drying clothes. This may increase when the weather is cold, although we don't see the moisture until it condenses on a surface, such as a window, first thing in the morning.

Other signs of condensation to look out for are water running down the inside of your windows, black mould growing on walls and a musty smell in the room.

You can reduce condensation and stop mould growing by:

- Keeping your home reasonably warm
- Not using heaters that run on bottled gas or paraffin
- Keeping your home well ventilated by opening windows (in winter, you should open the window a little for as long as it is misted up)
- Drying clothes outside (if you have a tumble dryer it should be installed in line with the manufacturer's instructions)

- Keeping bathroom and kitchen doors shut and windows open, especially when you are cooking or bathing
- Not letting pans or kettles boil for longer than they need to
- Not putting furniture, such as beds or wardrobes, against outside walls
- Regularly mopping up any condensation on windows and window sills.

The mould can be removed easily by cleaning it with hot water and household cleaning products that are diluted appropriately.

Never cover airbricks or vents. Do not disconnect or block outside vents, as this could be very dangerous if your home has gas heating. Do not block up unused fireplaces without leaving room for air to circulate. If you have plastic or modern wooden window frames fitted with trickle vents, keep them open.





# Your right to compensation for improvements

If your tenancy is ending, you may be able to get compensation for improvements you have made to your home.

You can apply for compensation when your tenancy ends – which is usually when you move.

## What type of improvements can you get compensation for?

The right to compensation applies to the following improvements:

- bath or shower
- wash-hand basin
- toilet
- kitchen sink and work surfaces for preparing food
- kitchen units
- central heating, hot water boilers and other types of heating
- thermostatic radiator valves
- pipe, water tank or cylinder insulation
- loft and cavity wall insulation
- draught proofing of external windows or doors
- double glazing or other window replacements or secondary glazing
- rewiring, or the provision of power and lighting or other electrical fittings (including smoke detectors)
- security measures (excluding burglar alarms).

Interior decoration (painting and wallpapering) does not qualify for compensation.

## How do you get compensation?

A claim should be sent to:

Projects Team Manager  
Colchester Borough Homes Ltd  
123 Gosbecks Road  
Colchester  
Essex CO2 9JT



The following information will need to be provided:

- your name and address
- what improvements you have made
- how much each improvement cost
- the date the improvements began and finished.

You can get up to a total of £3,000 for any one improvement.

You will not get any compensation if the amount is below £50.

### **What can you claim compensation for?**

You can claim compensation for:

- the cost of materials (but not for appliances such as cookers or fridges)
- labour costs (but not your own labour).

You will need to produce an invoice to show how much your improvements cost.



# About us

Colchester Borough Homes is an Arms Length Management Organisation set up to manage the Council's housing.

## Useful contacts

Colchester Borough Homes telephone numbers are open 8.30am to 5.30pm

Customer Services	01206 282514
Repairs	01206 282525
Antisocial Behaviour Hotline	01206 506973

Complaints and Compliments	01206 506706
Colchester Borough Council	01206 282222

You may write to us at:

**Colchester Borough Homes**  
**FREEPOST NAT 13892**  
**Colchester**  
**CO3 3BR**

## We aim to

- Answer your telephone calls within 25 seconds.
  - Acknowledge emails and letters within five working days. Our response will include the name and contact details of the member of staff who will deal with your enquiry.
  - Deal with you courteously; private interview facilities will be available if necessary when you visit us.
  - Provide reception services that are accessible for people with disabilities.
  - Have staff available to deal with enquiries between 8.30am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday – with an out of hours service available for emergency enquiries.
- Our staff will identify themselves and wear a name badge.
- Visit you at home by appointment if you ask us to. We will show you ID and treat your home with respect.
  - Use plain English in our publications and letters. We can arrange for correspondence and leaflets to be made available in large print, Braille, on audio tape, CD or translated into other languages if you want us to.
  - Admit mistakes and put things right if they go wrong.
  - Consult with you regularly – your views and opinions are important to us.



# Our company values

## **Building Trust**

We will work with you to build trust in our services.

## **Delivering Tenant Led Services**

We will work with you to improve what we do, and promote fair and equal services for all.

## **Commitment To Our Communities**

We will offer you services you can rely on, which respect the needs of the community and individuals.

## **Delivering Professional Services**

Our staff are highly trained to enable you to receive a knowledgeable response.

## **Providing Value For Money**

In everything we do.





Call us on 01206 282514 if you need this document in large print.

Call us on 01206 282514 if you would like any of our documents translated.

Please ask if you need an interpreter.  
Braille and audio copies can also be requested.

**Email: [cbh@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:cbh@colchester.gov.uk)**

**Colchester Borough Homes, PO Box 7888,  
Colchester, CO3 3YB.**

**[www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk](http://www.colchesterboroughhomes.co.uk)**

