



Welcome

to your new home.

CONTENTS

Welcome to your New Home

Welcome to Hellens Residential	1
Moving in to your New Home	2

Your Tenancy

Your Tenancy Agreement	3
Paying your Rent	3
Keeping in Touch	4
Moving Home & Ending your Tenancy	5

Neighbourhood Safety

Neighbourhood Management	6
Anti-social behaviour	7
Breaches of your Tenancy Agreement	8
Complaints Policy	9

Repairs and Maintenance

Gas Safety Policy	10
Reporting Repairs	11
Chargeable Repairs	12
Looking after your Home	13
General Repairs & Responsibilities	14
Gas, Heating & Plumbing	15
Electrical & Joinery	16
Making Alterations	17
Condensation & Mould	18

CONTACT DETAILS

By Post:

Hellens Residential
Teal House
10 Teal Farm Way
Teal Farm Park
Washington
NE38 8BG

By Telephone:

During Office Hours:
Monday - Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm **0191 594 6666**
Out of Hours for Emergencies Only **0191 594 6670**

By Email:

info@hellensresidential.co.uk

Website:

www.hellensresidential.co.uk

If you smell gas do not call us please first call: -
The National Emergency Gas Service 0800 111 999



WELCOME TO HELLENS RESIDENTIAL

Hellens Residential is a privately owned company providing affordable homes across the North East region. We develop and purchase new build houses, apartments and bungalows which are made available for Affordable Rent, Rent to Buy, or affordable home ownership providing a range of options to meet the needs of our customers.

Our mission is to develop sustainable, affordable communities, providing high quality homes backed up by excellent Customer Service. As a customer of Hellens Residential you will always be treated with courtesy and respect.

We hope that we can improve the lives of our customers by ensuring that they can live alongside their neighbours and families in a comfortable and secure environment. In return we ask that you take good care of your home, be a good neighbour and pay your rent and any other charges on time.

We are regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing.

We receive grants from Homes England on some developments and utilise other resources to minimise costs and increase standards.

We hope you find this guide useful in providing information about your new home and the services that we provide. We want you to enjoy your new home as much as possible and benefit from being a part of Hellens Residential.

**PLEASE KEEP THIS IN A SAFE PLACE
SO THAT YOU CAN REFER TO IT AT A
LATER DATE.**



Moving into your new home

As soon as you have signed your Tenancy Agreement and received your keys, you can move in.

Every rent week starts on a Monday.

Your rent is payable weekly/monthly in advance from your tenancy start date.

We must receive the first rent payment prior to key handover.

Your Keys

Before you move in you will be issued with two or more sets of keys. We expect the same amount of keys to be returned at the end of your tenancy, any shortages will incur a charge to yourself.

Please note we do not keep copies of the keys. We recommend that you give a spare key to a trusted family member or friend and let us know who they are so we can contact them in case of an emergency.

Some of our homes also have communal keys or fobs. Please look after both your house keys and communal keys/fobs as we do not hold spares and you will need to replace them at a cost to yourself.

We can change locks but will charge you for this service.

Moving In

There are a few things to think about when moving home, see checklist of things to remember

- Make sure you have given notice to your current landlord.
- If you are claiming Benefits or Universal Credit you will need to notify them of your change of address.
- Disconnect your phone and internet provider.
- Contact your energy suppliers and take final meter readings.
- Take meter readings for your new property.
- Change of address: notify your employer, doctor, bank, credit card companies, TV licence, Driving licence etc with your new address.
- Redirect your post via the Post Office or online.
- Cancel your current home contents insurance.
- Arrange home contents insurance for your new home.
- Update the Electoral Register if applicable.

Home Insurance

You are responsible for arranging suitable contents insurance for your home. This includes all personal belongings, furniture and decorations against fire, theft, vandalism and burst pipes. We are not responsible for any personal belongings or internal decoration.

We as your landlord are responsible for the buildings insurance.

First things first

- Stop tap - It's very important that you know where your internal stop tap is located. You will need to switch off the water if you have a leak or if you're having any plumbing work done.
- Take all meter readings for your new property and complete the meter reading form.
- Set up a suitable payment plan - see paying your rent and service charges on the following page.
- Arrange home contents insurance.

Subletting

You are not allowed to rent any part of your home to someone else.

Alterations

Please remember, it is very important that you get approval from us before making any alterations or improvements to your home.

Further details can be found on page 17.

YOUR TENANCY

Your Tenancy Agreement

When you accept the offer of a home from Hellens Residential, you are asked to sign a legal agreement - this is your Tenancy Agreement. This outlines all the rights and responsibilities of the tenant (you) and the landlord (us).

Paying Your Rent and Service Charge

In this section you will find the relevant information on ways to pay your rent. Paying your rent on time is very important.

Please make paying your rent a priority. If you do not pay your rent on time you may be at risk of losing your home.

If at any time you are having difficulty paying your rent, it is extremely important that you contact the office immediately, and we will endeavour to help you. The earlier we know, the more chance there is that we can help.

To help you keep track of your rent payments and the balance on your account, we will send you a rent statement every three months. Please use this to check that your account is correct and up to date.

You can also contact us directly at any time to get an up to date balance on your account.

Failing to pay your rent on time:

Should you fail to pay your rent on time without informing us, procedures will be put into place, and a tailored solution agreed depending on your circumstances.

Ways to pay your rent:

Standing Order:

This is our preferred way for you to pay your rent. You can choose to pay your rent weekly or each calendar month by Standing Order. Your payment terms will be agreed at the start of your tenancy. Choosing this option gives you the flexibility to choose exactly when the payment leaves your bank.

Online banking:

You can set up regular payments with your own online banking if you have the facility.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a payment to help with your living costs. You may be eligible to claim if you are on a low income or out of work. Whether you can claim Universal Credit depends on where you live and your circumstances.

You need to apply for Universal Credit online. You have to apply as a couple if you and your partner live together. You do not need to be married.

Universal Credit is being introduced in stages across the UK. You do not need to do anything if you are already claiming work-age benefits, just carry on as normal until you are contacted by the Department of Work Pensions (DWP) or your circumstances change.

Council Tax Support isn't included in Universal Credit.

Universal Credit will combine the following:

- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Working Tax Credit

Please contact us if you would like any help or advice with your Universal Credit claim.

Keeping in Touch During your Tenancy

Once you have signed your tenancy agreement your housing officer will keep in touch with you to answer any queries you may have and to arrange any further visits. These are for your benefit and are also a condition of your Tenancy Agreement.

Listed below are the meetings and visits you can expect:

- Key handover day - You will sign your tenancy agreement, complete your rent payment details, key handover form, meet your housing officer and receive important information regarding your new home.
- Welcome visit – One month after you move in to check you have settled into your new home. This is your opportunity to ask your housing officer any questions or queries you may have. We will also carry out an inspection of the property and go over important information relating to your tenancy.
- Nine months - Your tenancy agreement will be discussed alongside any questions or queries you may have. We will also carry out an inspection of the property and go over important information relating to your tenancy. Following this, you will be informed whether or not you will be offered a subsequent tenancy.
- Annually - These visits will take place 12 months after your 9-month visit to discuss any issues or queries which may have arisen, and to ensure your tenancy agreement is being carried out satisfactorily. Your home will also be checked to highlight any damage or maintenance issues.
- Annual gas safety check – this must be carried out by law and you MUST be available to allow the gas engineer access. Failure to do so will result in you being charged for a missed appointment.
- Electric 5 yearly check

Access to your home:

Always ask to see the identity of anyone who calls at your home. All Hellens employees carry identification cards, however if you are unsure do not let them into your home and telephone 0191 5946666 for advice.

You **MUST** allow us Access for Annual Gas Safety Check and 5-year electric check.

If you do not you will be in breach of the law.

Tenancy Fraud

We take Tenancy Fraud very seriously. Those who are living in a property that they aren't entitled to, prevents those in need of housing having a home.

What happens if you commit tenancy fraud?

The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 made tenancy fraud a criminal offence. Penalties which may be dealt are:

- Up to two years imprisonment
- Unlawful profit order
- Fine

If you are caught, at the very least, you are likely to lose your tenancy and may lose your right to social housing in the future.

Please be aware of the tenancy fraud offences and do not put yourself in the position of breaking the law.

Below are listed some of the most common examples:

- Application fraud
- Unlawful subletting
- Unlawful or unauthorised succession
- Key selling
- Not using your house as your primary residence

Please inform us immediately if you are not going to be living in your home for more than three months. We need to know how to contact you and the details of the person who will be looking after your home while you are away.

If you suspect tenancy fraud is being committed please let us know as soon as possible.



Moving Home within Hellens Residential

If your circumstances change and your current home is no longer suitable, then you may be able to move to another Hellens Residential property via our exchange system. For example, you may need an extra bedroom, or need to move to a bungalow.

We often have shared ownership/equity properties available if you would like the chance to own your own home. All such schemes are always subject to funding and eligibility criteria.

If you would like to exchange to another Hellens Residential home you should in the first instance check our website on the Home Xchange page where other customers homes who would like to swap, are advertised. If you contact us, we can add your property and hopefully facilitate a 'swap'. Exchanges are subject to agreement by Hellens Residential. Consent can be withheld in certain situations.

If you have any outstanding arrears on your account with us, we cannot consider you for another property.

Available properties are always advertised on our website: www.hellensresidential.co.uk and social media platforms.

Ending Your Tenancy

Please note that your probationary tenancy is for a fixed term of 12 months. **YOU CANNOT LEAVE BEFORE THIS TIME.** Once you have moved to a subsequent 2 year or 5-year tenancy, there are certain things you must do to end your tenancy:

- Give us **AT LEAST FOUR WEEKS** notice, in writing, to confirm you are ending your tenancy. All tenancies must end on a Monday.
- Your property should be available for future tenants to view during the notice period.
- You must continue to pay your rent as normal until the day your tenancy ends.
- You must pay any other money you owe us by the day your tenancy ends.
- All keys must be returned to a Housing Officer by 12 noon on the day the tenancy ends. If you do not return the keys within the appropriate timescale, or leave your home in an unacceptable condition, you may be charged an additional weeks rent and for any chargeable repairs. Alternatively, you will be charged for changing the locks and any rent lost while this is being done.
- You must inform us of your new address so that we can contact you.

- You must leave your home in a clean and tidy condition and clear of all your belongings and rubbish. You will be charged for the cost of putting things right if it is not left in a clean manner.

Types of Tenancy

Affordable Rent:

Rental properties are provided at a 20% discount to market rent. The tenancy offered to customers is outlined below:

- 1-year fixed probationary tenancy.
- 5-year fixed tenancy provided there have been no issues during the first-year tenancy.

Rent to Buy:

Rent to Buy homes are offered at a 20% discount to market rent for a minimum of 5 years. After the initial 5 years of letting the tenant has the opportunity to buy their home at market value. The tenancy offered to customers is outlined below:

- 1-year fixed probationary tenancy.
- 2-year fixed tenancy provided there have been no issues during the first-year tenancy.
- 2-year fixed tenancy provided there have been no issues with the prior tenancy.

Hellens Hub

Hellens Residential have implemented their own tenant portal system where customers will be able to access their account online and be able to see rent account information.

In addition to this it will enable you to:

- Report Repairs online and track progress.
- Arrange maintenance appointments.
- Arrange home visit appointments.
- View documents associated with your tenancy and property.
- Request an alteration to your home.

By implementing this new system, we are aiming to become more efficient and provide you as the customer with more information that is easier to access.

It will also enable us to make more of our processes digital and reduce our carbon footprint. You should have been given your login details at Key Handover. If you do not have these or forget them, please contact us.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY

Neighbourhood Management:

In this section you will find information relating to:

- Parking
- Rubbish
- Sheds
- Gardens
- Pest control
- Repairing vehicles outside your home
- Pets
- Decoration

Parking

You may only park a car on a properly built driveway. You must not park your vehicle anywhere that will cause a nuisance to your neighbours. If you want to park a vehicle other than a car at your property, you must first receive our written permission. This includes caravans, vans, trailers, commercial vehicles, horse boxes/traps etc. which are normally prohibited from parking on housing estates.

Rubbish

You must ensure you put all rubbish in the appropriate wheeled bin or black sacks and leave it out for collection on the appropriate day. You should put rubbish suitable for recycling in the appropriate bin or recycling box. If you live in a high-rise property you must dispose of all rubbish correctly. Failure to comply with the above may result in a charge to yourself.

Sheds

You must get written permission beforehand if you want to put up a shed or outbuildings in your garden. If you have your own garden you must look after it. You must put garden waste in the appropriate wheeled bin, in a compost bin or dispose of it. Some councils charge to have garden waste removed.

Pest control

If you have problems with mice, insects or other pests, you must contact your local authority.

Repairing vehicles outside of your home

You must not carry out repairs to vehicles over a long period of time outside your home, as set out in your Tenancy Agreement. We will take action against you if you breach this condition.

Pets

We are a pet friendly landlord and you can keep small domestic pets in your home. Hellens Residential will determine what is classified as a small domestic pet. You can keep no more than two cats or dogs and you must not allow your animals to cause nuisance to neighbours.

For practical reasons some of our homes do have a 'no pets' restriction. You will be informed if this is the case prior to key handover and it will be noted on our website advertisement.

Decoration

You must keep your home in a good, clean condition and decorate when required.



Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Hellens Residential take a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour from tenants, their families or visitors. We will respond promptly and appropriately to neighbour complaints and incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB). They will be investigated thoroughly and quickly to reach a satisfactory conclusion for the good of the neighbourhood.

ASB can have a serious negative effect on the quality of life of individuals and of entire communities if allowed to carry on unchallenged. ASB is something that causes or is likely to cause nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm or distress to anyone.

This can include:

- Loud music or any other loud noise including banging or slamming doors
- Trespassing
- Drunken and offensive behaviour
- Verbal abuse
- Allowing rubbish to accumulate in or around your home
- Barking dogs
- Allowing your children to cause nuisance to others by failing to exercise reasonable control of them
- Playing ball games near to someone else's home
- Allowing visitors to your house to be noisy or disruptive
- Violence (including threats of violence)
- Criminal damage
- Prostitution
- Illegal drug cultivation and dealing in addition to other criminal activities
- Domestic violence

We will endeavour to solve incidences of ASB quickly through talking to perpetrators and their neighbours and providing a mediation service. We will work closely with other authorities such as the Local Authority and the local Police force to bring a positive solution to incidences of ASB. If incidences of ASB continue and attempts at mediation do not help then legal action will be taken and the perpetrators may lose their home. If this occurs then it may affect the tenant getting a home in the future even if they find themselves homeless.

Noise nuisance

You can be a good neighbour by:

- Not doing DIY or noisy household tasks such as hoovering or using the washing machine late at night.
- Not slamming doors or shouting.
- Being mindful of flooring types such as laminate floors - carpets have better insulation.
- Refrain from playing loud music.
- Not using the rubbish areas late at night.
- Cooperating if a neighbour asks for the noise to be reduced.
- Being tolerant of other people's lifestyles.

If noise nuisance becomes an issue, speak to your neighbour to come to an agreement. If that doesn't work, or you don't feel comfortable approaching a neighbour, please contact us.

You must keep noise at a reasonable level at all times.

Noise should be kept to a minimum between 11:00pm – 07:00am

Harassment

This can take many forms and includes deliberately and continually troubling or intimidating a neighbour.

You must not harass neighbours and should take reasonable steps to stop anyone living in or visiting your home from doing so.

Damage to property

You, members of your household, or visitors to your home, must not cause damage to any property. If you do cause damage, we will charge you for the cost of putting it right and may take legal action against you.

Using the property illegally

You must make sure the property is not used for any illegal purposes, for example, storing or using illegal drugs or stolen goods. We aim to help prevent crime and criminal activity and will take legal action if necessary to tackle these problems.

Overcrowding

You must not allow additional people to move into your home without getting our permission first. You must not overcrowd your home.

Violence towards employees

We take violence towards our employees very seriously. You, or anyone else living in or visiting your property, must not physically or verbally assault or threaten our employees. This includes using abusive language as well as causing actual physical harm. We can take legal action against you or anyone living in or visiting your home who commits such acts.

Social Media

You must not harass, abuse, threaten, intimidate or cause nuisance to your neighbours, the public or our staff, through the use of social media. This includes all communication on email, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or any other social media platform. We can take legal action against you if you commit such acts.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a crime and affects the quality of life of the victims, their family and their friends, whilst also possibly affecting a person's home. You must not threaten violence or be violent towards anyone living with you in the property, harass or use psychological, emotional, physical or sexual abuse to make anyone who lives with you leave the property.

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to:

- Psychological - Making you feel devalued and afraid, if you are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) threatening to 'out' you to your family.
- Physical - Kicking, punching and restraining.
- Sexual - Rape, making you do things you don't want to do, preventing you from practicing safe sex.
- Financial - Taking your money and/or controlling your money.
- Emotional - Making you feel unhappy.

You can also report domestic abuse to: National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247 or Emergency 999



Complaints Policy

Hellens Residential Limited is proud to deliver excellent quality housing stock in good locations. It is very important to us to maintain the best environment for our tenants and their neighbours to live in.

We will therefore take a zero-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour from tenants, their families or their visitors. We will respond promptly and appropriately to neighbour complaints and incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

When Should You Complain?

You should get in touch if:

- You think we have done something wrong
- We have not done something that we said we would
- You are not happy with any aspect of our service to you as our customer

How to Make a Complaint?

You can make a complaint in many different ways: -

- Call us on 0191 594 6666
- Log onto www.hellensresidential.co.uk

Visit 'Make a complaint' and submit the form

Giving Feedback

We are always glad to receive feedback from our tenants, whether it is to complain or compliment. You can contact us using our contact details or:

- In writing, letter or email
- In person during a home visit
- By completing the feedback form on the website
- By completing one of our 'Yearly customer satisfaction surveys'

We will acknowledge any feedback within 5 working days. If your comment is a complaint then we will try to sort out the issue informally. If this is not possible, then the complaint will be referred to the complaints officer.

If you are unsure about anything regarding giving us feedback, please contact us.

Acknowledgement of Complaint

An initial response is sent to the complainant no more than 5 working days after receipt, providing the name and contact details of the staff member handling the complaint.

Stage 1

No more than 10 working days after from receipt of the complaint, a first response is sent to the complainant. This response will outline the complaint and our understanding of it; how the complaint relates to our policies and procedures, an apology for any wrongdoing and how we have attempted to resolve the complaint. At this point we will ask the complainant if they are satisfied with the current resolution.

Stage 2

If it is necessary to escalate the matter then it will take no more than 20 working days after the complaint was received for the complainant to receive a second response. During this time, the complaint will be investigated in full. The complainant will receive with a written response of the outcome and findings. The complainant will be provided with the details on next steps if they are not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved.

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome, they will be entitled to appeal:

If after the 2 stages of the complaints procedure have been completed, the complainant is still not satisfied that the complaint has been responded to then the complainant can contact the Housing Ombudsman 8 weeks after the final decision has been made.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

Boilers

Please keep your boiler manual safe as you may need to refer to it should you have a fault or problem. Your boiler will be checked annually by a Registered Gas Engineer.

Boiler Water Pressure:

Fault F1

This is the most common fault shown on boilers and can be easily rectified by following the below steps:

- If the dial is in the Red carry out the following procedure:
- Underneath the boiler there are two blue handles and a dial – check if this is in the red
- Turn the right hand one clockwise then flick the middle one towards you
- You will hear the water going to the boiler
- Check the dial is in the green position
- Switch the handles back to their original position

Gas Safety Policy

The health, safety and well-being of our tenants are vitally important to us. We by law, must make sure that all our homes have an annual gas safety check.

This is very important as it ensures that all our gas fittings and appliances are in good working order.

At least 2 weeks before the safety check is due, we will contact you with an appointment for a home visit. If this is inconvenient, please let us know as soon as possible for us to rearrange a suitable time.

We need to give our engineers at least 48 hours' Notice to rearrange an appointment; failing to do this will incur a penalty charge. Should this happen you will be incurring a penalty charge of £40.

If you do not allow access for an engineer to carry out the annual check you be in breach of your tenancy agreement.

IF YOU CAN SMELL GAS ACT IMMEDIATELY:

- Turn off appliances.
- Open windows and doors
- Do not turn on or off electrical switches.
- Do not light matches or lighters.
- Do not smoke.

**CALL THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY GAS SERVICE
0800 111 999**

As a landlord we have a responsibility to carry out other checks in your home: this includes 5-year Electrical Safety checks, Smoke Alarm testing and Carbon Monoxide Alarm testing.

PLEASE NOTE, IT IS AN OFFENCE TO USE OR ALLOW ANYONE ELSE TO USE TO USE AN APPLIANCE WHICH ISN'T SAFE.

It is a legal requirement that all our homes have an annual gas safety check. We will contact you at least 2 weeks before the check is due to arrange an appointment for a home visit. If this is inconvenient, please let us know so we can re-arrange. We have to give our engineers at least 48 hours' notice to rearrange an appointment or we will be charged

YOU WILL BE CHARGED A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF £40 FOR ANY MISSED APPOINTMENTS. IF YOU DO NOT ALLOW ACCESS FOR AN ENGINEER YOU WILL HAVE BREACHED YOUR TENANCY AGREEMENT



Reporting Repairs

It is important that you notify us as soon as possible to report a repair needed in your home, this can help prevent it turning into major repair work. The best way to report a non-emergency repair is online via our online portal. Once we receive the request for a repair, someone will contact you within 24 hours, Monday to Friday, to arrange a home visit to assess what needs doing.

Report a repair:

During Office Hours of Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm please call on 0191 594 6666 or email us at info@hellensresidential.co.uk

Through your Hellens Hub account on the tenant portal.

When you contact us please have the following information available:

- Your name, address and contact number.
- Location of the repair and details (the more information you give us, the more likely we can carry out the repair on the first visit).
- Let us know if there is an immediate risk to anyone's safety or the property.
- Your availability and access times.
- Your circumstances – hard of hearing, mobility.

How long will my repair take?

When you report a repair, you will be given a completion date and informed of who will carry out the work. If possible, we will try to arrange this at a convenient time for yourself.

The repair time will depend on the nature and seriousness of the problem but will fall into one of three categories summarised below:

- Emergency Repair - Attend within 24 hours.
- Appointable Repair - Non-emergency within 28 working days of being reported.
- Planned Repair - Carry out within 60 working days of being reported.

Out of Hours, for Emergencies Only:

0191 594 6670
(PLEASE NOTE THIS SERVICE IS STRICTLY FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS ONLY)

Emergency Repairs

Hellens Residential may only be able to carry out a temporary repair during our emergency out of hour's period. An appointment will be arranged for a permanent repair to be carried out at a mutually convenient time.

If Hellens Residential attends to a repair out of hours and the repair work is not classed as an emergency, we will look to charge the tenant. Emergency repairs are noted below:

- Report of gas leak or emissions from gas appliances.
- Report of unsafe or exposed electric cables or fittings.
- Total loss of power (not including power cuts in the area or loss due to pre-payment meter credit running out). Check the trip switch to confirm this has not been caused by a faulty appliance.
- Total loss of heating with no secondary source of heating, e.g. fire, from 31st October to 1st May.
- Water on electrics.
- Water leak that cannot be contained.
- Exit door not locking.
- Ground floor window not secure.
- External communal doors not opening or closing.
- Blocked toilet if only one in the house.
- Blocked drains causing flooding into the property.

PLANNED REPAIR CALLOUT

You will be charged a minimum amount of £40 for a second time missed appointment.

Chargeable Repairs

If there is doubt about how a repair has come about, we will visit to check the problem before the repair is carried out. You may have to pay part or all of the cost of the repair not caused by normal wear and tear or because of the age of the property.

Please note that if you have caused the damage then you have also broken your tenancy agreement. 'Chargeable Repair' is classed as a repair due to misuse or a repair caused by wilful damage rather than general wear and tear.

Criminal Damage: If your home is damaged in a criminal incident you MUST:

- Report the incident to the police
- Keep a record of the Crime Reference number
- Cooperate fully with the police in their investigation. If you do not follow the above, you may be held responsible for the damage whether or not it was your fault.

You may be charged for any repairs which are carried out.

Examples of when we will charge for a repair are when:

- Misuse of the emergency/out of hours service
- Damage due to wilful neglect or misuse
- Damage which is accidental or malicious
- Damage due to a lack of care or is repetitive damage caused by you, other household members, or visitors to the property
- When your tenancy agreement ends and you leave the property in an unacceptable condition
- If you make alterations or home improvements without permission
- Removal of refuse, furniture or personal belongings
- Replacement of locks, keys, fobs, communal keys
- Boiler call out to increase pressure
- Blocked drains due to baby/body/facial wipes, cotton buds and nappies.

We will let you know if you have to pay for a repair when you report it or when the tradesperson carries out the repair.

We will let you know how much the cost is and, in some circumstances, you may be asked to pay in advance.

Asking for Identification:

We will need access to your home from time to time to carry out maintenance or to undertake surveys for our maintenance programme.

You should always ask to see the identification of anyone calling at your home. All Hellens Residential employees have a photographic identification card.

If you are unsure do not let them in your home and telephone 0191 594 6666 for advice. If anyone refuses to show their identification, close the door and call 999.

We will carry out non-urgent repairs within 28 days of the request.

If there is doubt about how a repair has come about, we will visit to check the problem before the repair is carried out.

Our maintenance team can only attend to the repairs for which they have been booked, please don't request them to do anything else.

During the appointment:

- You or an adult over the age of 18 must be present whilst the work is carried out.
- Area around the repair is clean, tidy and clear.
- Pets and children are kept out of the way.



Looking after your New-build Home

If you are taking occupation of a new build property, every effort is made to ensure that your home is in full working order before you move in. The property will be ready to occupy but may have some very minor works outstanding or that come to your attention once you have moved in. Such repairs are known as defects and are the responsibility of the builder who carried out the original work.

Please report these repairs direct to Hellens Residential and not the builder.

Defect works may take longer than the 28-day time-scale given for day-to-day repairs, as the builder has up to 12 months to make good defects. For each defect you report, you will be advised of the likely time-scale for the work to be completed.

Before reporting any defect, please ensure that you have read the instruction leaflets, particularly if the fault relates to the heating system. If there is an electrical fault, please check your equipment, fuses or switches and make sure that your trip switch has not 'tripped'.

We ask that you do not replace or adapt any electrical fittings, including light fittings within the first 12 months as all electrical works are covered by a guarantee as long as they are not interfered with. For the same reason we ask that you do not carry out any works that affect the drainage or plumbing of the property for the first 12 months.

We ask that you do not decorate or paint your home within the first 12 months as there may be some settlement of the building leading to fine cracks in the plaster which need to be addressed by the original builder. There may be a charge for abortive or unnecessary callouts.

How to look after your Home

The Drains

You may notice that there are inspection covers around the building, which are also known as manhole lids.

These covers allow access to the drains. Do not erect any structures over them or obstruct access to them in any way.

Blockages are rare, but if you have occupied the property for some time a blockage is most likely to have been caused by someone putting inappropriate objects down the toilet.

Please do not attempt to flush disposable nappies, baby wipes, cat litter, newsprint or any other large items down your WC as this may cause a blockage in your drain or a neighbour's drain.

Please do not pour any oil, solvent or flammable liquid down the drains. Check with your local authority to find out about their recycling and disposal facilities.

We cannot be responsible for sorting out problems due to misuse. If a basin or shower gully is slow to drain, please ensure you try a liquid drain unblocker before reporting a drainage problem.

If you use a bleach block that affixes to the rim of the WC pan, please ensure that it is secure and cannot fall into the WC trap (U-bend) as it may be difficult to retrieve.

The Gutters

Please ensure that anyone working on the roof, cleaning your windows or cleaning out the gutters does not damage them while carrying out their work.

The Roof Space

To avoid heat loss from the rooms below, the ceilings are insulated to a high standard. The roof space is not for storage, this area has been designed as a load bearing area only. Any item stored in the roof space may be damaged, by moisture or temperature change for which Hellens Residential are not responsible for.

Worktops, showers, ceramics and floor coverings

Clean your taps and surfaces such as worktops, sinks and shower trays with a non-abrasive cleaning product. Do not use abrasive cleaners on appliances unless specifically recommended by the manufacturers. Stainless steel provides a hard surface but it is not scratch proof. Take care when using and cleaning your stainless-steel sink.

Remember to clean your shower head regularly. A reduction in shower pressure may be caused by scale accumulating in the shower head.

Kitchen worktops and units

Please avoid allowing wet laundry to sit on worktops and wipe away any spills to prevent worktops from swelling.

To avoid odours in wet area e.g. bathrooms and kitchens, please ensure that toilets are flushed and 'U' bends are topped up regularly by running the taps.

To avoid blockages please ensure that only used water, human waste and reasonable amounts of toilet paper are flushed into the toilet system.

Similarly, food scrapings, cooking oils, roasting juices and fats should never be put down the sink.

Repair Responsibilities

All alterations or improvements MUST have permission from Hellens Residential before any work is carried out. You can obtain this by completing an Alteration Request form

General Repairs & Responsibilities			
Description	Hellens	You	Exceptions/Comments
Annual Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors Check	✓		Smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you an early warning so you can get outside quickly.
Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors		✓	You are responsible for carrying out regular checks and replacing batteries in between annual checks.
Condensation			Please see guide lines on page 18.
TV aerials & satellite dishes and telephones		✓	
Internal decoration – all walls, ceilings and woodwork		✓	
Damage to worktops due to misuse		✓	
Shared/communal areas	✓		Only if service/maintenance charge is included
Window cleaning		✓	Except in apartment blocks with more than 2 storeys
Adjusting doors		✓	If new carpets have been fitted
Gardens are kept clean and tidy – unless part of a communal charge.			
Repairing door bells		✓	
Repairing washing lines/rotary driers		✓	
Removal and replacement of radiators during decorating		✓	
Dealing with pests i.e. rats, mice, wasp nests, ants		✓	
Gutters and drain pipes,	✓		
Garden sheds		✓	
Filling in major cracks from shrinkage	✓		
Fencing & Gates		✓	
Keys & Fobs		✓	
Carpets – if included		✓	They are Gifted to the tenants and are your responsibility

Gas & Heating			
Description	Hellens	You	Exceptions/Comments
Annual Gas Safety Check	✓		It is a legal requirement that all our homes have an annual gas safety check. We will contact you at least 2 weeks before the check is due to arrange an appointment for a home visit. If this is inconvenient, please let us know so we can re-arrange. We have to give our engineers at least 48 hours' notice to rearrange an appointment or we will be charged) You will be charged a minimum amount of £40 for any missed appointments. If you do not allow access for an engineer you will have breached your tenancy agreement.
Smell of gas		✓	Act immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn off appliances. • Open windows and doors • Do not turn on or off electrical switches • Do not light matches or lighters • Do not smoke • CALL THE EMERGENCY GAS SERVICE 0800 111 999
Servicing of gas cooking appliances		✓	This must be completed by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer
The gas bayonet fitting on a gas cooker		✓	This must be completed by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer
No heating or hot water	✓		

Plumbing			
Description	Hellens	You	Exceptions/Comments
Clearing blocked drains		✓	
Clearing blocked baths, basins, sinks or toilets		✓	
Replacing plugs and chains to baths, basins or sinks		✓	
Replacing toilet seats		✓	
Plumbing in washing machines/tumble driers		✓	
Bleeding radiators		✓	
Shower curtains		✓	
Tile grouting		✓	
Water leaks	✓		
Silicone seal around bath or shower		✓	

Electrical			
Description	Hellens	You	Exceptions/Comments
5 Year Electrical Check	✓		You will be charged a minimum amount of £108 for any missed appointments. If you do not allow access for an engineer you will have breached your tenancy agreement.
Installation/removal of cookers, dishwashers, tumble driers or other electrical appliances		✓	Must be completed by a registered electrician
Electric plugs, fuses, light bulb or fluorescent tube replacements		✓	Communal areas - Hellens Residential
Electrical appliances		✓	All new appliances are Gifted to the tenants and are your responsibility to register them. This includes cookers, cooker extractor fan, fridge/freezers, dishwasher, washing machines which may be included in your rental
External extractor fans	✓		
Changing Light bulbs		✓	

Joinery			
Description	Hellens	You	Exceptions/Comments
Wood or laminate flooring		✓	Please note that wood and wood effect flooring is not usually covered by standard household insurance. It is often necessary to lift flooring to provide access to under floor pipes for example during maintenance. It is your responsibility for removal and reinstatement of any flooring.
Replacement of keys/fobs		✓	Unless the lock is faulty
Boarding out the loft		✓	You must obtain permission from Hellens Residential by completing an Alteration Request form. The boards must be stepped up/ on a double joist so that the insulation, light fittings etc. are not compressed or damaged. At the end of your tenancy everything must be put back to its original condition or left.
Repair or replace doors damaged with general wear and tear	✓		



Making Alterations or Improvements to your Home

It is very important that you get approval from us before making any alterations or home improvements.

You can do this via completion of an Alteration Request form which you can obtain from us.

Any alterations or home improvements are made at a cost to the tenant. If you make alterations or home improvements without permission, we may ask you to return it to its original condition or charge you for the cost of any repairs.

Legal proceedings may also be taken as you are in breach of your tenancy. You may also need approval from the local authority through building control or planning permission. We will advise you of this upon your request.

There must be no rent arrears on your account to request an alteration.

If your tenancy ends you may be expected to return the property to its original condition.

We do **NOT** allow the following alterations or improvements:

- Gas or electric fires.
- Conservatories (standard sized sheds and greenhouses are permitted).
- Hot tubs in garden areas.
- Pigeon lofts or chicken coops.
- Loft conversions.
- Replacement or amendments to external and internal doors.
- Door and window shutters.
- Removal of internal walls.
- Pet access flaps in external doors.

- Fitting of water meters.
- Polystyrene coving or tiles to ceilings.
- Partitioning of any rooms including bedrooms.
- Glass panel doors - installing or replacing.
- Removal of handrails and balustrades.
- Artexing of any surfaces.
- Wood burning stoves.
- Block paving (we will only allow 20% of the garden area).
- Leading on windows.
- Laminate flooring in high rise apartments and upper floor flats.
- Garden ponds.
- Extensions.
- Carport/Lean-to.
- Garages.
- Patio and French doors.
- Mains powered garden lighting.
- Spotlights.

Wood or Laminate Flooring:

Please note that wood and wood effect flooring is not usually covered by standard household insurance. It is often necessary to lift flooring to provide access to under floor pipes, for example during maintenance. It is your responsibility for removal and reinstatement of any flooring and Hellens Residential will not pay to replace this.

Sheds / Greenhouses:

These can be installed, subject to correct Building Control Regulations. Garden buildings which are of a size needing planning permission, CANNOT be erected without specific and exceptional circumstances.

Condensation

Condensation is common in new build properties while construction materials dry out. In cold weather you may notice moisture on felt underneath roof tiles.

It is your responsibility to take steps towards preventing condensation and mould within your home.

Condensation occurs when warm air meets a cold surface. You're unlikely to prevent condensation in your home completely, but you should aim to reduce it to a level so that it doesn't cause problems. To help reduce moisture, please follow the guidelines below:

- While cooking, bathing or washing, use an extractor fan; keep the door closed and a window open to allow the steam to escape. If there are no windows keep the extractor fan running for about 20 minutes. Cover pans whilst cooking.
- Avoid drying clothes indoors or on radiators or storage heaters. If you need to dry clothes indoors, open the window and close the door of the room where you are drying the clothes.
- If you use a vented tumble dryer, make sure it's properly vented to an open window or through an outside wall.
- Leave trickle vents (slotted vents in the window frames) open when rooms are occupied – even in winter when your heating is on. These provide constant ventilation which removes water vapour.
- Avoid blocking radiators with furniture.
- Never turn your ventilation system off. Never block the vents or airbricks in the walls, doors and windows.
- Regularly wipe down windows and sills.
- Keep your home warm to avoid cold surfaces, remember it can take a long time for a building to warm up.
- If your home is unoccupied during the day, set the temperature so your home is warm when you return. During very cold weather, leave the heating on at a reduced temperature.

- If you don't use all the rooms in your home, you should still keep them heated to avoid cold areas. It is better to keep all rooms heated to a low temperature.

Treating Mould:

If you notice mould growing in your home, you should treat it immediately to stop it from spreading and causing more damage to your home. To remove mould, wash the walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash that carries a Health & Safety Executive approval number.

- Sterilise the area with a suitable fungicidal wash (available from most DIY stores) following the manufacturer's instructions. Keep checking the affected area for at least a week. If the mould reappears, wash it down again with the fungicidal wash to make sure the area is fully sterilised.
- If the treatment appears to have been successful, you can carry out any necessary redecoration. If painting, use a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould, but remember that this won't be effective if it's later covered by ordinary paint or wallpaper. If wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould regrowth.
- If mould or mildew is growing on clothing or carpets, you should dry clean them. Don't disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning as you can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- To prevent mould returning, make sure that you control condensation in your home.

If the problem with condensation and mould persists, please contact us in case there is a greater problem such as a leak which Hellens Residential might need to investigate.





