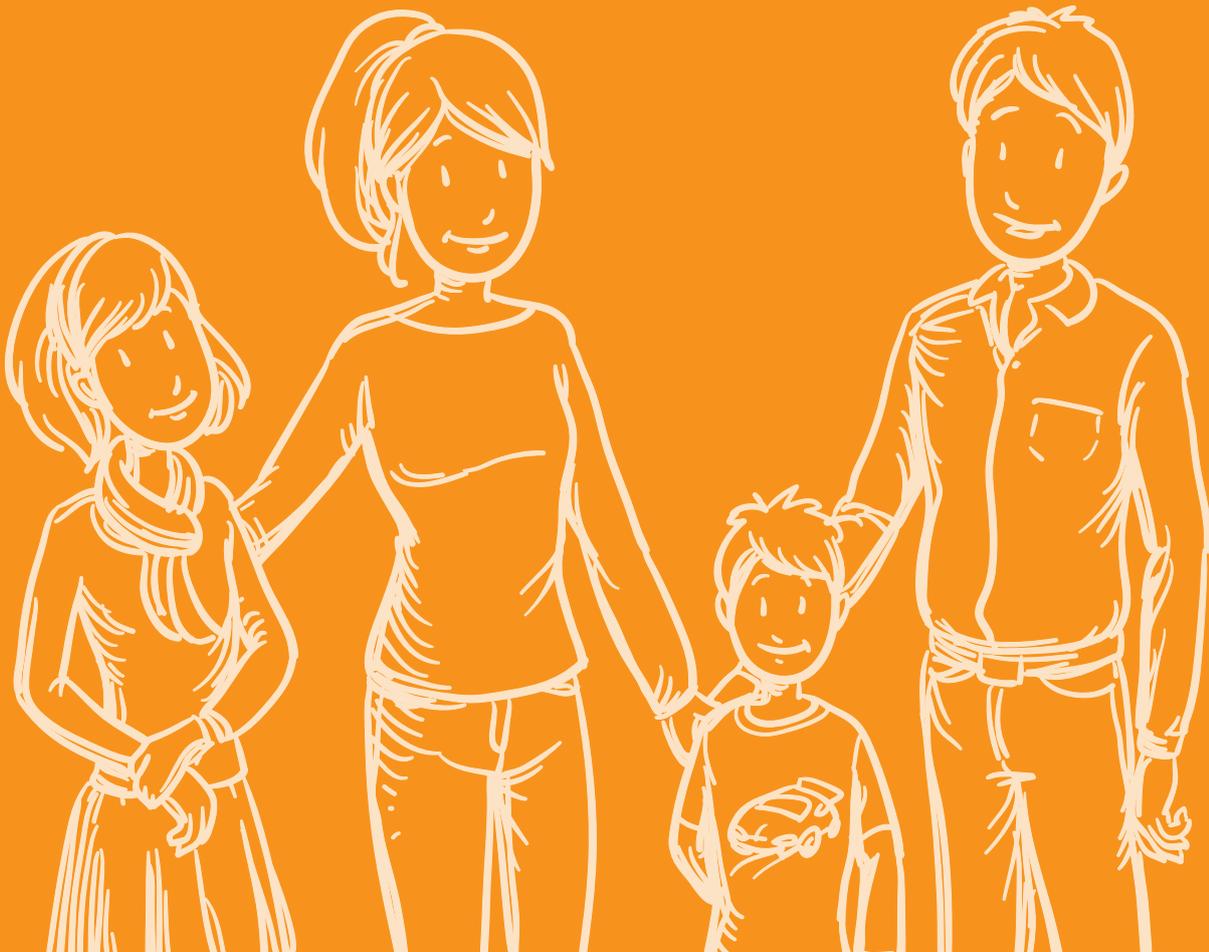


# Home Users Guide

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# Your new home

## Drying out

As you live in and heat your home, timber and other materials will shrink slightly. You may notice minor cracking or small areas of paint blistering

To minimise cracking:

- Keep a reasonably even temperature throughout your home, even in rooms you're not using
- Encourage ventilation - leave windows and internal doors open slightly whenever you reasonably can (always close windows before leaving the house). Open trickle vents - the slotted vents in the window frame
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking or washing. Use extractor fans and if necessary also open windows.

Any minor cracks that appear in the first 12 months can be corrected at the end of the defects period. Report any severe cracks during this time to customer services. If cracks need repairing and you have redecorated in a different colour, it is your responsibility to redecorate.

## Condensation

Condensation is common in new homes during the drying out period. It occurs when warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface and turns to water.

**To minimise condensation:**

Produce less moisture

- cover pans when cooking
- dry washing outdoors or in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on

- if you have a vented tumble dryer, make sure it's vented externally

Ventilate to remove moisture

- keep trickle vents in windows open
- open windows
- use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms
- keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when in use to prevent moisture reaching other rooms

Heat your home a little more

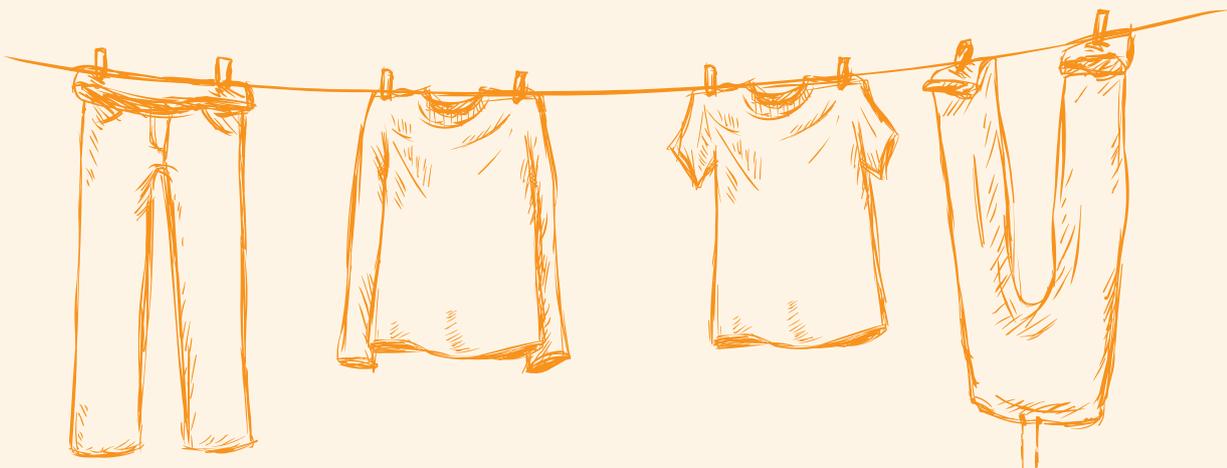
- in cold weather set the background heating to low all day
- thermostats on the heating controls will help maintain low background heat and control costs

## Mildew

Mildew will grow on timber, plaster and emulsion-painted surfaces wherever there is dampness and lack of ventilation. Mildew is more common in small closed rooms, cupboards and the corners of larger rooms where air isn't circulating. In most cases you can simply wipe the mildew from the surface of paintwork using a solution of warm water and a household cleaning product.

## Efflorescence

You may notice a white chalky substance (efflorescence) appearing on brickwork and plywood surfaces as they dry out. These are natural salts coming out of the wall materials. This is quite normal, not harmful and usually disappears over time.



# Utility services

Make sure you know where to find the various services and equipment in your home (see the 'My Home' supplement).

## External services

If you're digging in your front or rear garden and come across any of your home services, please contact us immediately. This is unlikely to happen unless you're digging very deep. Never dig deeper than 450mm.

As soon as you move into your house, contact gas, electric and water suppliers to arrange for these utilities to be put into your name. See the 'My Home' supplement for details.

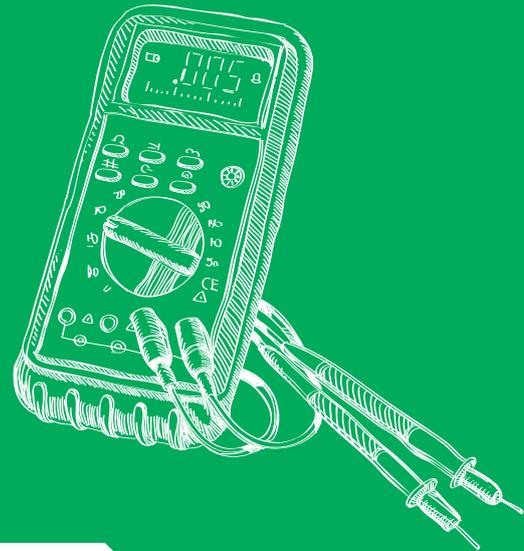
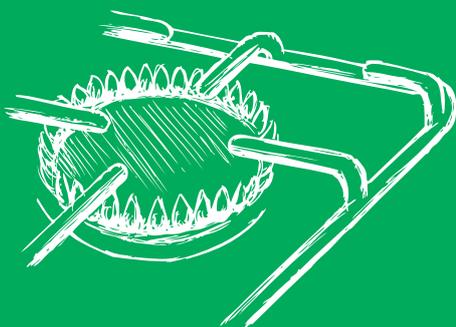
Tip: compare the costs from a variety of gas and electricity suppliers to ensure you get a good deal

## Gas

If you suspect a gas leak:

- put out all naked flames
- turn off the gas at the meter
- open all doors and windows
- call National Grid on 0800 111 999
- call us on 0303 303 0003
- DO NOT turn on any switches or electrical equipment
- DO NOT smoke

Only a Gas Safe registered engineer ([www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)) should service your system. For rented properties, we will arrange this.



## Electricity

The electricity consumer unit contains the main on/off switch for your electricity and a number of circuit breakers. Each of these protects a different circuit and is labelled.

The circuit breakers are very sensitive. If the electricity circuit becomes overloaded, the breaker will 'trip'. You can re-set the circuit manually by pushing the switch back to its original position.

In general, don't overload the circuits by using a large number of appliances at the same time.

The unit also contains a test button for the RCD (Residual Current Device). You should carry out a test every six months as detailed on the unit or user guide. Remember to reset electrical equipment with timers after testing.

NOTE: most problems with electrics in new properties are due to faulty appliances. Your appliance may have worked perfectly at your old address, but the new sensitive circuit breakers will detect any small fault that may not have been apparent under the old system.

If the circuit breaker trips more than once, you will need to identify the faulty appliance that is causing the problem:

1. Switch every appliance off
2. Slowly, one by one, turn appliances back on until the system trips (NB: for a washing machine, you may have to wait for its cycle to complete)

For your own safety, never attempt any work on the electrical circuits – this should only be done by a qualified electrician.

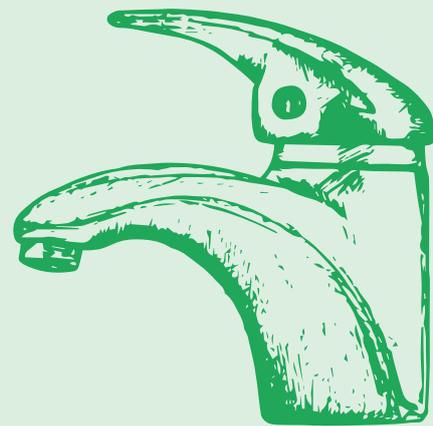
## Water

Water from the main supply is fed directly to your home through an internal stopcock.

The stopcock can shut off all the water to your home if necessary. It's usually found in a base cupboard in the kitchen or bathroom. Turn the stopcock off and on again every six months to prevent it seizing up.

- If you think your pipes are frozen, don't turn on the hot water taps (this will empty the hot water cylinder)
- Take care when fitting carpets. Water pipes that run under the floor are normally identified with a marker or pencil line
- Always fix a dripping tap as soon as possible. Persistent dripping water can stain sinks, baths and toilets

- If water is running from any of the overflow pipes, you should investigate storage tanks and cisterns IMMEDIATELY. Overflowing water may damage the fabric of the building over time. In the case of overflow from the toilet cistern, you may need to adjust the ballcock.



## Saving energy

There are lots of things you can do to save energy that cost nothing, e.g.:

- when making a cup of tea, boil only the amount of water you need – don't automatically fill the kettle
- don't leave appliances on when there's no one in the room
- close windows when the heating's on
- turn the television off at the set, not with the remote control – it's still using electricity when on standby
- defrost your fridge and freezer at least every three months, unless you have a frost-free model
- hang heavy, lined curtains in winter – they help stop draughts and will keep warmth in the room

For more simple energy-saving tips, go to [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

### Low-energy lighting

Low-energy bulbs (LEDs) last a lot longer and are cheaper to run than traditional light bulbs.

### Energy-efficient white goods

You will find the EU Energy Label on all white goods and home appliances sold in the EU. The label shows the energy efficiency of a product. Dark green is the most efficient, red the least efficient. The label also shows the product's total energy consumption and information such as water consumption and noise levels for washing machines, and screen size for televisions.

### Energy Performance Certificates

An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) shows the energy efficiency of a building on an A-G rating. A is the most efficient, and G the least.

The EPC gives prospective buyers, tenants, owners and occupiers important information on the energy performance and environmental impact of their home, so they can consider energy efficiency and fuel costs.



# Facilities in your home

## Heating and hot water

Heating appliances must be serviced annually and regularly maintained by a competent person. For rented properties, Broadland will arrange this. For shared ownership properties, it is the leaseholder's responsibility to arrange.

Any gas and/or other heating appliance that you have supplied should be regularly maintained and tested by a competent person.

Do not allow anything to obstruct the boiler flue.

Look for signs of corrosion or leakage from any part of the heating system. This may be the first indication that it needs repair.

Room temperatures are controlled by room thermostats and/or thermostatic valves on the radiators.

## Extractor fans

Extractor fans and/or cooker hoods in the bathroom and kitchen are operated either by a pull cord or a switch

## Renewable energy (if applicable)

### Solar panels (heating) or photovoltaic PV (electricity)

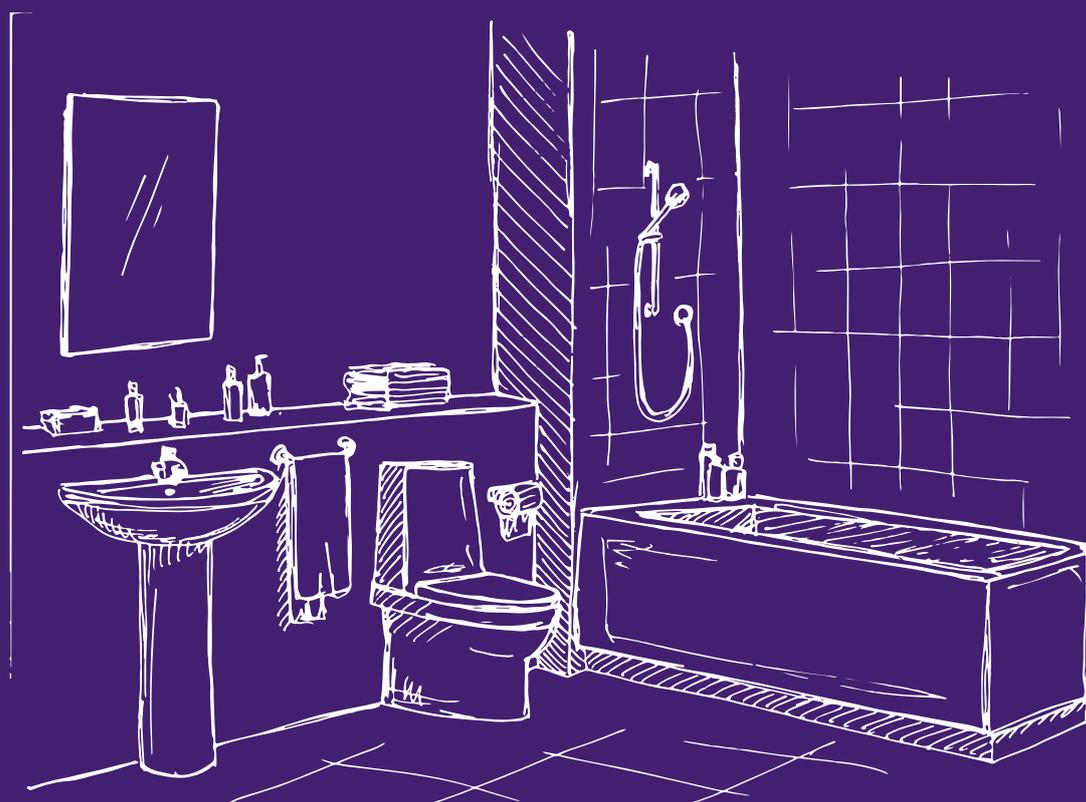
Solar and PV systems are panels installed on rooftops to absorb sunlight. This creates hot water/heating for solar systems and electricity for PV systems.

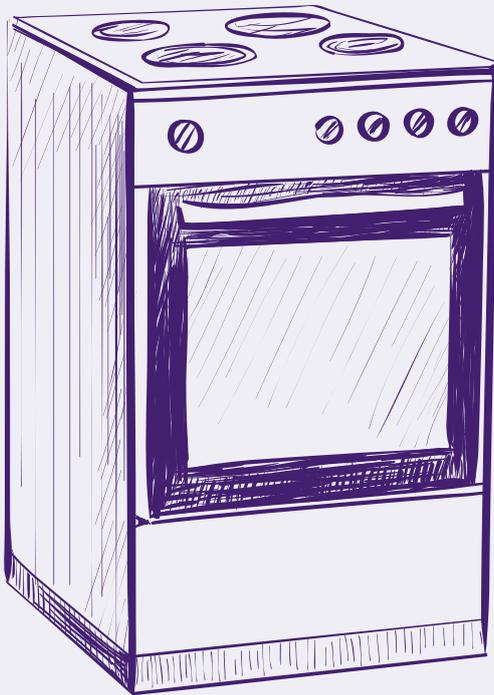
### Air source heat pumps

Air source heat pumps absorb heat from the outside air. This heat is used to warm water for radiators or underfloor heating systems, or to warm the air in your home.

### Ground source heat pumps

Ground source heat pumps use pipes buried in the garden to extract heat from the ground. This is usually used to warm water for radiators or underfloor heating systems. It can also be used to pre-heat water before it goes into a more conventional boiler.

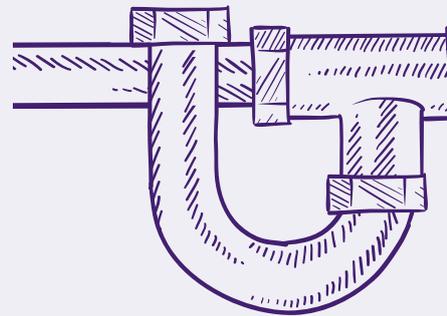




## Smoke detectors

The smoke detector alarm is wired directly into the main electricity supply, so it will remain fully operational even if any circuit breaker switches off through overload or a fault. Smoke detectors are fitted with back-up batteries.

- Regularly test each smoke detector by pressing the test button
- Replace batteries annually
- Remove dust regularly from detectors with a vacuum cleaner attachment



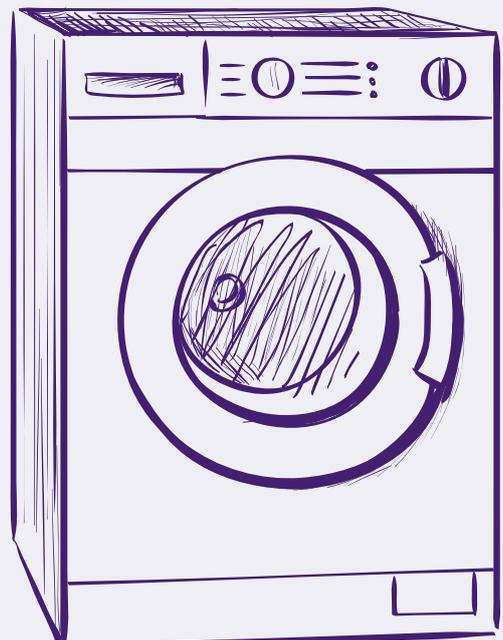
## Cooker connection

Your cooker should only be installed by a qualified installer.

## Washing machines

Your property is plumbed for an automatic washing machine.

- Check the waste pipe is not capped before connecting your washing machine
- Seal any unused pipes
- Connect flexible hoses following the manufacturer's instructions
- Check that hoses are in good condition and that the connecting rings and washers are watertight after connecting your machine
- Clip the waste hose to the connecting pipe
- Do not connect washing machines to sink or basin taps

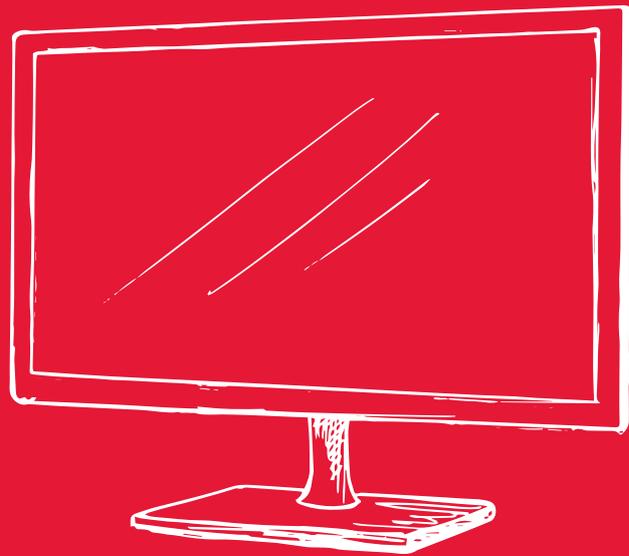


## Television

Your home has a television point with a cable to the roof space. It is your responsibility to arrange for an aerial to be fitted or for satellite services, and for the cost of this.

Please check whether there are any restrictions on the position of the satellite dish at your property. We do not accept any responsibility for rectifying problems that might occur as a result of restrictions.

For communal blocks, a communal aerial has been installed and we maintain it.



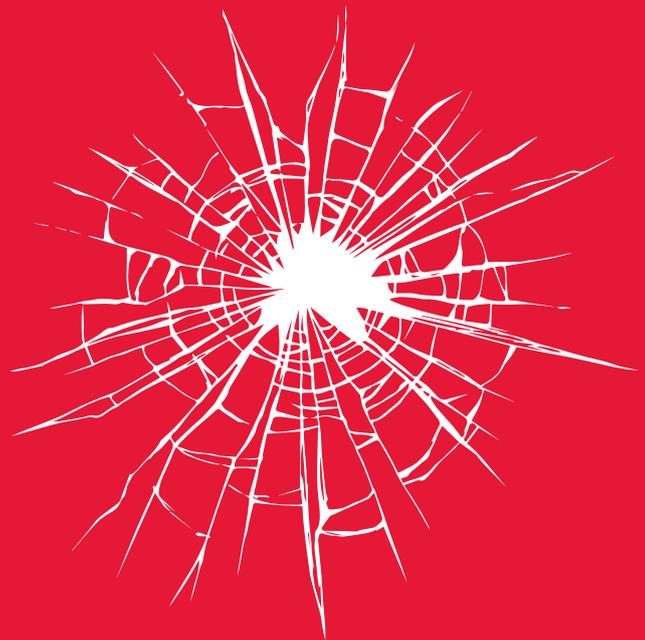
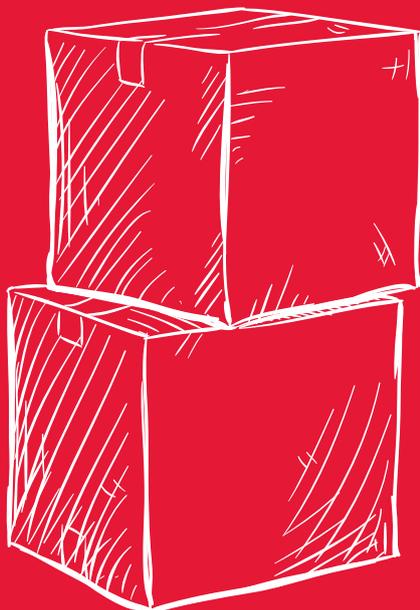
## Telephone

Your home has a landline socket. You are responsible for the telephone connection and resulting charges.

## Storage

To avoid personal injury or damage to your property, avoid using the roof space for storage. The loft space is not boarded and is not designed to carry loads.

Also, because of insulation, the roof space is very cold in winter. Warm, moist air gets in whenever the hatch is opened. This may result in condensation which could damage your possessions.



## Glazing

If a window is broken, it is your responsibility to have it re-glazed. You are strongly recommended to use a competent firm to do this, as your home will probably have been glazed originally with an energy-efficient glazing system.

Before fixing anything to the wall or floor, check for the location of pipes and cables.

The following special wall fixings are recommended, available from DIY stores:

### Internal walls

Plasterboard into the batten	British Gypsum drywall timber screw
Plasterboard into the cavity behind the plasterboard	Rawl interset M6 x 52
Through the plasterboard only	Rawl metal self-drive with rawl uno plug

### Separating walls

Through the plasterboard	Rawl spring toggle
Through double layer through plasterboard	Rawl uno plug

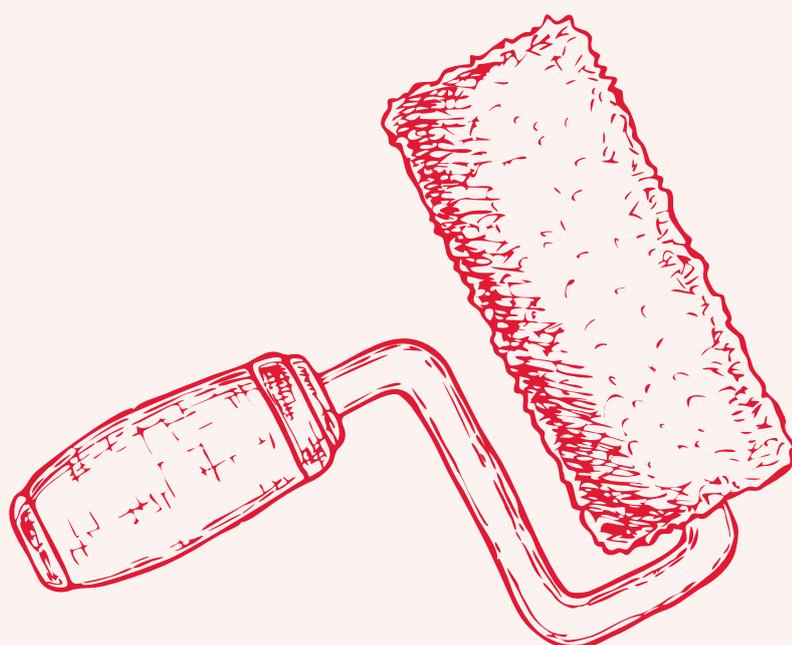
### Decoration

Interior walls are dry-lined plasterboard, painted with emulsion. You may decorate your home to your own personal taste. However, we recommend you wait 12 months to allow your new home to dry out fully first.

### Carpet fitting

When fitting carpets or flooring, it is your responsibility to shorten any doors that may catch on new carpets.

Check for underfloor pipework before drilling any holes in floors, to avoid damage to services.



# Recycling and waste

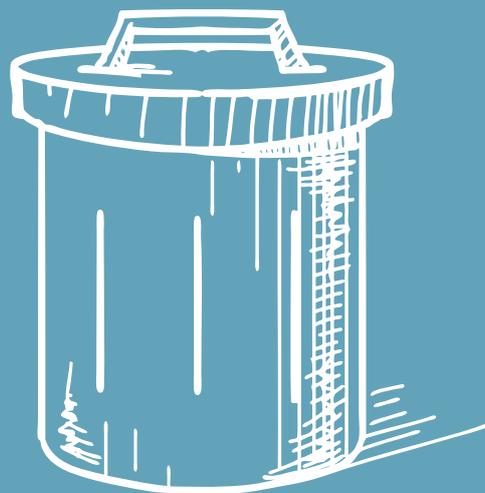
The local authority is responsible for your refuse collection, and provides the bins.

Use one bin for general waste, and the other for recyclable waste. It is your responsibility to ensure that bins are available for emptying at collection times.

Some Broadland Housing schemes have larger communal bins. Please keep these areas tidy to avoid attracting pests and vermin.

To dispose of large items of rubbish (old furniture, mattresses, etc), you will need to take them to your local recycle centre or contact your local authority about collection.

For further information regarding your refuse collection, please contact your local authority.



## Recycling

Please recycle as much of your household waste as possible to help protect the environment.

- 1 recycled aluminium drinks can saves enough energy to power a TV for 3 hours
- 1 recycled glass bottle saves enough energy to power a light bulb for 4 hours
- Every tonne of paper recycled saves 17 trees

See more recycling facts at [www.recycle-more.co.uk](http://www.recycle-more.co.uk)

## Sustainable DIY

Every year in the UK billions of pounds are spent on timber, paints, varnishes and other materials for home DIY projects. By choosing your materials carefully, you can reduce your impact on the environment.

### Using greener materials

If possible choose environmentally-friendly materials and finishes for your DIY projects. They do not necessarily cost more and many are widely available:

- Using reclaimed wood saves energy and resources
- Buy certified wood – it is estimated that at least a quarter of the timber arriving in to the UK has been produced illegally
- To check for sustainable timber and wood products, look for a label from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC – [www.fsc-uk.org](http://www.fsc-uk.org)), the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes (PEFC – [www.pefc.co.uk](http://www.pefc.co.uk)) or other forest certification schemes.



# Landscaping

Your front and rear gardens have been paved or planted where applicable.

To care for your lawn during the first 4-6 weeks:

- Water lawn frequently, particularly in dry weather
- Use a fine sprinkler to water, early in the morning and late in the afternoon
- Keep people and machinery off the grass

# Fire safety

## Reduce your fire risk

- More people die in fires caused by smoking than anything else. Never smoke in bed and always ensure cigarettes are fully extinguished
- Is your upholstered furniture fire-resistant? Sofas etc made before 1988 will catch fire easily and produce clouds of poisonous smoke
- Nearly two-thirds of all domestic fires start in the kitchen. Take extra care when cooking, especially with hot oil
- Never leave pans on the hob when you're not around, even for a few minutes – take them off the heat if you have to answer the door or phone
- Keep your cooker clear of flammable objects, such as cloths, oven gloves and curtains
- Keep electrical leads from trailing over or near the cooker
- Clean inside ovens and microwaves, and empty breadcrumbs out of your toaster from time to time. A build-up of fat and bits of food can start a fire
- Never leave young children alone in the kitchen
- Never leave lit candles in an empty room, or where children are unsupervised
- Make sure candles are in secure holders on a surface that doesn't burn and candles are kept away from any flammable materials

- When grass is 75-100mm high, cut with a sharp mower blade, set to leave the cut grass 50mm high. Collect grass cuttings

- After 3-5 cuts, lower the mower setting height to 25-35mm

After 12 months, apply a good quality feed to the lawn. Weed frequently during spring and autumn.

Don't worry if paths or paved areas develop minor cracks. The ground will slowly settle during the first 2 or 3 years. However, do report such faults to us.

## Keep exits clear

- Keep all exits from your home clear, so that people can escape quickly if there's a fire
- Keep communal corridors and stairways free of obstructions, such as plants, bikes, pushchairs, furniture, rubbish etc.
- Keep keys for doors and windows easily accessible, always in the same place

## Useful tips

- Fit smoke alarms on each level in your home on the ceiling and in hallways and landings
- Keep alarms free from dust and test them once a week

**If you do have a fire, don't take risks – get everyone out of your home and call 999**





### Further information

For more information about your home and any queries, visit Tenants Online at [tenantsonline.broadlandhousing.org](http://tenantsonline.broadlandhousing.org) or telephone **0303 303 0003**.

For more about Broadland Housing, see our website [www.broadlandgroup.org](http://www.broadlandgroup.org).

