

Home User Guide

Your new home

A new building contains a variety of materials that will have absorbed water during construction. This moisture needs to evaporate slowly over the first 12 months and be ventilated away.

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.

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

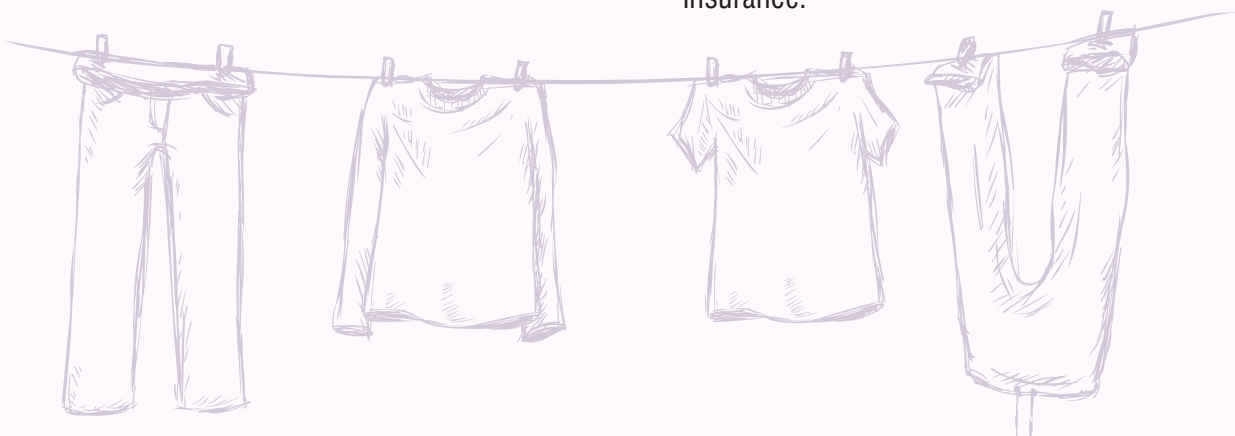
Mildew will grow on timber, plaster and emulsion-painted surfaces wherever there is dampness and lack of ventilation. Mildew is more common in small closed rooms, cupboards and the corners of larger rooms where air isn't circulating. In most cases you can simply wipe the mildew from the surface of paintwork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

Storm Damage

Any damage caused by high winds or storms is not the responsibility of Broadland St Benedicts. For example, should a roof tile become dislodged or fence blow down, you should arrange for the repair or claim on your own insurance.



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

Low-energy lighting

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

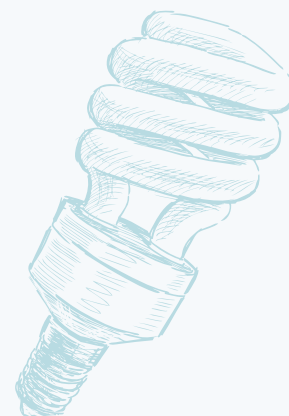
Energy-efficient white goods

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 should be serviced annually and regularly maintained 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 thermostats and 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 or photovoltaic PV

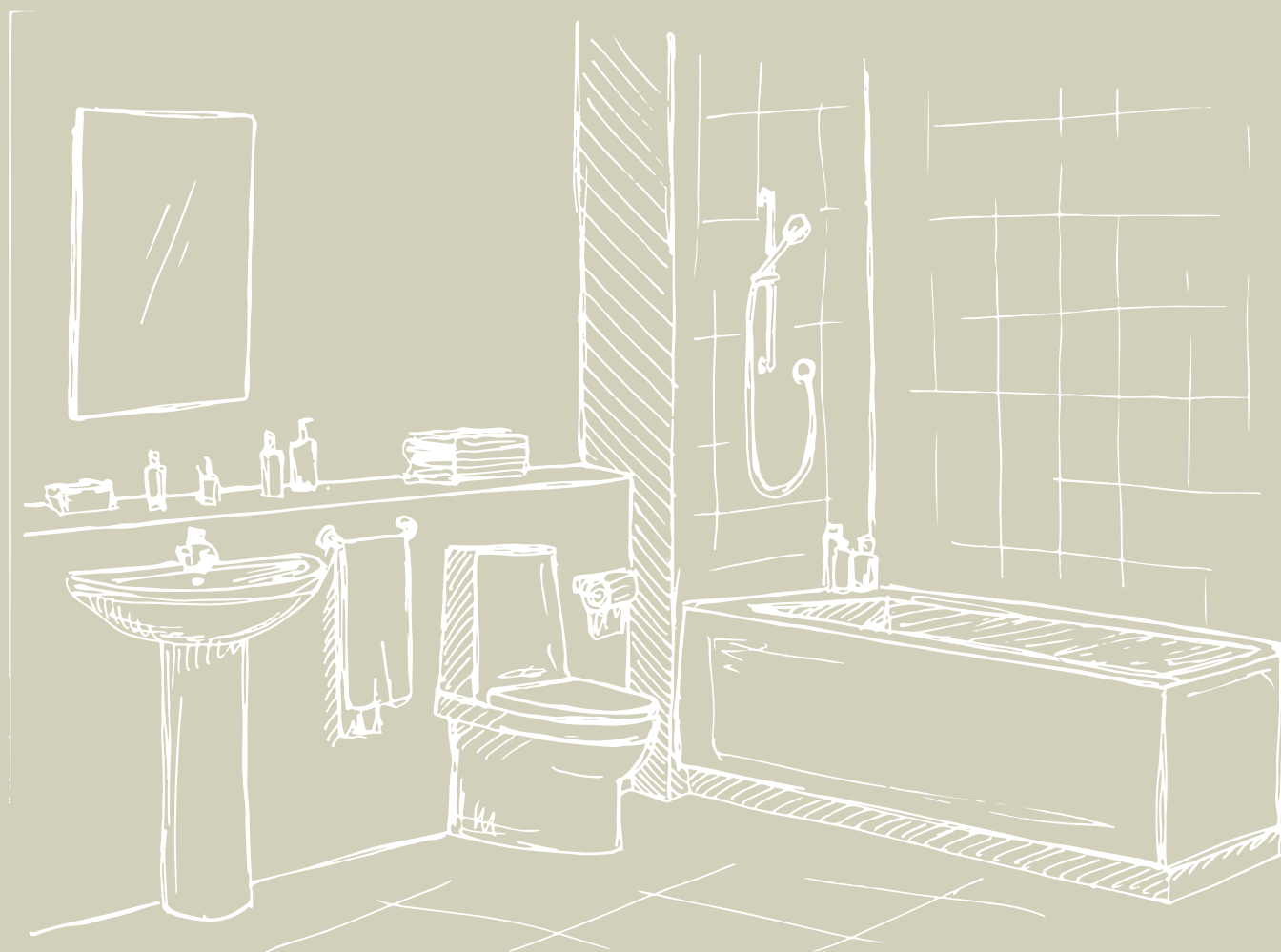
Solar and PV systems are panels installed on rooftops to absorb sunlight. This creates hot water/heating for solar systems and electricity for PV systems.

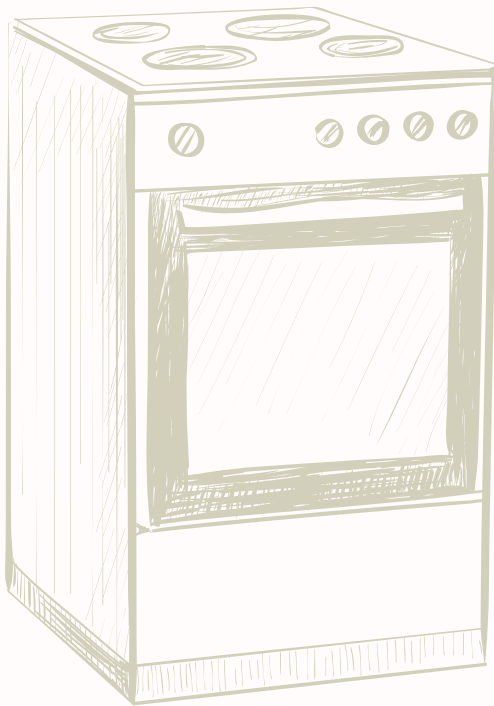
Air source heat pumps

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.

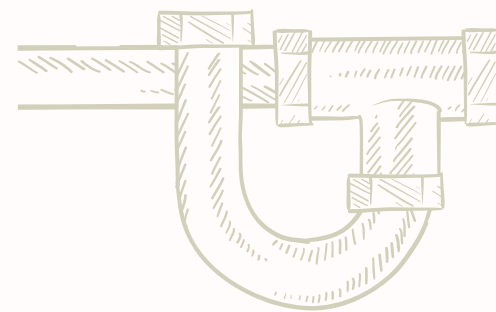




Smoke detectors

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



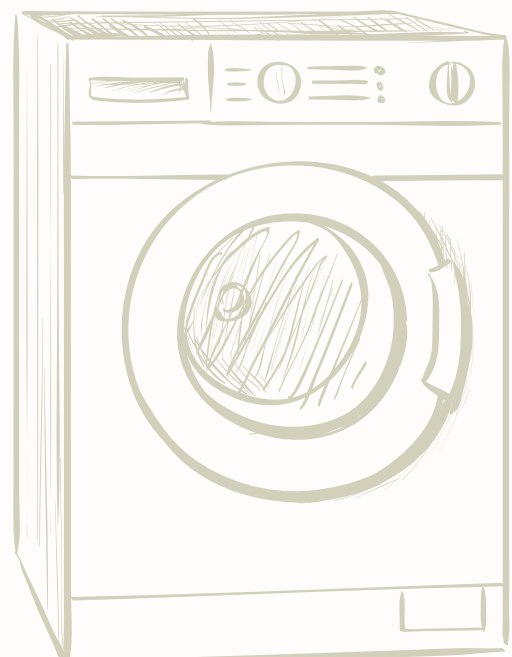
Cooker connection

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

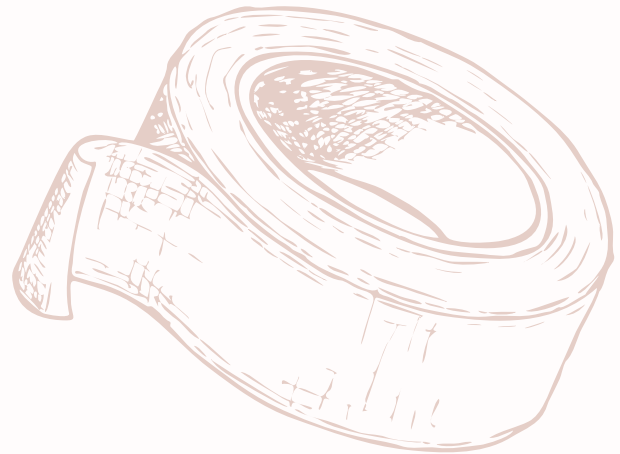


Walls

Before fixing anything to the wall or floor, check for the location of pipes and cables. A cable detector may help locate services. If in doubt seek professional services.

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.

Sanitary ware

Regular cleaning of sanitary ware will prevent a built up of soluble salts. However, limescale deposits will sometimes require removal. When cleaning sanitary fittings, care should be taken to use the appropriate product to avoid any damage.

Ironmongery

External and internal ironmongery should be lightly oiled annually or in line with the manufacturer's recommendation.



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
- 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.

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

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 or telephone **0303 303 0003**.

For more about Broadland Housing, see our website www.broadlandgroup.org.

