



Renfrewshire
Council

repairs handbook



This repairs handbook has essential information about getting repairs done in your property.

It tells you how to report a repair, the timescales for repairs being done and important safety information. There's also a useful section on how to fix minor faults.

For more information about repairs, visit us online at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

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What repairs are we responsible for?

As your landlord, the Council has a legal duty to repair and maintain your property.

We will carry out certain repairs to your property to make sure it is maintained to a safe standard.

We are responsible for:

Outside

- Roof and chimneys
- Drains, gutters and rainwater pipes
- Walls and windows
- External doors and frames
- Boundary walls, fences and paths
- Bin areas and the poles supporting washing lines

Inside

- Walls and ceilings
- Heating and hot water systems
- Plumbing systems
- Electrical wiring, sockets, light fittings and hard wired smoke detectors
- Kitchen and bathroom fittings
- Doors and surrounds inside your home

We are also responsible for communal areas around the property.

We will maintain common entrances (including door entry systems), halls, stairways, lifts and other communal areas to make sure they are in good condition. However, this may be a joint responsibility if other owners are involved.

What are you responsible for?

As a tenant, you are responsible for minor repairs such as:

- repairing or replacing any minor fixtures and fittings such as curtain rails, light bulbs, toilet seats and plugs;
- replacing keys and fitting extra locks;
- maintaining internal decoration;
- maintaining or replacing floor coverings supplied in kitchens and bathrooms as part of our investment programme;
- maintaining or replacing shower curtains supplied in bathrooms as part of our investment programme; and
- repairs to television aerials and reception equipment (except in multi-storey flats and sheltered housing complexes).

You are also responsible for any non standard fixture or fittings you have accepted as part of the property including floor coverings, garages and sheds.

You must also:

- report any damage or repairs needed to your home or communal areas;
- take care of your home, including carrying out minor repairs and decorative work as described above;
- allow us access to your property so we can carry out repairs, inspections, maintenance and annual gas servicing;
- tell us as soon as possible about any alterations you wish to carry out in your home and get our permission before they are carried out; and
- report any criminal damage or vandalism to your home to us and the police, and always remember to get a crime reference number.

You are also responsible for repairs which have been caused by misuse, neglect or damage by you, your family or any visitors to

your home. If we repair this damage, you will be responsible for paying the cost of these repairs.

For more information on repair responsibilities, our Housing Repairs Policy is available at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Reporting your repairs

There are a range of easy ways for you to report a repair.

You can report by phone:

- Call the Repair Line on **0300 300 0300**.
- Use the freephone Repairs Direct telephones in the Johnstone and Renfrew neighbourhood offices and the Paisley Customer Service Centre.

You can report online:

- Fill in an online repairs request at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

When you contact us to report a repair, you'll receive an appointment for the repair to be completed by a tradesperson or, if it needs to be inspected first, a visit from a repairs and maintenance officer.

When reporting a repair, please make sure that you:

- arrange the appointment at a time when it is convenient for you to be in the house;
- give a contact number in case we need to reschedule the work; and
- let us know about any disability or impairment that may affect our ability to gain access to the property, so that we can act accordingly.

Once you have an appointment time, there are a number of things you can do to make sure we can carry out our job as quickly, effectively and safely as possible.

We need you to:

- make sure there is a responsible adult present to allow our tradesperson access to the repair;
- clear the area around the repair before our tradesperson arrives to carry out the work (this may include uplifting carpets or laminate flooring, clearing work surfaces, emptying cupboards, taking down curtains or moving furniture away from the area); and
- keep pets and young children away from the area of the repair work whilst work is in progress.

If you're unable to keep an appointment, please let us know as soon as possible on **0300 300 0300** and we will be happy to arrange an alternative time to suit you.

If you don't notify us and we attend to carry out the repair but cannot access your home, the repair request will normally be cancelled and you will need to call and arrange a new appointment.

Out-of-hours emergency repairs

Some emergency repairs are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Emergency repairs will be attended to outwith normal working hours only when:

- there is a **serious** risk to health and safety;
- there is a **serious** risk to the structure of the property; or
- the property is not secure.

If a serious fault occurs outwith normal working hours, and it is not safe to wait until the next working day, you should call us on **0300 300 0300**. If the repair does not qualify as an out-of-hours emergency and does not require immediate attention, you will be given an appointment for the repair to be carried out the following day.

When will my repair be carried out?

Repairs are split into four groups and the response time for each one is different.

Emergency repairs

These are repairs where there is a serious threat to health and safety or where we need to take quick action to prevent damage to your home or a neighbouring property eg front door not secure, burst pipe or carbon monoxide alarm sounding.

Emergency repairs will be attended to and made safe within **one day** of being reported and, where possible, we will carry out the full repair.

If this is not possible, we may carry out temporary repairs immediately to make the situation safe, and then return to complete the repair.

Urgent repairs

These are repairs which are not emergencies, but which need to be carried out quickly to prevent more damage to your home eg minor leaks and overflows, damaged flooring or faulty showers.

Urgent repairs will be carried out within **5 working days** of being reported.

Appointable repairs

These are everyday repairs which are required as a result of normal wear and tear to a property.

Appointable repairs will be carried out within **15 working days** of being reported.

Programmed repairs

These are generally non-urgent, general maintenance repairs and many of these jobs will involve renewing items, working at height or common repairs involving owners.

Sometimes it is better to carry out repairs (particularly larger scale repairs) on a programmed basis rather than carrying out individual responsive repairs.

We will inspect all jobs which fall into this category before we programme the work. The length of time to complete programmed repairs depends on the volume and type of work required, but generally we would hope to complete these works within approximately **three months**.

For more information on different types of repairs, visit us online at **www.renfrewshire.gov.uk**

Your Right to Repair

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 gives you, as a tenant, the right to have small urgent repairs carried out within a given timescale. This is called the Right to Repair. The Right to Repair scheme covers certain repairs up to the value of £350 – if we do not carry out the repair within the set timescale, you may be entitled to compensation.

To qualify for the Right to Repair scheme, the repair must:

- have an estimated value of less than £350; and
- be included in the table below ('Repairs covered by the scheme').

If we do not start the repair within the set timescale you have the right to arrange for an alternative contractor from our approved list of contractors to carry out the repair. You cannot use a contractor who is not on the Council's approved list.

If we fail to carry out a qualifying repair within the maximum time allowed, you will be entitled to £15 compensation. You will then be entitled to a further £3 per day for every day the repair remains outstanding, up to a maximum of £100.

The Right to Repair does not apply if:

- the repair has an estimated value of £350 or more
- the defect has been caused by a breach of your tenancy conditions (e.g. deliberate damage)
- the repair is delayed due to matters outwith our control (e.g. a spare part is required or the work is covered by a guarantee that requires another contractor)
- the repair is not the Council's responsibility or is to the common parts of the building.

If we cannot get into your home at a time agreed with you, your repair will be cancelled. You will then have to reapply and start the process again.

For more information on your Right to Repair, visit us online at **www.renfrewshire.gov.uk**. Alternatively you can find out more at the Scottish Government website **www.gov.scot**

Repairs covered by the scheme

1 working day means by the end of the next working day, we must have completed the job or made it safe. For example, if a repair was reported on Tuesday, we would have until 5pm Wednesday to attend (excludes weekends and public holidays).

Fault	Maximum period for completion in working days
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 the house	1
Blocked sink, bath or basin	1
Electric power:- loss of electric power	1
partial loss of electric power	3
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Unsafe access path or step	1
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Loss or partial loss of hot water and/or heating where no alternative heating is available	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1
Water supply:- loss of water supply	1
partial loss of water supply	3
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working and no alternative ventilation	7

Will I have to pay for any repairs?

You are responsible for any damage that you, your family or visitors to your home have caused.

If we carry out a repair for such damage you will be asked to pay for it. We will give you an estimate for the repair, including an administration charge.

If you believe the damage was caused by vandalism, you must report the matter to the police and get an incident reference number. You will be recharged for the cost of the repair; however you may be able to appeal against the recharge cost on receipt of your invoice as per the Council's Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

When you move out of your property, you must:

- leave the property in a clean and tidy condition;
- remove all your belongings;
- remove all floor coverings (unless agreed at your pre-termination inspection);
- make sure decoration inside the property is in a reasonable condition;
- do any repairs you are responsible for; and
- remove any fixtures and fittings you have installed without our permission and put right any damage.

If you fail to leave the property in the required condition or any repairs you carry out prior to the end of the tenancy are not of a satisfactory standard, Renfrewshire Council will carry out the work and you will be recharged for the cost.

For more information, please refer to the Council's Rechargeable Repairs Policy available at **www.renfrewshire.gov.uk**

Common repairs

Responsibility for repairs and maintenance of common areas within flats is shared between all the owners, including the Council.

Common areas include parts such as roofs, external walls, gutters and close and stair areas.

To get non-urgent repairs done to common areas, a majority decision is needed, in line with the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004.

Where common repairs are required, we will work with owners to encourage them to participate in any proposed improvement works in compliance with the legislation. This can sometimes cause delays in work being carried out to Council-owned properties, particularly where the Council is not the majority owner in the building.

For more information on common repairs, visit us online at **www.renfrewshire.gov.uk**

Gas safety checks

By law, the Council is responsible for carrying out annual gas services and other safety checks. As your landlord, we have a legal obligation to ensure our gas appliances (gas fires or gas central heating installed by us) and flues are maintained in a safe manner.

We service our gas appliances every year to keep them in good working order and safe for your use. Unsafe systems are dangerous and can have potentially fatal consequences, so it is very important that you allow us access to your home.

This is a legal requirement – you must allow us reasonable access to your home so that we can carry out these essential checks.

If you don't allow us access, we will have to arrange for a forced entry and you will have to pay any costs, such as repairs to the door.

If you install a gas heater or gas water-heating appliance with written permission, we will maintain and service it. Gas appliances will become the property of Renfrewshire Council at the end of your tenancy. If you wish to take such appliances with you at the end of your tenancy, a suitable, fit-for-purpose heating appliance must be left in its place and properly installed by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

When carrying out gas safety checks, we will shut down any unsafe gas appliances that we have no responsibility to maintain.

Electrical safety checks

It is the Council's legal duty to carry out an electrical safety test in your home every five years. This means sending an electrician to your home to carry out a safety inspection. We do this to ensure the safety of our tenants, our property and to fulfil our obligations as your landlord.

We will let you know when your electrical safety inspection is due by sending you a letter. When you receive this letter, please call us to arrange an appointment time that suits you but if you forget, we'll send you a reminder.

However, if we don't hear from you we may need to force entry in to your home and you will be recharged for any associated costs.

We will carry out the inspection in a safe manner and will clean switches and surfaces before and after the safety test. Before we arrive, we would ask you to ensure that the cupboard or area around the consumer unit and meter is clear to allow the electrician free movement and please ensure all electrical sockets and light switches are accessible.

Asbestos in the home

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a natural mineral which is mined out of the ground. In the past, after processing, most asbestos was made into building materials and was used in building work for many years, reaching a peak during the period after 1945. We, along with most other UK local authorities, own many properties with buildings which contain asbestos. All asbestos is potentially very dangerous. However, health risks only happen if asbestos fibres are released when materials containing asbestos are damaged or disturbed.

Where might I find asbestos in my home?

You will find asbestos most commonly in some, but not all, of the following materials:

- Decorative textured coatings and paints applied to walls and ceilings
- Floor tiles
- Heating and ventilation flues and parts of heaters
- Toilet cisterns
- Bath panels
- Old electrical fuse boxes
- Access panels to service ducts
- Screen panels under windows, fascia boards, soffits, roof tiles, rainwater gutters and pipes
- Water storage tanks

Please remember

Building materials in houses which contain asbestos, but which are in good condition, will not be a risk to anyone living in the property and are best left undisturbed rather than being removed. Asbestos which has been painted, covered by other materials or enclosed in ducts, for example, in cupboards, also should not be a risk.

What can I do to help?

If you know there is damaged asbestos in your home or you are planning DIY or maintenance work which could involve working with building material containing asbestos, contact the Housing Repairs Line on 0300 300 0300. You can arrange an appointment for a technical officer to visit you. We may arrange for a sample of suspected material to be taken for analysis and will give you advice on what action, if any, you need to take.

Home safety

We do not insure the contents of your house or your personal possessions.

We recommend that you insure your possessions against loss by fire, flood, theft and accident.

From as little as 75p per week, we can offer home contents insurance for a small additional charge on your rent.

If you would like to join our insurance scheme, call into any of our neighbourhood offices or fill in an online form at

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

Customer satisfaction

We are committed to providing a quality repairs service and want to make sure you are satisfied with work carried out in your home.

If our service does not meet the standard expected, it is important that you let us know as quickly as possible so that we can put things right.

If, for any reason, you are not satisfied with the service you have received, you can let us know through any of the methods via which repairs can be reported. We can normally solve problems quickly and easily at this stage.

However, if you are still unhappy with our service, you can make a formal complaint by completing the online complaints form available at **www.renfrewshire.gov.uk**

Our Customer Service Team will investigate your complaint and, where appropriate, correct the problem and take steps to make sure it does not happen again. We will also let you know the outcome of your complaint.

Our staff

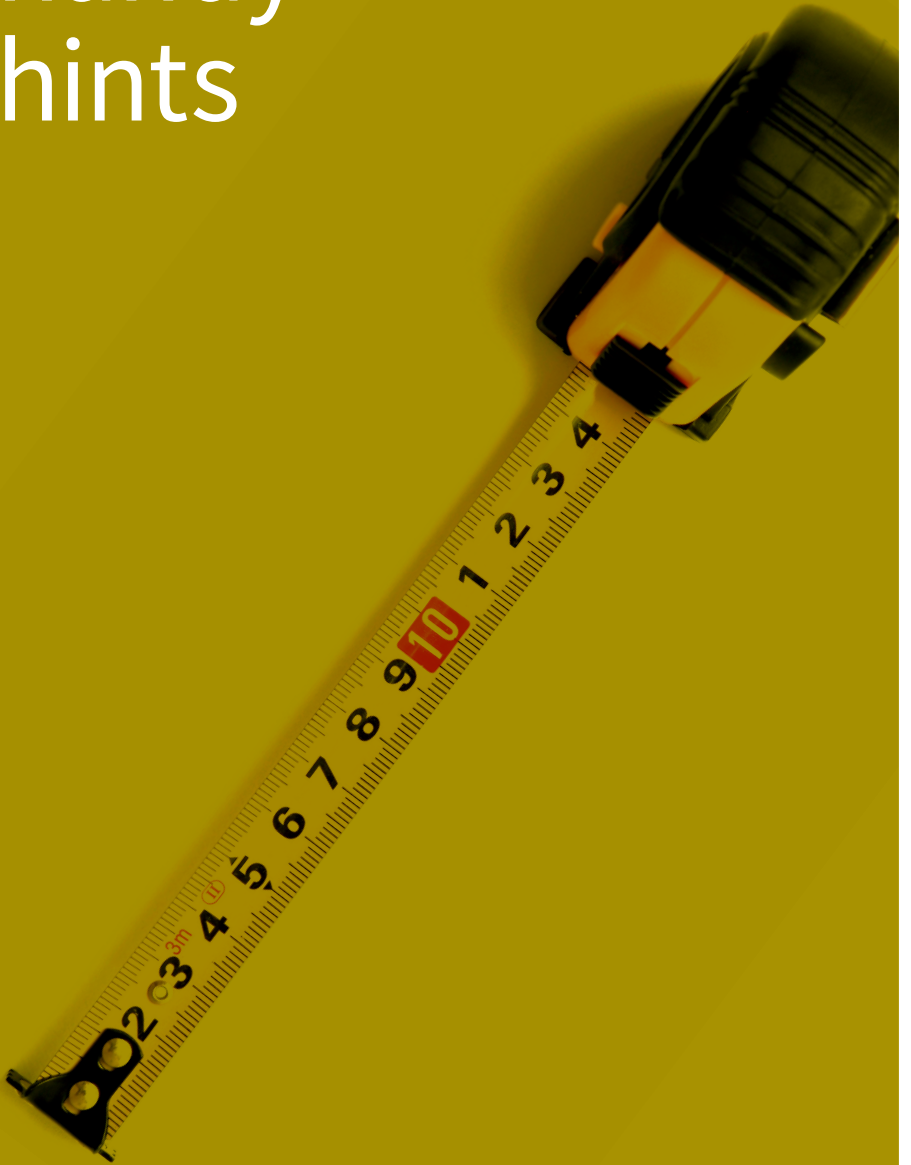
All Building Services employees and workers employed by our contractors carry an identification card.

Before you let anyone into your home, you should ask to see their identity card.

If you are unsure about anyone requesting access to your home, please contact us on **0300 300 0300** before allowing them into your property.

Our staff will always conduct themselves in a professional, quiet and orderly manner and try to minimise disruption and mess.

handy hints



Gas

If you suspect you have a gas leak, you should contact the **National Gas Emergency Service** on **0800 111 999** and take the following steps:

- ✓ Turn off the gas supply at the meter. Turn the handle at the meter to the horizontal position to turn it off.
- ✓ Open all windows and doors to allow any gas to escape
- ✗ Do not use any naked flames
- ✗ Do not turn any sockets or lights on or off

If you have no gas or have high or low pressure, phone the **National Gas Emergency Service** on **0800 111 999**.

No heating or hot water	Check the pilot light has not gone out Check the timer is set correctly Check the isolation switch
Pilot light has gone out	Press the reset button on the boiler
Radiators are not very hot	Check the timer is set correctly
Other	Call the Housing Repairs Line on 0300 300 0300

Electricity

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

This can sometimes happen when there is a problem with your electrics and a switch is tripped to break the circuit.

This can happen when:

- there are too many appliances on a circuit and it's overloaded
- an appliance is faulty or hasn't been used properly
- water has leaked into a circuit or has spilled onto a plug
- a light bulb has blown

Trip switches

The consumer unit (fuse box) is next to your electricity meter. If any of the switches are down, push them to the up position. (The main switch may need to be turned off then on again to reset the system).

If this doesn't fix the problem, you should then try the following:

No electricity (power points and lights) at all

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.
Are your neighbours affected? (you could also check the stairwell or communal areas)	Yes – Call SP Energy Networks on freephone number 105 No – It is likely that the fault starts from inside your home, call the Housing Repair Line on 0300 300 0300 stating that you have no electricity at all. An emergency electrician will come and investigate the problem further.

No electricity (power points or lights) to part of the property

Is it the electrical supply or the appliance?	Electrical Supply – If lighting is affected in a part of your home, or if no appliance will work in the affected socket, call the Housing Repair Line on 0300 300 0300 stating that you have a partial loss of electricity. They will arrange an appointment for an electrician to call. Appliance – If only one appliance is not working, it may be faulty. If other appliances work in the same socket, you should get the appliance checked by a qualified electrician.
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Plumbing

Stopcock	<p>This is a tap that controls water flowing from the mains into your home. Stopcocks are often located in the hallway or under the kitchen sink; there is sometimes more than one stopcock to allow you to turn water off to part of the property.</p> <p>If you have a leak you should turn the water off at the stopcock to prevent any more water leaking. Turn the mains stopcock to the right (clockwise) to turn it off.</p> <p>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. Check immersion heater is switched off before the hot water tank is drained down. In the case of gas heating switch off the water heater.</p>
Frozen pipes	<p>If the temperature inside a property drops below freezing, water may freeze inside the pipes. When the ice thaws out it may cause pipes to burst.</p> <p>To prevent frozen pipes always ensure that you turn the water off at the mains or leave central heating on low if the property is going to be unattended for long periods of time during the winter months.</p>
No water	<p>Check the stopcock and then check to see if your neighbours have water. If they don't there may be a burst mains, contact Scottish Water on 0800 0778 778 to report it, otherwise call the Housing Repair Line on 0300 300 0300 for advice.</p>

<p>Taps won't turn off</p>	<p>Contact us and we will arrange an appointment to repair it.</p> <p>If the water is running very quickly (full bore) 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.</p>
<p>Water discoloured</p>	<p>If your water is a different colour to normal, there may be a problem with the water supply. You should contact Scottish Water on 0800 0778 778 for further advice.</p>
<p>Blocked toilet</p>	<p>As a responsible tenant you should ensure that your toilet does not become blocked due to foreign objects being flushed down it.</p> <p>Common examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's toys • Nappies • Entire toilet rolls • Kitchen roll • Paper • Plastic toilet fresheners <p>If a foreign object causes a blockage, the cost of the repair will be recharged to you. If an object accidentally falls into the toilet bowl, you should always remove it by lifting it out, NEVER try to flush it away</p>
<p>Blocked shower head</p>	<p>It is your responsibility to clean the shower head.</p>

Blocked sink or bath	Using a plunger, sink un-blocking agent or sodium bicarbonate can often clear blocked sinks or baths quickly and easily. Some blockages will also clear by themselves if they are left for a few hours.
Toilet won't flush	If this is your only toilet, we will fix the fault by the end of the next working day. In the meantime toilets can be flushed manually by pouring a bucket of water down it after each use.
Water from above	<p>If you are on the top floor, a leaking roof could cause this, 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.</p> <p>If there is another flat above you, please try speaking to the occupier and get them to turn off their water. If they are not in, check the flats on both sides and the floor above, as sometimes the leak can travel some distance before it becomes noticeable.</p> <p>Where the property is privately owned, we cannot break into an empty property to repair a leak without first going through a legal process. This may take some time.</p>

Condensation

Condensation comes from water vapour being produced from within a building that cannot escape. Moisture is always present in the air even if it can't be seen. Condensation occurs when moist air comes into contact with a cold surface and water droplets form on windows, mirrors and cold spots on external walls.

Condensation happens mostly on the colder parts of external walls particularly where there is not much air movement, for example in corners of rooms, behind wardrobes and beds or even inside wardrobes. Its presence is often first seen by the development of mould growth on walls and ceilings and in some cases on furniture and clothes. It can also lead to the rotting of affected timber such as windowsills.

Everyday living adds extra moisture to the air inside our homes, even breathing! Breathe on a cold window or mirror and it will fog up.

The first step in reducing condensation is to produce less moisture

- If possible, hang your washing outside or hang it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window slightly open or the extractor fan on. Avoid putting wet washing on radiators
- Always cook with the pan lids on and turn the heat down once the water has boiled. Only use the minimum amount of water required in the pot
- When filling your bath run the cold water first and then the hot, it reduces steam (which leads to condensation) by up to 90%
- If you use a tumble drier, it must be vented to the outside unless you have a new condensing type of washer/ dryer
- Do not use your gas cooker to heat up your kitchen. This is dangerous and burning gas produces moisture
- Avoid using gas or paraffin heaters. These produce high levels of moisture

Increase ventilation and improve airflow in your home

- Ventilate your bedroom(s) by opening the window twice a day for at least 15 mins to let air in and moisture out and/or ensure trickle vents remain open
- Keep a kitchen window open when cooking or washing and use your extractor fan if you have one. If you do not have a working extractor fan in your kitchen & bathroom, contact the Council's Repair line on 0300 300 0300 and we can arrange to have it repaired
- Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom for about 20 minutes after use by opening the window slightly or by switching on the extractor fan

Control the temperature

- Avoid heating one room and leaving the other rooms cold, where possible. It is better to heat your home throughout at a low to medium level (ideally between 18-21oC) in colder months. If you need advice about managing your energy bills, you can contact our Energy Advice Team on 0300 300 0300 or email emu@renfrewshire.gov.uk. You can also get advice about what to do if you're struggling to pay your energy bills from the Citizen's Advice Scotland website.

Reduce the number of cold surfaces in your home

- Avoid putting furniture against outside walls that are always colder. If you do this, you must ensure there is a decent gap between the piece of furniture and the wall
- Avoid overfilling wardrobes and cupboards as it restricts air flow

How to remove mould

The best way of tackling mould is to reduce the condensation levels and prevent it from growing in the first place. However, there are some steps you can take to remove it

- To kill and remove mould, wipe down or spray walls etc with a fungicidal wash that carries a Health & Safety Executive (HSE) 'approval number' and follow its instructions carefully. You can often buy these at supermarkets and DIY shops
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint and a fungicidal resistant wallpaper paste to help prevent mould growth recurring. Please note, the effect of fungicidal or anti-condensation paint is destroyed if covered with an ordinary paint or wallpaper.
- Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo any effected carpets. Mould cannot be removed by using a brush or Hoover

If you are unable to undertake the above steps, telephone the Council's repair line on **0300 300 0300** and we will arrange for a Repair & Maintenance Officer to call out to your home and assess if the Council can assist you.

Lost keys

If you lose your keys or get locked out you will be charged for any costs to do with gaining access to your property.

This will include:

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

We must attend other emergency repairs before attending to anyone who is locked out, this means you could wait up to six hours before we are able to gain access to your property.

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

This document can be made available
in braille, large print or audio.

A summary is also available in these languages on request:

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub
w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

 0300 300 0300