



London Borough  
of Hounslow

March 2009

# PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

Problems with your home -  
how we can help



Help with repairs  
and renovations

Care and repair service

Home adaptations

Energy efficiency

Infestations

Empty homes

**This leaflet is for private tenants and homeowners and gives advice and the services available to help you repair, maintain and improve your home.**

## **Help with repairs**

**Landlords have a responsibility to keep the properties they let in a good standard of repair.**

If you notice anything wrong with the property you rent, for example, dampness or a broken boiler, you must **report the problem to your landlord (or your landlord's agent) as soon as possible** so they have the opportunity to repair the problem.

Most landlords do carry out repairs once they know about them and the council cannot assist unless you have first contacted your landlord or agent. Keep a record of any communication you have with your landlord.

Your landlord should carry out the repairs within a reasonable time. Although there are no set time limits, you should consider how dangerous the problem is, how difficult the problem will be to sort out and any complications involved in the job (such as obtaining quotes from specialists, arranging for scaffolding etc).

However if your landlord is unwilling to undertake the repairs, please contact the **Private Sector Enforcement team** on 020 8583 3870 and an officer will contact you to discuss the case and if necessary arrange to visit your property to inspect the problem.

We can offer advice, approach your landlord informally or if necessary take enforcement action to ensure that your landlord undertakes any necessary repairs.

## Empty homes

**Leaving a property empty is costly and can attract vandals and squatters.**

If you own a property which you have left empty, then let us know. We have a number of ways to help you get the property back into use including help with repairs or finding tenants.

There are many reasons why a property may be empty, but if there is an empty home in your neighbourhood which is causing problems, we may be able to help.

For help bringing an empty home back into use or to report one which is causing problems in your area, contact the **Private Sector Enforcement Team** on **020 8583 3870**.

## Help with paying for repairs or renovations

If you have lived in your home for more than five years we may be able to help pay for repairs and renovations. You must be the owner or a tenant who has responsibility for repairs.

There are different types of grants and financial assistance that we offer to help you improve the condition of your home, from major repair assistance to minor work.

**We may be able to help you pay for works to:**

- the structural stability of your property;
- dampness;
- toilet facilities;
- electrics;
- drainage;
- bathing; and
- kitchen facilities.

There are criteria you will need to meet to receive a grant.

You must be over 18 years old and a UK citizen or 'ordinarily resident' not subject to immigration control.

If you would like more information on the financial assistance available to improve your home contact the **Private Sector Housing Team** on

**020 8583 3874/3876/3877**

## Care and Repair Service

The Care and Repair service helps Hounslow's private sector residents who are finding it difficult to cope with their home and have no support, carry out repairs, maintenance or adapt their homes.

Arranging repairs to your home can be quite complicated. Our service can help reduce the stress and disruption of repairing and improving your home by offering confidential advice, support and expertise.

### **We can:**

- advise you what repairs and improvements are needed;
- get quotations for you from reliable builders;
- supervise the works until they are completed;
- help you to apply for grants or loans to fund the works if necessary; and
- help you when arranging works covered by insurance claims.

### **We can also help you:**

- check your benefit entitlement and help you to apply for any types of benefits for which you might qualify;
- contact energy efficiency schemes to make your home warmer and more energy efficient; and
- contact local services (e.g. Age Concern, Volunteers Bureau, Occupational Therapists)

**All our advice, including our initial visit, is free.**

If you decide to carry out work with our help, a fee based on the cost of the works will be charged.

This fee can be included in any grant for which you may be eligible.

## Handyperson scheme

The handyperson scheme is part of Hounslow's Care and Repair service to help with practical small jobs such as:

- putting up hand rails;
- fitting curtains rails;
- small items of plumbing or carpentry work;
- basic electrics such as changing plugs, fuses or light bulbs; and
- fitting home security devices such as new locks making you more secure in your home.

There is a charge for the handyperson service. You will be asked to pay for any materials plus an hourly labour charge. If you are in receipt of a means-tested benefit, i.e. pension credit or council tax benefit, you will only have to pay for the materials.

An estimated cost of the work will be discussed with you **before** you decide to go ahead. Since it is a very popular service and is in great demand, you can only

use the service for a maximum of 6 hours in one year.

**For more information, and to use these services, contact us at:**

**Care and Repair Team**

Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow TW3 4DN

**Telephone:** 020 8583 3878

**Fax:** 020 8583 3990

**Minicom:** 020 8583 3900

## **Difficulty coping in your home - adaptations**

If you are finding it difficult to cope in your home, you may be able to get adaptations carried out to make it easier for you to use.

### **Adaptations which may help you could include:**

- grab rails for the bathroom or entrance;
- a ramp;
- widening doors for wheelchair access;
- a stair lift; or
- a level access shower.

You may be able to apply for a **Disabled Facilities Grant** toward the cost of the adaptation. There are rules which say who can receive this help, we can discuss this with you and see what changes will help you the most in your home.

**For further information contact:**

**Community Services - Occupational Therapy  
Services (West team)**

13 Hanworth Road, Feltham, Middlesex, TW13 5AF

**Telephone:** 020 8583 3200

**Fax:** 020 8583 3303

**Community Services - Occupational Therapy  
Services (East Team)**

Ashburnham House, Chiswick, London, W4 4BY

**Telephone:** 020 8583 3400

**Fax:** 020 8583 3663

**or**

**Private Sector Housing Unit**

Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow, Middlesex,  
TW3 4DN

**Telephone:** 020 8583 3874/3876/3877

**Fax:** 020 8583 3990

**E-mail:**

[privatesectorhousing.grants@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:privatesectorhousing.grants@hounslow.gov.uk)

## Energy efficiency

Everyone uses energy in the home but often we use more than we need.

We are promoting energy efficiency in all homes in the borough, helping you to save money on fuel bills, keep your home warmer and protect the environment.

Energy efficiency is about using energy wisely so you stay warm and comfortable without waste.

There are many energy efficiency schemes and projects running in Hounslow and in West London.

### **We may be able to help with a grant for:**

- a new central heating system;
- a replacement boiler (deemed by our installers to be faulty or over 15 years old); and
- heating upgrades.

For details of all these schemes call freephone on **0800 587 2251**.

To find out what you can do to save energy, visit our energy efficiency advice web pages at **[www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk)**.

## Problems with rats, mice or insects?

We can offer advice and help with treating pests in your home.

### We can help with problems with:

- rats;
- mice;
- squirrels (in roof spaces);
- fleas;
- bedbugs;
- cockroaches;
- pharaoh ants; and
- wasps.

The treatment of rats is a free service in domestic properties but there is a charge for the treatment of other pests. However, householders on certain means tested benefits may qualify for free treatment.

### For more information and to arrange treatments contact us at:

#### **Pest Control**

Environment Department  
London Borough of Hounslow  
Bridge Road Depot, Pears Road  
Hounslow TW3 1SQ

**Telephone:** 020 8583 5082      **Fax:** 020 8583 5088

**Minicom:** 020 8583 6622

**Email:** [pestcontrol@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:pestcontrol@hounslow.gov.uk)

**This leaflet can be supplied in community languages, large print, audio tape/CD or Braille.**

**Contact the Communications Team:**



**020 8583 3535**



**[hcscommunications@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:hcscommunications@hounslow.gov.uk)**

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## **Private Sector Housing Unit**

Civic Centre  
Lampton Road  
Hounslow TW3 4DN

**Telephone:** 020 8583 3870

**Fax:** 020 8583 3990

**E-mail:** [privatesectorhousing@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:privatesectorhousing@hounslow.gov.uk)

**[www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk)**

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