



YOUR TENANT'S HANDBOOK

co-op
H O M E S

part of RHP Group

An easy access guide to the latest service information
from Co-op Homes, all in one place.

CONTENTS



- 3 Introduction
- 4 Contact
- 5 Access our services
- 6 Repairs
- 8 Share your views
- 9 Complaints
- 10 Stay safe in your home
- 13 Prevent damp & mould
- 15 Get financial support
- 16 Safety in your home

INTRODUCTION



We've designed this booklet to give you easy access to the latest service information from Co-op Homes all in one place. Keep it handy in case you need to contact us, share your views, make a complaint, or ask for support.

Your main rights and responsibilities as a tenant of Co-op Homes or one of the co-ops we provide management services for are outlined in your tenancy agreement which is a legal document. We've pulled out some of that information into this booklet as a handy reminder.

If you need a different format such as a translation into a different language, accessible PDF, large print, easy read, or an audio recording, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



HOW TO CONTACT

Get in touch with us in the way that suits you. You can:

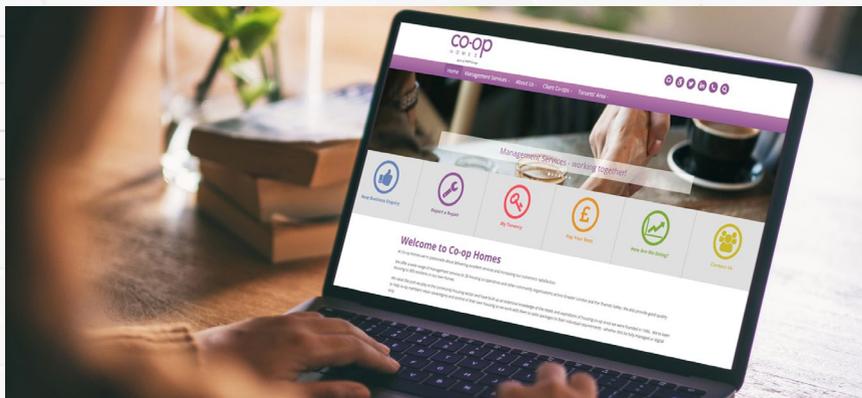
 Email customer.services@coophomes.coop. We aim to respond within one working day, but we'll always let you know if we need more time.

 Call us on [020 3166 2608](tel:02031662608) if you'd rather speak to someone over the phone. We're available 9.00am – 5.15 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00am – 5.00pm on Fridays. *Mondays and lunchtimes are especially busy, so please call outside these times if possible.*

 TEXT using [07398 377388](tel:07398377388) for rent balance, repair or to request a call back from your housing officer.

 Write to us at [8 Waldegrave Road, Teddington, TW11 8GT.](mailto:8WaldegraveRoad@coophomes.coop)

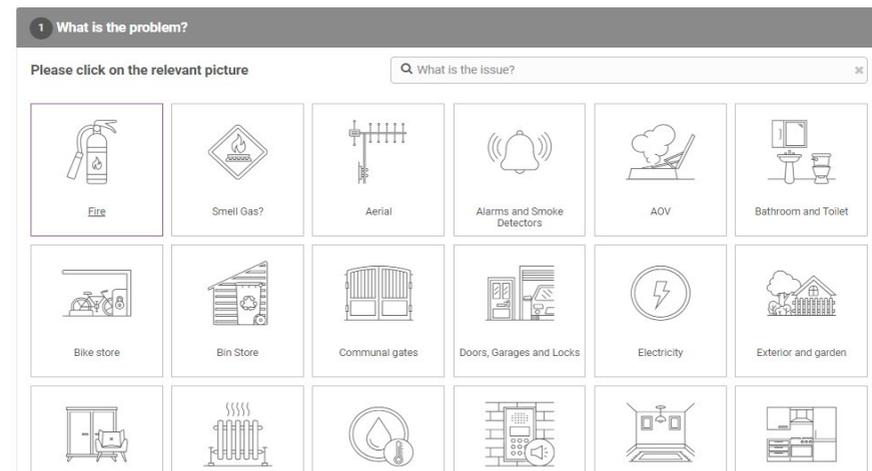
For general queries, try our Help and Advice page at www.coophomes.coop



HOW TO ACCESS OUR SERVICES

For access to our repairs ordering system, visit www.coophomes.fixflo.com. Here you can set up your Fixflo page and request an appointment to fix your repair issue. You can do this 24/7 in just a few clicks using a handy pictorial guide to identifying the fault.

All you need is an email address. It only takes a few minutes and you'll only have to do this once. If you don't have internet access, you can also call us for help with any of the above.



It's easy! Just choose the picture icon most relevant to the problem, review any guidance that pops up (this might even solve your problem), then give a little bit more information about the problem and attach any photos or videos if you can. Select your address and check that your contact details are correct then submit your request.



ORDER REPAIRS

Our repairs team will pick up your request and if it's an issue that we or your housing provider are responsible for we'll instruct a contractor to make an appointment with you. You'll be able to track the status of your appointment on Fixflo and can also comment on the process or the works carried out. Using Fixflo also means that you won't have to wait to get through to us on the telephone.

Alternatively, text "REPAIR" to **07398 377388** and we'll get back to you. Or call **020 3166 2608**. But, if your repair is an **EMERGENCY** you should phone us on **020 3166 2608** immediately.

How long can you expect to wait for your appointment?

Emergency repairs (within 24 hours)

To make safe where there could be imminent threat to life, danger of serious injury or major damage to property. These will be made safe within 24 hours although repairs to completely resolve the problem may take longer and require a separate appointment.

Urgent Repair (within 7 days)

Repairs which will prevent or resolve a significant interruption to your facilities.

Routine repairs (30 days)

Non urgent routine repairs

Programmed works

In some cases work will require a longer period of time because of the extent of what's required to complete the job. In this situation you will let you know when we expect works to start and how long they will take.

What are you responsible for?

This is now your home and it will be up to you to look after it. This involves:

- ▶ keeping your home clean and in good decorative order and not damaging the property or any fixtures provided
- ▶ carrying out minor maintenance, like changing light bulbs, pull cords, fluorescent fittings
- ▶ unblocking your own sinks, basins or baths
- ▶ replacing bath and sink plugs and chains and your own toilet seats
- ▶ preventing pipes from bursting during cold weather
- ▶ keeping air vents and window trickle vents clear both inside and outside to help prevent condensation
- ▶ maintaining cooker connections using a qualified installer
- ▶ maintaining all paths, keeping your own fencing and garden maintained (if you have one) and trimming your own trees and bushes
- ▶ keeping gully grids clear of leaves etc
- ▶ replacing door bells, door knockers and chains
- ▶ repairing your own units or any work surfaces not fitted by us
- ▶ resetting trip switches and adjusting heating controls
- ▶ fitting additional door locks or burglar alarms
- ▶ testing smoke detectors (if fitted) and replacing batteries in any mains operated back up devices
- ▶ getting TV aerials installed professionally if you live in a house
- ▶ putting up, removing or replacing shelves, rails or hooks and to make good to any damage to the walls on removal
- ▶ letting us know as soon as possible when a repair needs to be done to prevent further damage
- ▶ allowing us access to rectify any problem in yours or a neighbouring property.



SHARE YOUR VIEWS



We can only deliver brilliant service if we listen to you and learn where we need to improve. There are plenty of ways for you to tell us what you think including:

- ▶ Responding to a text survey if we send you one.
- ▶ Contacting us about joining our Customer Focus Group – we meet every few months to talk about our service and policies.
- ▶ Contacting us about becoming a Estate Champion. We'll train you on key safety matters relating to your building, and you'll carry out regular checks to make sure it's well maintained.
- ▶ An independent market research company called IFF Research may call to ask questions about our service, like repairs, antisocial behaviour, and communal cleaning. The call will take around ten minutes. From April 2023, all social housing landlords in England and Wales will carry out these surveys and report their results to the Regulator of Social Housing. Results will be published online from Summer 2024, making performance more visible. Read more here: www.coophomes.coop/about-us/news/telephone-survey.

We want to be honest with you about how we're doing, so we publish our performance and annual reports, and let you know how we're putting your recommendations into action, at www.coophomes.coop/about-us/about-us/how-are-we-doing/.



COMPLAIN



We believe complaining shouldn't be difficult, so you can do this by phone, email, text, through our website or letter. If things go wrong with our service, we'll respond quickly and effectively to put things right. We'll acknowledge your complaint, investigate and respond to all Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days.

You'll find our full complaints policy on our website. The Housing Ombudsman Service recently introduced a new Complaint Handling Code, which sets out good practice. We've published this too, so you can see what areas we've committed to follow.

We're confident we'll be able to resolve your complaint within our formal response stages, but you are entitled to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage throughout the complaints process. If you'd like to contact the Housing Ombudsman, you can call [0300 111 3000](tel:03001113000) or email info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

You can find out more about how we handle complaints by visiting <https://www.coophomes.coop/about-us/compliments-and-complaints/>.



HOW TO STAY SAFE IN YOUR HOME



Keeping your home safe is a top priority for us, but we can't do this on our own: we need your help too.

Your communal area

- ▶ Leaving items in communal areas can block emergency exit routes and prevent the fire brigade from carrying out their duties.
- ▶ If items are set alight, they give off smoke and gas which might reduce your visibility. They could also explode or cause the fire to spread more quickly.
- ▶ Items that shouldn't be kept in communal areas include buggies and prams, children's toys, plant pots and rubbish you're waiting to throw away. If we find any of these items in communal areas, we'll have no option but to remove them.
- ▶ Only door mats are permitted in the communal areas: all other items will be removed.
- ▶ If an item is removed and you'd like it back, you'll need to get in touch and pay removal and storage costs.

It's your responsibility to dispose of large or bulky items, and non-domestic waste. This can be at a local recycling centre, by a registered waste carrier, or through your local council. Leaving these items in the bin rooms or on the estate is fly tipping and it's illegal.



HOW TO STAY SAFE IN YOUR HOME Continued



Your gas safety check

An annual gas service is a legal requirement and as your housing provider we need to carry it out to keep you and your family safe. If these checks aren't carried out, you could put your whole household at serious risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. A gas leak could also cause a fire or explosion. Also, you should know that gas appliances can become less economical to run if they aren't serviced annually, so will cost you more money.

You must let us into your home to carry out your gas safety check, but we want to carry it out at a time that works for you. Our gas contractor will invite you to book an appointment two months before your gas service is due to expire, so you'll have plenty of notice.

If there's anything preventing you from giving us access to your home, please get in touch so we can discuss your situation.



HOW TO STAY SAFE IN YOUR HOME Continued



Your community

Our employees and contractors should feel safe and secure working in our communities without suffering abuse or anti-social activities. We take all reports seriously: any form of aggression towards our employees will result in Co-op Homes taking action against you. This could include restrictions to our services, or action against your tenancy.

We also ask all our residents to respect their neighbours and the communities in which they live and this can include, if you live in a flat, something as simple as your choice and type of floor covering as for people living above or below flats with hard flooring everyday noises can be amplified.

In our closeknit communities we have to accept a certain amount of noise as being "normal". But residents have the right to complain about excessive noise or noise outside the generally acceptable times of 7 am to 11pm. We advise residents to have a gentle word with neighbours to calmly explain the problems you're experiencing (or drop them a note). Our experience tells us that in most cases people come to an amicable solution that suits both households. If you've tried the above and the problem persists please let your housing officer know.

Where your neighbour's behaviour is or becomes threatening, violent, abusive (including harassment) or they are breaking the law in any way, please call the Police.



HOW TO PREVENT DAMP & MOULD



When temperatures drop into single figures in the colder seasons most homes will be affected by condensation at some point.

It's caused by water vapour or moisture meeting a colder surface, like a window or wall, and soaking into wallpaper, paintwork, or plasterwork. Over time, black mould grows in the affected areas. Mould can appear anywhere around the home, but you may notice it in corners of rooms, on external walls and around windows. It's also found in areas with poor air circulation, such as behind furniture that's been pushed up against external walls. By making some changes to your routine, you'll start to notice a difference, and the level of mould should reduce.

- ▶ Wipe down your windows and windowsills every day to remove condensation.
- ▶ Where you can, keep your home warm and at an even temperature: between 18 and 21 degrees.
- ▶ Keep internal doors closed to prevent heat escaping and moisture transferring into other rooms.
- ▶ Open windows and doors slightly and often. Newer UPVC windows will have trickle vents that'll allow you to ventilate your home more easily.
- ▶ Don't block airbricks or vents.
- ▶ When bathing, use your extractor fan if you have one and open the window. Keep the door closed until the room cools down.
- ▶ When cooking, use your extractor fan if you have one, cover pots with lids, and open the window.
- ▶ Where possible, dry clothes outdoors, or use a clothes airer in the bathroom with the door closed.

HOW TO PREVENT DAMP & MOULD Continued



If you already have mould growth, it won't go away unless it's treated. You can do this by regularly wiping it down with a shop-bought mould killer spray, or diluted household bleach.

If you're worried that the damp or mould in your home is a bigger issue than any of the things mentioned, please let us know straight away. You'll be asked to provide more information and photographs and if we need to carry out further investigation, we'll arrange for a surveyor to come and take a look.



HOW TO GET FINANCIAL SUPPORT



If you're worried about covering rising heating costs and other essential bills, or wish to find out if you are entitled to any welfare benefits, visit

www.turn2us.org.uk which has a lot of information about grants, benefits and other support available if you're on a low income. Our parent, RHP also has some useful information on its website with links to agencies set up to assist <https://www.rhp.org.uk/news/financial-employment-support/>.

Please do let us know if you're struggling to pay your rent. We can help offer solutions and signpost you to agencies or charities who may be able to help. We know that there are many claims upon your income and money has to be stretched. We're here to help – and we can discuss what support we can offer, advice on budgeting, claiming benefits, and ways we can support you to pay your rent to prevent you getting into arrears.

You can also manage payments at any time through your free MyTenancy online account.



HOW TO SAFETY IN YOUR HOME



Make sure you know where the following can be found in your home in case of emergencies:

- ▶ Electricity meter
- ▶ Fuse board and isolation switch
- ▶ Gas meter and stop tap
- ▶ Cold water stop tap

If you smell gas

Call the National Grid immediately on **0800 111 999**. Please also call us on **0203 166 2608** so an engineer can attend. Do not use electrical items - including mobile phones - or naked flames inside or outside your home as these can ignite the gas.

ESCAPING IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

If you live in a flat with shared communal access areas

If you are in a flat and your access route is communal and the fire is somewhere else in the building, you may be safer to stay in your flat as your front door is fire resistant (unless you are being affected by heat and smoke). Stay near a window.

However, if your exit from the building is obviously free from danger you should leave if it is safe to do so.

HOW TO SAFETY IN YOUR HOME Continued



If you live in a house or a flat with no communal access areas:

- ▶ Make sure you and your family are aware of your fire escape plan & practise it regularly
- ▶ If there is a fire, the most important thing is to get out and stay out of the building.
- ▶ The best escape route is usually your normal way in and out of the building unless this is blocked by fire or smoke. Plan for a second escape route and make sure everyone in your household knows what it is and how to use it.
- ▶ Test closed doors with the back of your hand before opening them. If they are warm to the touch you should not open them as the fire is on the other side.
- ▶ As you leave the building, close doors behind you to delay the spread of fire.
- ▶ If there is a lot of smoke, crawl close to the floor as the air will be clearer there.
- ▶ Do not leave by a window unless you are on the ground or first floor. Throw bedding or other soft furnishing out to break your fall. Don't jump but lower yourself to the ground.

If you live in a flat and the fire is in your flat leave the building closing the door behind you and alert people by shouting and banging on doors as you leave. Do not delay your departure.

REMEMBER - ALWAYS CALL 999 IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

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