

# GUIDE TO DECENT HOMES AND MAJOR REPAIRS





## One of our key aims is to bring all our 16,000 homes up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard (DHS) by 2010.

To achieve this Standard, we carry out many hundreds of major repairs each year, whether as part of our programme to meet the Standard or as one off pieces of work to renew a part of your home that has reached the end of its useful life.

### What is the Decent Homes Standard?

A 'Decent' Home is warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities.

To meet the Standard we may need to carry out internal work such as fitting a new kitchen or bathroom or external works such as re-pointing, or a new roof. It may be a mixture of both. However, some homes will not require any work at all as they already meet the Standard.

This guide tells you the standards of service we provide.

### Before we start any major works we will:

- show you our photographic identification cards. Check this card before you let anyone in. If you need to confirm who someone is, phone the number on their ID card;
- carry out a survey at your convenience (sometimes more than one) so we know what work is needed;
- write to you to describe what work has been identified;
- give you a choice of kitchen units, work tops, ceramic wall tiles and floor covering and also a choice of paint colour for walls;
- cater for your needs in the design of the work, for example considering the layout of your kitchen and positioning of your appliances;

- tell you who your Project Liaison Officer (PLO) is, together with contact details;
- make it clear to you how we work around any home improvements you have done yourself;
- supply you with boxes to pack away items if needed. (perhaps if you are having a new kitchen fitted). We can also move the larger items such as the cooker or washing machine;
- arrange for goods and furniture to be put into storage (depending on the size of your home and the work required);
- describe any preparation that is your responsibility. For example, lifting laminate flooring so that the work can take place;
- give you a minimum of 10 working days notice before work starts to your kitchen or bathroom; and
- take note of any special needs or requirements you or your family may have, for example, planning for a walk in shower rather than a bath replacement.

### During any major works we will:

- at the end of each working day we will as a minimum ensure you have cooking facilities, a water supply and all electrical sockets and switches put back;
- need access from 7.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. If we need access outside these times, we will tell you in advance;
- show respect to you and your home and be courteous in our discussions with you;
- use clean dustsheets or polythene sheeting to cover all furniture and floor coverings; and
- clear up any mess or rubbish at the end of each day. This is monitored by us and our site management staff.



### **We will not:**

- use or move your belongings without permission unless they are at risk of damage or if you are out;
- smoke in your home;
- use your toilet or washing facilities;
- use (or ask to use) your telephone;
- leave tools or materials in your home overnight;
- use your home for lunch or tea breaks; and
- use your power or water supply.

### **After any major works we will:**

- send you a satisfaction survey so you can tell us how we performed. (each completed form is also entered into a quarterly draw for £50 of high street vouchers so please do take the time to complete and return this);
- show you how to use any new equipment such as the kitchen fan; and
- assess your entitlement to a grant towards the cost of making good any decorations damaged by major works.

If after any work we have had to disturb or damage existing decorations (for instance damaging wall paper during a re-wire) you may be entitled to a grant towards the cost of redecorating. Once all work is complete, a Project Liaison Officer will

inspect the work and tell you how much grant can be awarded.

Please be aware that if you have rent arrears any grant awarded will be credited to your rent account. If the rent arrears are less than the value of the grant, the balance will be awarded by cheque.

### **And finally...**

If you want to carry out your own improvements you need to get written permission from your local Housing Manager. Work must not be started until permission is given and there may be certain conditions attached, such as gas fittings being carried out by a CORGI registered person and electrical work by a NICEIC installer.

Work can involve a level of noise and mess and we fully appreciate that carrying out work can be a disruptive for your household. We will do everything possible to minimise any inconvenience and help you cope while we are working in your home.

### **When carrying out major works we will expect you to...**

- be polite to us and our contractors. Foul language or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behaviour may mean that the contractor refuses to work in your home. If you think things are going badly or you have a complaint about the contractor, please contact us;

- keep out of the compound! There may be a site compound for welfare facilities for contract staff near your home. It's usually several steel huts with a fence around them. Please keep your children away from the compound; and
- not touch any equipment. You must not touch or use the workers' machinery and equipment, including hand and electric tools.

### Special note for Leaseholders

Leaseholders will not normally be affected by a kitchen, bathroom or re-wire scheme, but we will ensure that leaseholders are given the appropriate notice of any scheme which may involve a cost e.g. roofing or external work.

The PLO will visit any leaseholder in a scheme to explain any possible disturbance from neighbouring properties.

### Tenants' Own Improvements

Written permission should be sought from your Housing Manager prior to any work starting.

Work must not be started until permission is given and there may be certain conditions attached, such as gas fittings being carried out by a CORGI registered person and electrical work by a NICEIC installer.

When considering a tenant's own kitchen or bathroom for replacement under the Decent Homes Standard, the following will be taken into account:

- whether the component fails the Decent Homes Standards;
- if it fails, had permission been sought from your local housing manager?;
- if permission had been obtained and work carried out to a reasonable standard, replacement will take place;
- if permission has been obtained but work has not been carried out to an acceptable standard, AVHL will make an informed decision whether or not to carry out the replacement work. To correct the DIY may be too costly;
- if permission had not been obtained, AVHL will take into account the reasonableness of accepting responsibility for replacing the component; or
- if the component passed the Decent Homes Standard, there will be no need to replace the component.

If you would like this information in any other format including large print, audio CD/tape, Braille or translated into another language please telephone **0113 214 1942** and speak to the Equality Officer.



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