

## HOW TO CONTACT US

**Customer Services Team**  
**01736 331799**

Lines are open from 9.00 am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday  
 Fax: 01736 331647 E-mail: [contact@penwithha.org.uk](mailto:contact@penwithha.org.uk)  
 Typetalk: 18001 01736331799 Minicom: 0800 0277014

Or visit us online at  
[www.penwithha.org.uk](http://www.penwithha.org.uk)

**Repairs Hotline - FREEPHONE 0800 592238**

**PHA Emergency Line - FREEPHONE 0800 592238** (5.00pm - 9.00am)

We are also able to provide this document in large print, spoken word on audio tape or other languages through Language Line. If you would like this leaflet in one or more of these ways, please contact our Customer Services Team.

Head Office:  
**67 Morrab Road, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2QJ**

Hayle Office:  
**30 Fore Street, Copperhouse, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4DY**

Registered as an exempt charity with the Financial Services Authority number 27834R

## Penwith Housing Association SETTLING INTO YOUR NEW HOME



# SETTLING INTO YOUR NEW HOME

We hope you are settling in to your new home. We have enclosed some useful information when having to deal with a defect or a repair. Please take a moment to read through the leaflet.

## **New Build Properties**

Your property was part of our new build scheme and is therefore covered by a 'defects liability period'. This period is usually 12 months and is where the contractor remains responsible for any defects that occur in your home.

At the end of this period, a representative from PHA or on behalf of PHA will inspect your home and will list any remaining defects, which are considered the contractor's responsibility under the terms of the contract. This list is then issued to the contractor who has an obligation to carry out the works listed within a reasonable time period.

If a defect arises after this inspection which existed during the defects liability period but for some reason was not apparent at that time, this defect could be considered a 'latent defect' and could be the responsibility of the contractor.

Please do not report settlement cracks, decoration issues (i.e. flaking plaster), twisted door frames or gardens as these will be inspected, identified and rectified at the 12 month inspection.

## **Refurbished Properties**

You may have just moved in to an existing PHA property which has undergone a major refurbishment prior to your occupancy. Such works include kitchen or bathroom replacements or central heating installations. These works are also covered by a 12 months defects liability period which will enable you to report any defects that occur during this period relating to the recent works. Any other repairs can be reported to our Response Maintenance Contractors, Ocean

## **Reporting a Non Urgent Defect**

When reporting a defect, you should be prepared to give the following information:

- Your name and address.
- Your home telephone number (if applicable), mobile number, work number or a number where you can be reached.
- What defects have occurred giving as much detail as possible. Too little information can mean that the problem is assessed incorrectly and can result in your repair taking longer to complete.
- When you will be at home or other arrangements to allow the contractor access.
- Any other information the Association or the contractor may need to know (this could include, access problems or hearing/sight difficulties).

## **Reporting an Urgent Defect**

If you have a problem which you think needs urgent attention, please report the repair using our 24 hour emergency service:- 0800 592238

This service operates 24 hours a day. Examples of the type of work that would be treated as an out of hours emergency are:

- Serious flooding and burst pipes (where the stopcock cannot be turned off).
- Dangerous structures.
- Dangerous electrical faults.

Once the defects liability period has expired, any defects that occur then become repairs. All repairs are dealt with by Ocean and can be reported by telephone on the number above, e-mail, fax or letter.



## Defect & Repair Priorities

The time taken to complete a defect or repair depends upon its urgency. The Association uses a system of priority codes to determine the length of time in which the work should be carried out. The priority is determined by the nature of the fault and the possible risk to the health and safety of the people living in your home.

Delays can often occur because:

- The Association or contractor is having difficulty in obtaining spare parts.
- The weather has been too bad to do the work.
- You have not given reasonable access to allow the work to be carried out.
- You have not kept to a pre-arranged appointment either to inspect the work required or to allow the contractor access.

The priority codes are as follow:

**P1 – Emergency repairs** – to be responded to and made safe immediately and in any event within 24 hours.

**P2 – Urgent repairs** – to be attended to within a maximum of 7 calendar days.

**P3 – Routine repairs** – to be attended to within a maximum of 28 calendar days.

## PHA Responsibilities

PHA will be responsible for repairs to the following:

The structure and exterior of the premises including:

External Works	Internal Works	Communal Facilities
Chimney stack (not sweeping) Roofs	Skirting boards Walls, floors & ceilings	Lifts Decoration & repair of common entrance halls & stairways Lighting
Drains	Plastering (not including painting & decorating)	Waste disposal installations
Gutters and external pipes	Domestic water systems & sanitary fittings	Fire safety equipment installations & fittings
External doors & door frames	Domestic electrical	Door entry & security equipment
Window frames & fastenings	Fuse boxes	Communal drying areas
Walls & rendering	Space heating installations (including fireplaces, fitted fires, central heating, boiler & pipework to appliances)	Communal aerials (where installed)
Sheds & garages	Installations provided for heating hot water (including immersion heaters & boilers)	Other communal amenities (where installed)
Paths & steps	Oil, gas & solid fuel boilers	
Boundary walls & fences Cyclical external decoration	Stairlifts	

PHA provide a cleaning service to all communal areas. If you are not happy with any aspect of this service, please inform your Neighbourhood Manager.

Where a repair, which is the responsibility of the Association is required because of neglect or wilful damage by the customer, the Association reserves the right to make a charge to the customer in accordance with the 'Rechargeable Works Policy'. This can be located on our website or can be obtained from our head office.

## Responsibilities of the Tenant

The Association actively encourages tenants to report any defects to the property promptly, including any disrepair or defect for which the Association is responsible and reasonable access to the property must be allowed to inspect and carry out the work. Repairs that are the responsibility of the tenant are as follows:

Gardens & Communal Areas	Maintenance
To maintain gardens & keep tidy & cultivated & to arrange for the prompt collection of any discarded household items & refuse.	To keep the interior of premises & landlords fittings on the premises in a good state of repair (including cracked or broken glass) & decoration & in a clean & lettable condition at all times.
To keep boundary hedges, shrubs & verges in good order & ensure ditches & watercourses are not obstructed.	To maintain clotheslines &/or rotary dryers (except where provided in certain communal areas)
Not to cut down or damage trees, shrubs or fences & in the case of open plan estates, not to plant hedges, shrubs or trees in front gardens without written permission.	To clean solid fuel chimney flues (once a year).
In flats & maisonettes to jointly keep communal areas clear of obstruction.	To provide refuse storage receptacles.
	To keep the premises free from insects and vermin.

May we take this opportunity to remind you that the above is part of your tenancy agreement which you have signed and agreed to abide by.

In accordance with the 'Gas Service Regulations' and the Associations 'Gas Servicing Policy' tenants will be informed that there is a statutory obligation to allow entry to the property and that enforcement action will be invoked in the event that the Association is denied access.

## Rechargeable Works

PHA will recharge tenants in the following circumstances:

- Where damage is caused to landlords fixtures & fittings.
- Vandalism & criminal damage to PHA's property.
- Costs incurred resulting from evictions.
- Costs incurred in reinstating unauthorised works.
- Clearance of & repairs to properties which have been vacated by tenants.
- Carrying out works which are the responsibility of tenants.

The cost of the recharge will be the amount of PHA's contractor charges, an admin charge plus VAT.

## Coping with Emergencies

**Water** – Find out where the stopcock is located on your water supply and make sure it works by turning it off and running the cold tap in the kitchen. The tap should stop running completely almost immediately. If it does not, please report this immediately.

**Electricity** – Make sure you know where the consumer unit (also known as a fusebox) is and where the 'off' switch is.

**Gas** – If you have a gas supply, make sure you know how to turn it off at the stop valve. Never attempt to deal with the fault yourself. Gas leaks can be dangerous and must be reported immediately. Gas escapes can be reported direct to Transco on 0800 111999. If calls are made to the Associations emergency service unnecessarily, a charge could be made. A typical out of hours call out costs the Association in excess of £50.

## **Avoid Freezing Pipes**

In very cold weather, try to keep some heating on at all times, open inside doors to allow warmth to circulate around the home. However, these doors should be shut when you go to bed at night. If you have a loft hatch, open it to allow some warmth to circulate into the loft to help prevent pipes and tanks freezing.

Look in your loft to check your pipes and tanks are lagged. If they are not, please report this so that we can arrange for it to be done. Loft insulation should not be placed directly under tanks.

Only consider doing this if you are physically able and feel happy to do so. If not, please ask someone else to do this or alternatively, PHA will arrange this.

## **Coping with Freezing Pipes**

If you know the location of a frozen pipe, you can try and thaw it yourself. Turn off the stopcock and place a heater close to the pipe – a hairdryer or water bottle is ideal. It can take a considerable amount of time to thaw a frozen pipe.

If the hot water tank is not filling up or no water is coming through the hot taps, you must not use your water heater, back boiler, immersion heater or central heating boiler as these could become dangerous if there is hot water in them.

Be prepared for the pipe thawing. Have a bucket or bowl ready to collect any water if the pipe has burst. If you do have a burst pipe:

- Turn off the stopcock.
- Turn off your water heater, immersion heater, central heating boiler or if you have a back boiler damp the fire down and let it go out.
- Turn on the hot and cold taps to drain all the water.
- Put a container under the leaking pipe to collect any water.  
If the leak is close to the floor, use a baking tray or something similar.
- If you are spending any time away from home in the winter months, please remember to turn off your stopcock to prevent burst pipes and to reduce the risk of major flooding. If you have gas or electric central heating, consider leaving the heating on at a very low setting to minimise the risk of freeze-ups.
- Finally, report the problem.

## **No Electricity**

The circuit-breaker and/or RCD (Residual Current Device) may have tripped due to a faulty appliance being plugged into a socket. It will not be possible to reset either or both of the devices until the faulty item has been disconnected. If you are unsure which appliance is causing the problem, unplug all appliances, reset the circuit-breaker and/or RCD and then plug the appliances in one by one until the faulty item which trips the circuit is found. You may be charged for the call out if it is found that one of your appliances has caused the problem.

Please check with your neighbours that there has not been a power cut. If you cannot solve the problem, please report it.

## **Blocked Drains**

If you find you have a blocked drain, stop using the kitchen sink and bathroom fittings affected until the drain is cleared. Try and make some arrangements to use a neighbour's toilet if necessary. Report the blockage. Please remember that the Association is not responsible for blocked waste pipes, gullies and toilets where caused by the tenant, the tenants household or visitors.

## **Other Hints & Tips**

- **If your toilet will not flush** - you can flush a toilet by pouring a bucket of water down the pan.
- **Dealing with running WC overflows** – you can usually stop an overflow running by placing a coat-hanger over the top of the cistern and under the arm of the ball valve. This will hold the ball valve in the up position.
- **Loss of electric lighting** – if your sockets are working normally, you can use a table lamp or similar plug in light.

## **Energy Efficiency**

The Association has a policy of promoting energy efficiency in all its properties. The aim is to ensure that customers' energy bills are kept to a minimum thus making better use of incomes and making rents more affordable.

The Association also has a responsibility to ensure that the wider environment is protected by its actions.

The Association offers customers practical advice through its energy hotline and Energy Advisor.

## **What do Energy Advisors do?**

Energy Advisors can provide a variety of advice to help customers use the services and facilities within their homes more cost effectively and efficiently. For example they can offer advice on how best to operate heating and hot water systems and controls.

Energy Advisors can also suggest other agencies that customers can contact to provide further assistance and make use of other benefits that may be available to them given their particular circumstances.

To arrange for the Association's Energy Advisor to visit, please call our free hotline on 0800 7837226.