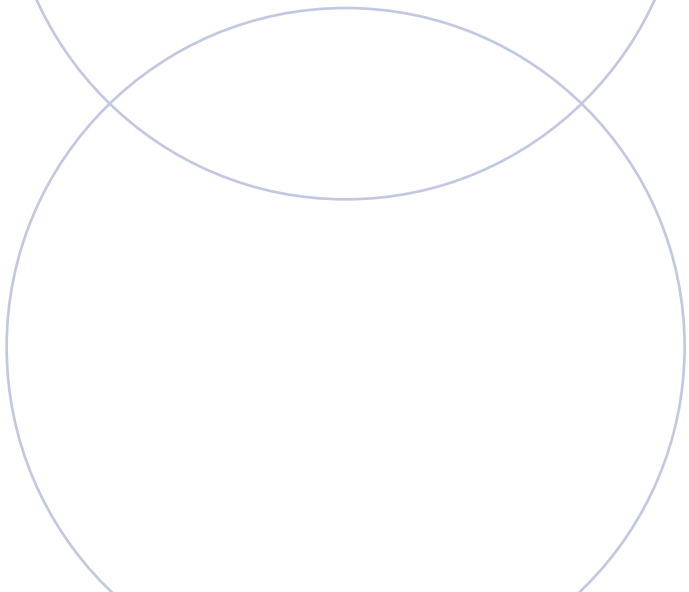
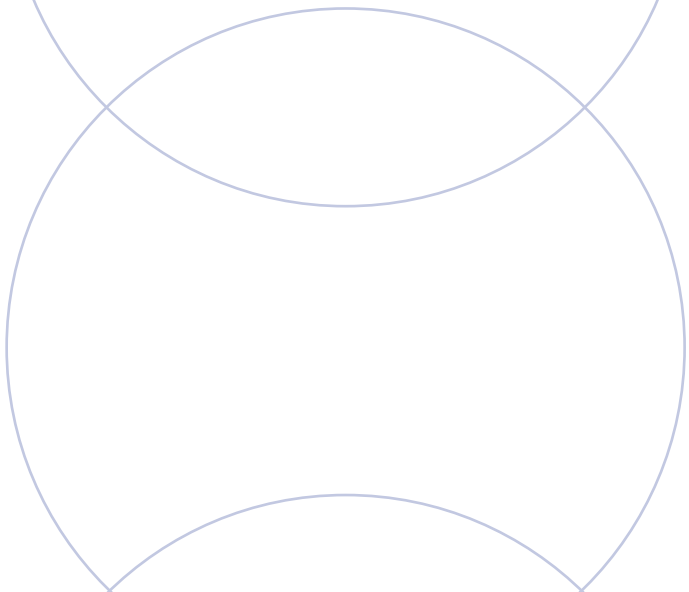
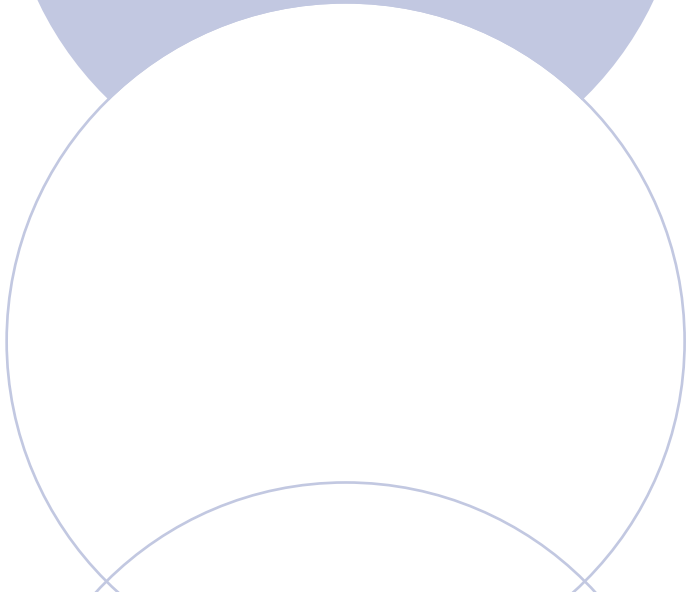
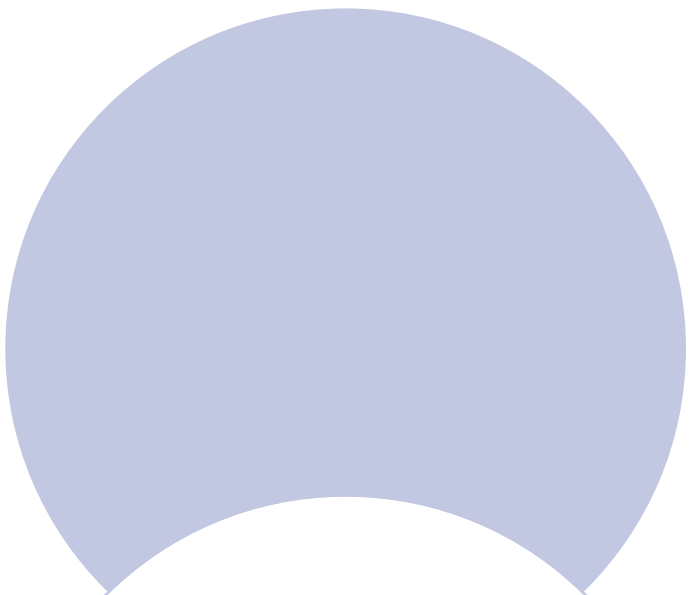


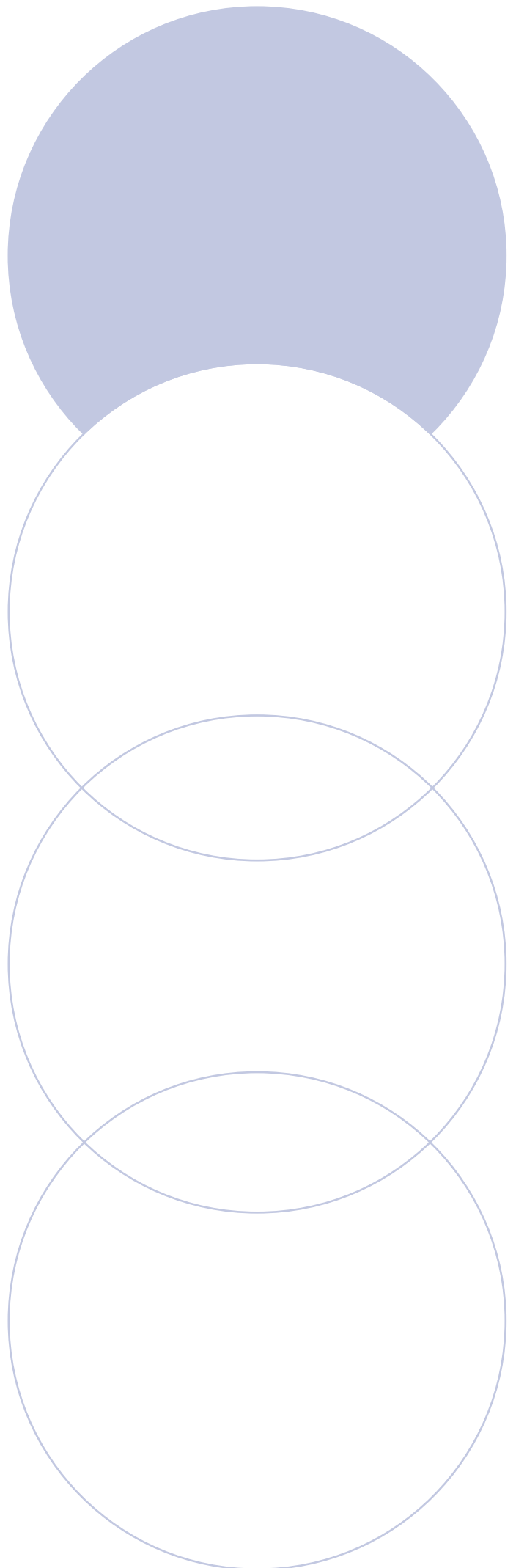
# Repairs and maintenance handbook





# Contents

- Reporting a repair
- Health and safety in your home
- Repair responsibilities
- Your heating system
- Tips and advice
- Our promise to you





# Reporting a repair

## To report a repair contact the following:

..... this is who you ring for your day to day repairs

..... this is who you ring for out of hours repairs

Or you can send an email via our website. Log onto [www.greaplace.org.uk](http://www.greaplace.org.uk) then choose 'mygreatplace', then choose the do it online option. Then click on report a repair.

To order your repair we will need to know:

- Your name and address
- What the problem is
- Daytime phone number for us to contact you for further information
- Whether you have any special requirements that we need to take into consideration, for example a disability.

### Reporting repairs as a result of crime

You will need to get a crime reference number from the police before you contact us. Please note that: police log numbers cannot be accepted.

For emergencies when the office is closed please dial the repairs number as usual and our out of

hours staff will deal with the problem.

### When will my repairs be carried out?

#### Emergency repairs – 4 hours

Repairs that cause a real risk and danger to people or property.

Examples include a burst pipe, which cannot be contained by a bucket, gas leaks, failure of stair lift, no hot water in winter or keeping your home secure following a break in.

#### Urgent repairs - 1-3 working days

Repairs that cause significant discomfort but are not a safety risk.

Examples include no heating during the summer months; leaking pipes which cannot be contained; mains operated smoke alarms; minor electrical faults.

#### Routine repairs – 1-15 working days response

Less urgent repairs that can wait a short time before being dealt with and would include minor problems.

Examples include loose or damaged floorboards, windows not locking with no security risk, extractor fans not working, and minor repairs to kitchen units.

#### Planned maintenance

Every year we invest money in tenants' homes to keep them in good condition and to improve them. This type of work ranges from painting a front door to fitting a new kitchen.

Our decisions are based on the information we have about your home (e.g. when major work was last done, together with what you have told us and what our surveyors say about your home. We will

contact you before any planned work starts at your home.

### Inspection

Some repair requests may need to be inspected by a surveyor first who will make an appointment with you. Once the inspection has been carried out, your repair will be completed in line with the timescales above.

### Compensation

If we do not meet our repairs obligations on two successive occasions you may be entitled to compensation. However each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

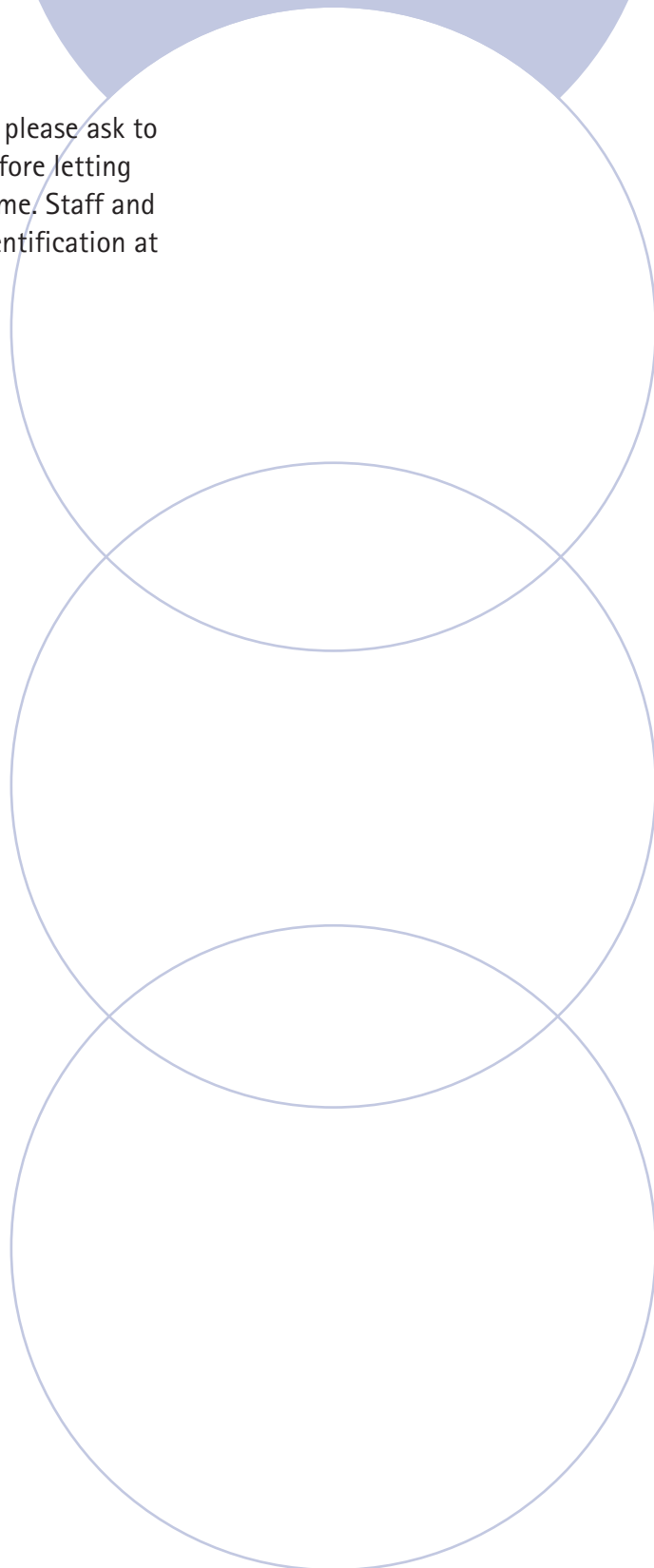
### Your satisfaction

All tenants who use the service will be given the opportunity to give us their views. This may be a form which is given or sent to you in the post or a telephone call from a member of staff. We ask for this information to make sure you are happy with the services we provide. Please tell us honestly what you think of our service so that we can sort out any problems.

### Identification

For your own safety, please ask to see identification before letting anyone into your home. Staff and contractors carry identification at

all times. If you are unsure, you should contact your local office who will confirm the identity of our member of staff or contractor.





# Health and safety in your home

## Gas safety

You and your family are at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- Your gas appliances have not been checked for safety or maintained regularly.
- There is not enough fresh air in the room.
- Your chimney or flue gets blocked up.
- You allow non Gas Safe registered engineers to install or maintain your appliances.

As part of our repairs service, we offer a free annual gas service to the appliances we provide, to protect you and your family from these dangers, and you will be provided with a gas safety certificate.

Your tenancy agreement says that you must allow us access to carry out this check. You may be taken to court, if you do not let us do this inspection once a year.

## Gas repairs

We will carry out free of charge, repairs to your gas appliances which are owned by Great Places on request through your gas contractor.

## Fire Safety

Don't forget to check whether you have a smoke detector fitted in your property. This may be wired to your

electrics or battery operated. You should test regularly that the detector is working and replace batteries when necessary.

Your local fire brigade will be able to visit your home and carry out an inspection to help you identify potential fire risks and know what to do to reduce or prevent them.

You can request a home fire risk check from your local fire brigade by logging on at [www.fire.gov.uk](http://www.fire.gov.uk)

You may be eligible for a free smoke detector. For more information on fire safety visit [www.firekills.co.uk](http://www.firekills.co.uk)

## Emergencies

### Gas leak

If you smell gas, or suspect there is a gas leak, you should do the following immediately:

- Open all doors and windows.
- Extinguish naked flames.
- Remove yourself from the source of danger.
- Shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve (if you know where it is).
- Call the National Grid gas emergency freephone number 0800 111 999.
- In the case of suspected carbon monoxide leakage, follow the steps above. If you are able to identify the cause

contact us and we will carry out any necessary repairs.

## Electrical

If you experience a power cut you should:

- Check to see if your neighbour has the same problem. If so, call your electricity supplier.
- Phone the repairs hotline if you need more help.

## Water Leak

If there is a serious leak of water in your home try to do the following:

- Turn off your main stop tap. This is the valve that controls your water supply and is usually located under your kitchen sink. It could also be in the bathroom, under the stairs or in your meter cupboard. Then turn on all taps in the house.
- If there is a risk that the leak might affect the electricity system – turn off the electricity at the fusebox/ consumer-unit if it is safe to do so.

If you are unsure what to do with any of the above please phone the repairs hotline.



# Repair responsibilities

As part of our obligations as your landlord, we are responsible for keeping the outside of the property in good repair and this includes:

- Gutters, pipes and drains
- Window frames and doors
- Roof work
- Chimneys
- Boundary walls
- Paths and yard surfaces
- Outbuildings

Inside the property we are responsible for most repairs unless they are caused by damage. You are responsible for the following repairs:

- Light bulbs and fuses
- Toilet seats, chains and plugs

- Internal door handles, bolts and catches
- Replacement keys and/or lock changes
- Unblocking toilets, sinks and baths
- Internal decoration of your home
- Your garden areas
- Locks to outside sheds and stores
- Door bells and batteries
- Batteries in smoke detectors
- Home contents insurance cover

## Let us in

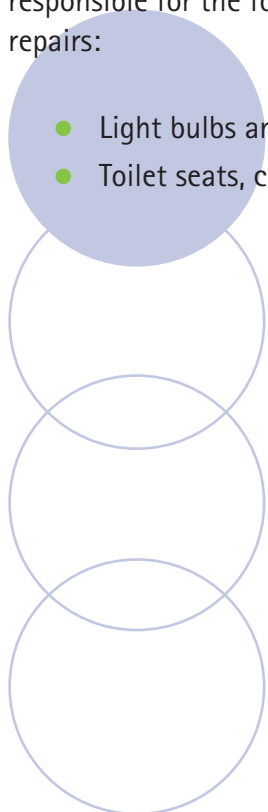
It is your responsibility to let our staff and our contractors into your home so that we can carry out repairs.

## Recharges

You are also responsible for the cost of a repair if you cause any damage to your home. Normally, Great Places would expect you to do these repairs yourself, but where there are health and safety issues, we would carry out the repair and charge the cost back to you.

You will be told something is rechargeable and the cost at the time you report the repairs. Costs and payment arrangements must be agreed with a member of staff.

In serious cases we may take legal action against you.





# Your heating system

## Gas fired central heating system

It will be watertight and in good condition.

Gas fired central heating is the most common form of heating in Great Places homes. If your home has central heating, you will have a gas fired boiler which is usually on the wall in the kitchen or behind a gas fire front in the either the living room or dining room.

- Standard boilers and back boilers heat up hot water for bathing and washing and store it in a hot water cylinder.
- Combination boilers heat hot water as it is required and do not have a storage cylinder.

**Warning:** If your room has a back boiler you will have an air vent on an outside wall. This vent should be kept open and clear at all times to avoid the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

All individual gas fired central heating systems have similar basic controls.

## A time clock or programmer

Gas fired central heating can be set to come on and off, usually twice a day.

You can usually separate your heating controls from your hot water, allowing you to heat water in summer months without having the heating on.

It is cheaper to heat the house right through rather than just the rooms that you use. The walls of the building act like a big storage heater and absorb heat. If the walls are allowed to cool down, most of the heat is absorbed into the walls which can make your home seem colder.

Your boiler does not run constantly, but will come on and off automatically as the room temperature drops and rises.

In particularly cold weather it is a good idea to keep the heating on constant but lower the thermostat (see below) overnight, or when you are out of your home.

## A room thermostat or 'room stat'

The roomstat is the control that regulates the general heat in your home. It is generally located in the hall or living room. During mild spells we recommend you set this to around 18oc - 21oc. In very cold periods, you can increase this up to about 25oc to suit your own needs.

## Thermostatic radiator valves

Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRV's) are fitted on most radiators. TRV's control the heat to individual radiators, so you can have more control over the heat in each room.

It is a good idea to run your heating system every couple of weeks in the summer for a short period. This helps to stop any parts from seizing up and reduces the chances of your heating breaking down when the weather does turn cold.

## Electric storage heaters

Great Places electric storage radiators work on an Economy 7 tariff, which is an electricity tariff with different prices according to the time of day. This system means that the energy you use during the night costs less than during the day.

For more information about Economy 7 tariffs, visit [www.uswitch.com/Energy/Economy7](http://www.uswitch.com/Energy/Economy7)

If you do not have access to the internet, we can provide this information if you ask for it.

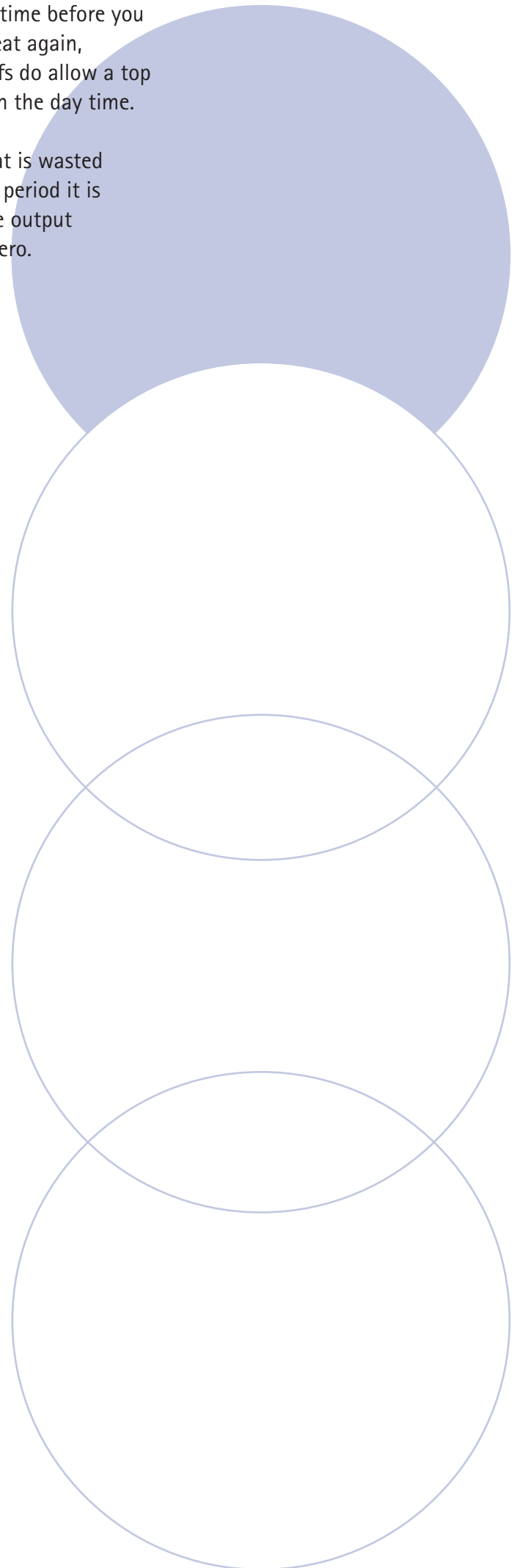
The input control controls the amount of heat taken in by the radiator during the charging period, which would generally be overnight. The settings for mild periods should be less than for the cold or winter

periods. We recommend that the highest setting is kept for extremely cold periods.

The output control regulates the heat given out. The higher the setting the more stored heat is released and the quicker the heat is spent. Once you have used up the stored heat, generally you have to

wait until the tariff time before you can start to store heat again, although some tariffs do allow a top up for a set period in the day time.

To make sure no heat is wasted during the charging period it is essential that all the output controls are set at zero.





# Tips and advice

## The outside of the property

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you can't see it. If the air touches a cold surface, e.g. on windows and outside walls, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear on these surfaces – this is condensation. The more moisture there is in the air, the worse the condensation will be. If this water is allowed to build up in these cold areas, it will lead to black mould forming.

## What is damp?

Damp is normally caused by problems such as a leaking gutter or a missing roof slate. If there is damp, there will normally be some visible signs such as mould growth. If you suspect that it is damp, you should contact your property services co-ordinator immediately.

## Tips to help prevent condensation

- Cover pans when cooking and open a window.
- Close the kitchen door when cooking.
- Dry clothes outside where possible.
- If drying clothes inside then use heating and open windows to release moisture.
- Close bathroom door when bathing or showering.

- Vent tumble dryer to the outside.
- Open trickle vents or open a window when someone is home.
- Use the humidistat fans – especially when cooking and bathing etc.
- Leave a space between the back of wardrobes / cupboards and the wall, and position them on an internal wall whenever possible.
- Keep a low level of heating on all day when it's cold including in the bedrooms. It's cheaper to keep an even heat and then turn it up when needed.
- If you see condensation – open windows to release moisture.

- If the pan is full, remove some of the water to avoid further spillage.
- Use your toilet brush to try to dislodge the blockage – by pushing the brush into the base of the toilet about 10 times a vacuum will be created which may dislodge the blockage.
- Once you have done this try flushing the toilet.
- You may need to repeat this exercise several times.

If you have followed all these measures but still find that you have mould growth, contact us and we will advise you further.

## Blockages

Most blockages are caused by people throwing cooking fat/oil down kitchen sinks and nappies and sanitary towels down the toilet.

- When blocked, the toilet should not be used.



# Our promise to you

Great Places aims to provide you with the best possible repairs and maintenance service in terms of quality of work, speed of response and value for money.

## Day to day repairs - we will

Respond to repair requests within the following timescales:

**Emergency** within 4 hours

**Urgent** within 3 working days

**Routine** within 15 working days

- Tell you when you can expect it to be completed by and confirm the details in writing.
- Offer you a two hour appointment slot or an appointment that is suitable to you when you request a repair—including evening and weekends where employment, culture and/or disability would prohibit a week day visit.
- Tell you if an inspection is needed before the repair can be done and give you a date when this will happen.
- Keep appointments.
- Leave your property tidy at the end of each visit.
- Provide an out of hours service for customers with emergency repairs.

## Maintaining your home - we will

- Carry out regular surveys on our homes.
- Develop a five year plan for re-investment and modernisation of our homes based on the survey.
- Consult with customers.
- Inform you in writing at least 14 days before any works begin.
- Offer a home visit before the start of work.
- Offer as much choice as possible (e.g. paint colours, layout).

## Health and safety - we will

- Carry out a gas safety and servicing test on all the appliances we provide once every year.
- Carry out electrical safety testing to all our homes every five years.
- Keep detailed records of all our properties where asbestos is found and provide customers and contractors with appropriate health and safety advice.
- Monitor the condition through regular checks or remove the asbestos, dependent on the level of risk.

- Carry out water testing and treatment of shared water supplies.

## Managing your home - we will

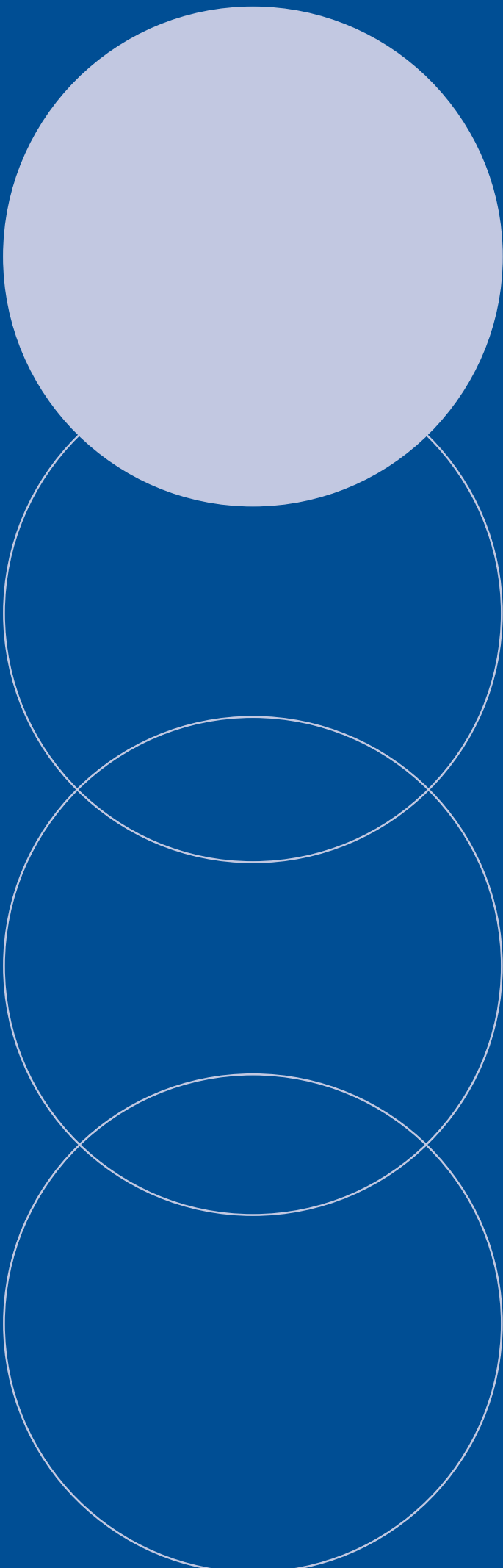
- Make sure that all properties not requiring major repairs are ready to let within two weeks.
- Provide new tenants with our minimum re-let standard and details of repairs carried out to their property when it was empty.

## Satisfaction - we will

- Seek and report customer satisfaction information on all repairs and inspections carried out.
- Deal with any complaints in line with the Great Places complaints procedure.
- Report to tenants on performance and satisfaction.

## What we ask of you

- To report repairs as soon as you become aware of them.
- Let us in at agreed times to carry out inspections and repairs.



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