

# New Home User Guide

We recommend this guide is read in conjunction with your NHBC guide to a new home and with the operating instructions provided to you which are specific to your home.

June 2019.

**Bromford.**

# Your Home User Guide - Content

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## Welcome to your brand new home!

We hope this guide will help you familiarise yourself with your new surroundings and help you get used to your new home & how the equipment in your home works, so that you can relax and feel comfortable after your move.

**We wish you every happiness for the future in your new Bromford home.**

Your home is owned and managed by:

Bromford

1 Exchange Court

Brabourne Avenue

Wolverhampton Business Park

Wolverhampton

WV10 6AU.

After moving into the property, you should contact Bromford for any concerns that you may have with your property

## Logging into your customer account or calling 0330 1234 034

A copy of this New Home User Guide is also available in other formats. This includes translation into other languages, Braille, large print, and an audio CD. Please contact us for an alternative format copy.

# Moving In

Upon moving in you will need to begin setting up your home. The New Home Essential Information Sheet on your customer account has lots of useful information about your new home which will help you with the following:

- Contacting the various utility suppliers so that water, gas, electric and telephone are connected in your name. These may be disconnected from your home if you do not apply to have them put into your name.
- Set up your direct debit to pay your rent
- Register any warranties on new products in your home
- If your refuse bins are not already at your property, you will need to order them from your local council, the bins will take up to 10 days to be delivered and you may have to attend the 'tip' to get rid of excess rubbish from the move or consider using your local authorities bulky waste collection service.
- Read the manuals provided so you can operate the equipment in your home, such as the heating controls.
- Register with your local council to pay your council tax.

**We would also recommend that upon moving you consider informing a change of address for the following:**

- Set up a mail redirection from your previous address
- Your car, home & pet insurance providers
- Your details on the electoral role
- Your bank
- Your TV, telephone and media suppliers
- Update any credit agreements, credit cards, loans, student loans
- Update TV licencing
- Update your employer
- Update your driving licence and vehicle log book with the DVLA
- Update your dentist, GP and any other health related provider you may need to
- Tell your friends and family
- Ensure your new post code is registered with the Royal Mail  
<https://www.royalmail.com/account-type>

### Insure your belongings

You should arrange a comprehensive contents insurance policy to start from when you move into your new home to cover your personal belongings in the event of a fire, burglary, storm and flood damage.



The National Housing Federation have an insurance scheme called My Home, this scheme is open to all social housing tenants and there are no excess fees. You can contact My Home insurance on 0345 450 7288 or via [www.thistlemyhome.co.uk](http://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk) . You can also find a list of insurance brokers online or in the yellow pages, but please be aware, it pays to shop around.

# Bromford Aftercare

Living in a brand new home has a different kind of home management to an older property, no home is maintenance free and a new home requires a different type of care. This guide aims to support you in managing your newly built home.

All new homes are of high quality builds and each one passes strict guidelines set by the NHBC (National House Building Council). However we completely expect that not each home can be perfect and have no problems, as they are all man made. We will always try and put things right; it helps us firstly to establish whether the issue is a defect or another type of issue. This helps us ensure we find the right solution to the problem with your home.

A new home is an individually built, handcrafted, product. For this reason there will inevitably be some variation in the finished appearance of different elements of the construction and a lack of uniformity, due to the nature of the materials used and the way in which they are applied. This is normal and to be expected.

All new homes require a running in period and are subject to tolerances in building processes which are agreed across the building industry – for more information on this aspect please familiarise yourself with the **NHBC Standard of Finishes Guidance** that supports this guide. The construction process for your new home involves the use of large quantities of water for various processes plus the daily use and occupation of your home will also generate moisture. For information on the management of this aspect of your home, called the ‘drying out period’, please refer to the guidance on **Damp, Condensation and Mould**. Further guidance on this and other helpful information is contained in the **Guide to Your New Home** published by the NHBC and included in your pack.

## New Build Property Defects

Newly built properties carry a defect liability period with the builder for a year following handover of the properties to Bromford. This means the builder is obliged to return and

repair a variety of different faults in the property should they occur.

### **What is a Defect?**

A defect is a fault in the workmanship, installation or manufacture of items of equipment which form part of the construction. The most common faults that occur are leaks from waste pipes, heating or hot water problems, toilets not flushing (this does not include blockages).

### **Reporting a defect**

If you discover a defect you can report the defect via our portal or by speaking to one of our customer service advisors on 0330 1234 034

### **The end of defects liability period**

The defects liability period begins one year from the date the property was handed over to Bromford, not the date you move in. Just before the expiry of the defects period you will receive notification of a defect's inspection appointment. Representatives from Bromford and the developer will visit to identify any defects that may still be outstanding and require rectification.

Your co-operation at this stage will be required and appreciated, attending this appointment is essential in order to get any necessary works complete. It is useful at the inspection to have prepared a list of the items you feel are covered during the defects period to ensure that all items are addressed.

You are asked not to re-decorate your property until this maintenance period has elapsed, as we are unable to match any changes in the colour scheme.

# A Guide to Defects

A defect is a fault in the workmanship, installation or manufacture of items of equipment which form part of the construction. The most common faults that occur are leaks from waste pipes, heating or hot water problems, toilets not flushing (this does not include blockages).

Description of frequent request	Defect?	Not a Defect?
<p><b>Shrinkage Cracks</b></p> <p><i>Any new building will need time to settle and dry out, which can cause shrinkage cracks. Most of these are minor and can be dealt with by yourselves when you redecorate.</i></p>	<p>If the crack is larger than the edge of a pound coin but still not large enough to place two fingers into the crack, the end of defects inspection will take note of this and add it to any remaining works required. Any cracks that you can place two fingers in, need to be reported immediately as a defect.</p>	<p>If you cannot place the edge of a pound coin into the crack, this is not a defect</p>
<p><b>Decoration</b></p>		<p>Your new home is fully decorated, however you may find an odd pencil mark, patch or sticky dot, on the walls or ceiling. You can easily remove pencil marks gently with an eraser or peel off the sticky dots.</p>
<p><b>Floor coverings</b></p>	<p>Where we have provided floor coverings to the wet areas of your property – these are covered by the defects period if found to be faulty.</p>	<p>Any floor coverings you provide in the property (such as carpets, vinyl and laminate) are your responsibility and we advise you to take out contents insurance, to cover any damages or loss incurred.</p>

<b>Fencing</b>	Boundary fences are the responsibility of the customer, unless they have a fault or were not installed correctly.	Boundary fences are the responsibility of the customer
<b>Condensation</b>  <i>All new homes dry out from the build process, this is perfectly normal. All new homes meet strict requirements for air-tightness and have either extractor fans and/or mechanical heat recovery ventilation (MVHR) systems that are designed to help with air exchange and prevent condensation.</i>		You must ensure your extraction unit is switched on and working. Mould takes at least 12 to 24 hours to form, we would advise to wash it down with a weak bleach solution and ventilate your property. If mould and damp is left to form in the property, this has a potential impact on health – please see our support & guidance on damp & mould in the home user guide.
<b>Leaks</b>	Leaks from waste or water pipes may be a defect, please isolate the valves in this instance and report to us immediately	Any leaks that occur due to your appliances not being fitted correctly are your responsibility. Should the contractor or Bromford be called out to attend you may be charged.
<b>Efflorescence</b>		This may occur on the exterior of properties and is a result of salts leeching out of the bricks/masonry. This is nothing to worry about. If you wish to remove it and it is safe to do so

		(beware of heights), mix baking soda with water and cover the affected area. Leave for a while then rinse off.
<b>Blocked Drains/toilets</b>		Should any blockages occur due to items other than standard toilet paper being placed in the toilet/drain and the contractor or Bromford be called out you may be charged.
<b>Nail pops</b> <i>This happens when the layer of plaster over a nail head detaches and falls off.</i>	If there is a run of them the contractor will agree to repair. The end of defects inspection will take note of this and add it to any remaining works required	
<b>Your Appliances</b>	If appliances are fitted as part of your new home, we advise that you ensure you have registered their warranties as per the product description	If the fault is with your domestic appliance, the repairing responsibility lies with you, we advise you to contact your own electrician to repair/replace your appliance.
<b>Light bulbs</b>		If a bulb has blown and requires changing this is not a defect, please ensure you change any light bulbs (including exterior lights) before reporting any issues

Boiler pressure		On occasion you may be required to re-pressurise your boiler, instructions can be found on line via the manufacturer’s website or YouTube, in your manual or our heating team can talk you through this over the phone.
Thermostat		Instruction for setting the thermostat have been provided and can be found online via the manufacturers website or You Tube, if you are not sure how to use this please ask a family member or friend. If the thermostat is battery operated, you are responsible for replacing the batteries.
Radiators		You are responsible for bleeding the radiators and instructions are listed on the previous page alternatively you can find instruction videos on You Tube, if you still have difficulty please ask a family member or friend for help or one of our heating team can talk you through this over the phone.
TV and Media		Any issues with TV, telephones or broadband are between you and your provider, we will not attend calls for these items.

<b>Lost keys</b>		<b>We do not keep spares, if you lose your keys and lock yourself out, you are responsible for replacing them and/or changing the lock.</b>
<b>Stiff Door or Window Handles</b>		<b>This is common with new doors and windows and should ease with use, clean hinges and try a silicone lubricant.</b>
<b>Easy Clean Hinges/Window restrictors</b>		<b>Are there for safety, if you damage them you may be charged for the repair</b>
<b>Glazing</b>		<b>We recommend you take out suitable contents insurance which includes glass cover, any glass breakage after you move into the property is your responsibility to replace unless it has occurred during a criminal act and has been reported and logged by the local police.</b>
<b>Additional Items to your home</b>		<b>If you require additional items such as more kitchen cupboards or you wish to extend your slabbed area, add lighting etc – we can provide details on where materials were from but the purchase and installation would</b>

		<b>be the customers responsibility – permission may be required from Bromford too – Please check with your Neighbourhood Coach</b>
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**If some jobs raised are not a defect and have been caused by damage there may be a charge to the customer. For support and guidance in this please refer to our website:**

**<https://www.bromford.co.uk/customer-area/repairs-and-alterations/repair-responsibilities/rechargeable-repairs/>**

# Key features of your New home

## The boiler



Your home may have a boiler providing heating and hot water which is energy efficient.

**Your boiler instruction manuals are included in this pack, please read them carefully to help you use the heating efficiently.**



## Fault Codes

Should the boiler show a fault code, such as the E for error code in the picture, please consult your manual for advice. Manuals are also available on line at the manufacturer's website. Our customer service team can talk you through most issues over the phone. If a problem occurs with the boiler a fault code will show on the information panel,

please ensure you tell the team what this code is, so they can advise you accordingly

If you do not understand how to operate your heating and hot water system, please read the manual you have been provided with, our heating and hot water team, have copies of boilers manuals and can talk through issues over the phone. Always make sure you bleed your radiators and check the pressure on your boiler before you raise a repair to us. We have videos available on our website that can provide guidance on topping up your boiler and bleeding your radiators.



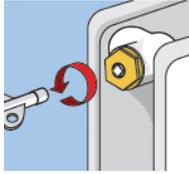
## Thermostats

Room temperatures are controlled by the thermostat. If your property has two thermostats, this means you can set different temperatures on each floor. The instruction manual will advise you how to set the thermostat to the temperature you find most comfortable. You may also find that the thermostat is battery operated, if the screen is blank, please check the batteries. Your neighbourhood coach or one of our customer service advisors may be to offer you further support with this if required.



## TRV's

In addition all but one of the radiators are fitted with thermostatic radiator valves (TRV's) to individually control room temperature, which you can turn up and down.



### Radiators

If you notice that a radiator is cool at the top, it may indicate that there is air in the system, this is common in newly commissioned systems.

To release the air, first turn off the heating and allow the system to cool. Attach the radiator key to the bleed valve and turn it anti-clockwise. As you open the valve slightly, you should hear the hiss of air escaping. It is a good idea to hold a cloth underneath to catch any water once the air has stopped escaping, close the valve.

Your heating system may need re-pressurising after bleeding the radiator, your boiler instruction manual explains how to do this, and alternatively you can find instruction videos on the web site of the boiler manufacturer which will talk you through how to do this.

### Cooker Installations

Please ensure you use a qualified competent person to install your gas or electric cooker. If you do not, you may be risking your health and safety.

### Washing machines and dishwashers

You will find the connections under the sink and/or in the utility area. Most modern washing machines will have just one cold fill pipe and the connection will only support this. We recommend that a competent person installs your appliance to ensure it is fitted correctly. Please also check you have turned the isolation valve on for water flow. We recommend using jubilee clips to secure the waste pipe from the machine to the fittings. We also recommend that you check this around four weeks after moving in to ensure it has not worked loose on the new fittings. If your washing machine or dishwasher has not been correctly installed it may leak and cause damage in your home.

### TV Aerials



A television aerial socket can be found in the lounge with an additional socket in the master bedroom. To use the television sockets, you will need to use a qualified professional to install an appropriate aerial in/on the loft/roof of the property. We have provided cabling

to the loft and aerials are not to be fitted to the front of properties.

If you require any further equipment, such as a satellite dish, you will need to request permission in writing from your Neighbourhood Coach. If written permission is granted, you will need to contact your service provider to arrange installation

Please note that satellite dishes should only be fixed to walls with an approved bracket or pole. Cables from the dish should not be thrown over the roofs or drilled through windows or door frames and dishes should not be installed to the front of properties.

Please note that if you are moving into your new home from another area, the T.V signals may be coming from a different transmitter than your previous home and some initial re-tuning of your T.V may be necessary.

The setup of your TV aerial can vary on different developments. We will provide you with information regarding your aerial set up and what you may need to do as part of the renting or purchasing process

### **Broadband and Phone**

In most developments we ensure that cabling for phone lines are installed to the front of your property. You are then required to pay a provider to install your line, any hub required and to activate the line. In some circumstances you will find a hub and line already installed but you will still need to pay a provider to activate the line and set up your account. Please refer to your manuals for more information on this.



BT Telephone connection – Tel: 0800 800 150 & <https://www.bt.com/>

### **Doors and Windows**

You may find that some of your door and window handles are a little stiff. This is quite common as they are new and should ease the more they are used; please read your instruction manual and if required use an appropriate lubricant. If you have trouble locking an external door we will attend for security reason, to ensure your safety. If you damage any window restrictors by forcing them open, you will be charged to repair/replace.

### **Windows Breakages**

Glass breakages are your responsibility unless committed by a criminal act that has been reported and a crime reference number provided. We advise you to take out contents insurance with glass cover, which will cover any breakages.

### Keys

The keys to your property are your responsibility. If you lose your keys, you will need to arrange a lock change. If you live in a property with a communal entrance operated by a 'fob' you will be charged for a replacement.

### Efflorescence

This may occur on the exterior of properties and is a result of salts leeching out of the bricks/masonry. This is nothing to worry about. If you wish to remove it and it is safe to do so (beware of heights), mix baking soda with water and cover the affected area. Leave for a while then rinse off.

### Drainage

Blocked drains are normally caused by the following: sanitary wear, wet wipes, nappies, disposal toilet wipes (which are not disposable) and fat. Please ensure you do not put these items down your drains, if a blockage occurs and it is identified that these items are the cause, you will be charged for work to unblock the drain. Please do contact us via the customer portal if you are experiencing issues with your drainage as continued issues may impact you and your neighbours.

### Loft Space

Your loft space is well insulated, and we do not advise that you enter the loft unless it is by a TV engineer to install an aerial. The lofts are not boarded and pose a potential danger of falling should you enter them. We do not recommend storing items in your loft.

### Water Meter

You should apply to the water company to open your account. They will arrange for the existing supply connected for the builder to be replaced with a permanent supply for yourselves. Your washing machine sink and other services may not work properly if you do not contact the Water Company.

This is the meter cover



This is the meter which sits inside





### Stop Tap

The tap is used to turn off your water supply in the event of a leak, please ensure you check it periodically to ensure it is working.

### Safety features

Your bath is fitted with an anti-scald device, this means that you cannot have the bath water too hot, we still advise you to check the temperature before getting into the bath. Your pipework is fitted with isolation valves so that in the event of a leak, you can isolate the area concerned by turning off the water to the specific area.



### Electricity

Your home is fitted with a smart meter from which you will receive bills in due course.

You should sign up with an approved supplier as soon as possible. Your current supply is shown in the table on a previous page. You can choose which company you wish to supply the electricity and we advise you to shop around to get good value.

### Consumer unit

This is where the trip switches are located for electrical appliances, switches and lights. The consumer unit can be sensitive and 'trip out' even when a light bulb fails. Please follow the instructions within your new home manual to establish if any of your bulbs or appliances are causing the unit to 'trip'. If it is a light bulb or appliance; this is not classed as a defect. If you have any concerns about the electrical safety in your home – please call us on 0330 1234 034 or 0300 1232222 (former Merlin customers)



Your consumer unit (fuse box) identifies and controls all the lighting and power circuits.

Each circuit is protected by a residual current breaker or RCD. These breakers are easy to re-set by flicking the switch back to the on position.

Circuit breakers are generally more sensitive than fuses and may well trip out even when a light bulb fails, or you are using an appliance with

an electrical fault or faulty plug. This is designed to happen as a protection device and should not cause concern.

Each of the circuits in your property is on a separate circuit breaker and will be clearly labeled. When one of the circuit breakers “trips out”, it can easily be identified as the one showing “**OFF**”.

**To restore the power, lift the switch back to the “ON” position.**

**If it “trips out” again please do the following:**

- **Turn off** all appliances or lights in the affected circuit
- Re-set the switch on the board to “**ON**”
- If it still will not reset, **unplug** all of the appliances on the circuit
- Turn back on all of the lights or appliances one by one
- If the miniature circuit breaker (MCB) “trips out” again, as you turn back on an appliance or light, it will mean that the appliance or light is faulty and is causing the circuit breaker to trip out
- If this happens, turn off the light and replace the bulb or turn off and unplug the appliance that caused the circuit breaker to trip and again re-set the MCB, you will then be able to continue to use the remaining lights and /or appliances on that circuit

If the fault is due to the electrical installation, please report this to **Bromford**, during normal office hours. **Emergency calls are for total power failure.**

Please take care to ensure that any electrical appliance you use is suitable for connection to a 240 volt 50 cycle AC supply. Ensure it is safe and in good working order and that a fuse of an appropriate rating is installed in the plug of the appliance. If you have doubts about any appliance you should seek advice from a qualified electrician.

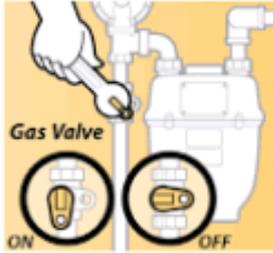
Please ensure your cooker if electric, is installed by a fully qualified electrician.  
**Remember that electricity can kill. Do not attempt to do any work on an electrical circuit or appliance, unless you are suitably qualified.**

## Gas

Your home may be fitted with a gas meter from which you will receive bills in due course. The meter is located outside of your property.

You should sign up with an approved supplier as soon as possible. Your current supply is with the company shown on your New Homes Essential Information Sheet. You can choose

which company you wish to supply gas and we advise you to shop around to get good value.



Your gas shut off valves location is shown on your New Homes Essential Information Sheet

**If you suspect you have a gas leak you must:**

- Turn off the gas at the meter
- Extinguish all sources of ignition
- Do not smoke
- Do not operate any electrical light or power switches
- Do not use any phones inside the property
- Open doors and windows to ventilate the property
- If the smell persists, vacate the property.

**Smell Gas?**

Call 0800 111 999 to report a gas or carbon monoxide emergency or if a pipeline is struck – 24/7

Call 0330 1234 034

**Our Customer service advisor will instigate a three-way call with the emergency service provider to ensure all information required such as address, post code and contact details are provided. The Emergency service provider will provide you with a reference number, details of who will attend and the time you can expect them to arrive.**

**The process above also applies if your CO2 detector is triggered.**

If you have a gas cooker please ensure this is fitted by a 'Gas Safe' engineer, to ensure your safety.

Smoke and heat detectors are hard wired into the mains electricity. It is not necessary for you to change any batteries however they should be tested regularly. Bromford services this equipment annually

# The Building

## Masonry (blockwork) walls

These are the strongest walls in your home and can support shelving, pictures or mirrors being hung from them, however you must ensure you use the correct fixings for the weight of the item you wish to hang.

A cable, pipe and stud detector is an essential tool to help you locate timber studs and identify the locations of electricity cables and water pipes behind the wall surface.

## Timber frame walls

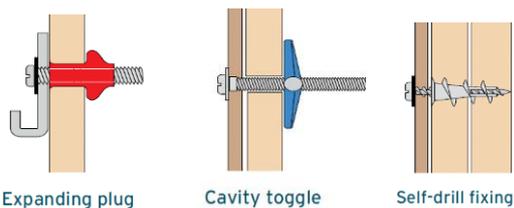
Timber frame walls can also support items, so long as the fixings are attached to the timbers within the wall and not just the plasterboard. Vertical timber studs are typically found at 600mm spacing across the width of the wall, but you should use a detector to determine their exact position.

## Wall fixing

The type of fixing you should use to attach items to walls depends on the construction of the wall and the weight of the item.

Pictures and other light items can be hung on all types of walls using steel pictures hooks or masonry nails.

Below is an illustration of different fixing types.



(NHBC, 2015)

## Doors and Windows

Security doors are fitted to your home, please ensure you keep your keys safe as you are given all the keys to the property. We do not carry spares.

Their features include;

Locks to keep your home secure



Trickle vents to allow air flow & ventilate your home to avoid condensation



Easy clean hinges which allow cleaning both inside and out without requiring ladder.

Sometimes the window may be stiff to open, It is helpful to periodically clean the hinges and if they do start to get stiff to use, a lubricating oil will help ease



Restrictors on windows above ground level are to prevent falls and are on any window that opens onto a path to prevent anyone walking into them

### Insulation

Your new home is very well insulated and air tight. This will help you keep your home warm and reduce your running costs.



### Ventilation

Your home is fitted with extractor fans normally within the kitchen and bathroom. In most new properties the fans are designed to work at all times, with very little running costs. When you use the boost function or turn on the light in the bathroom they will increase their performance to account for cooking or showering. If you do not keep your home ventilated and use the fans as directed, you may end up with condensation problems. Please read the instruction manual.



### Preventing condensation

Condensation is formed when steam or water vapour in a room touches a cold surface – it then turns to water.

Condensation can be caused by:

- Lots of water vapour in your home including the vapour we all breath out
- Lots of cold surfaces where the vapour can condense
- Heating being too low
- Ventilation Systems being switched off



Condensation can damage clothes, bedding, floor coverings, decorations and the fabric of the building if mould growth takes hold on walls and ceilings. Homes that are heated and ventilated appropriately will have less

problems.

To reduce problems of condensation you can take the following steps:

- **Produce less moisture:**
  - Cooking: when you cook, cover the pans with lids and do not leave kettles boiling. If you have a cooker hood, use it
  - Washing clothes: dry washing outside or on a clothes horse but not on radiators.
- **Ventilate to remove moisture:**
  - Leave the mechanical ventilation system turned on all the time – if your home has been fitted with one
  - Ventilate more in the bathroom and kitchen especially when bathing or cooking and close the doors to stop the spread of vapour inside the building

# Outside Space



## Parking

You will be informed of your parking space/s upon sign up. Please ensure you only use your allocated spaces and do not block or impede your neighbours' access. Visitor's spaces are for visitors not residents use, please do not use these spaces.



## Fencing and Sheds

If a shed has been provided this has been gifted to you. It is your responsibility to maintain and will not be repaired or replaced by Bromford. You are advised to treat any wooden sheds with a suitable wood preserver annually.

## Landscaping

Any planting to the front of your property, is normally included as part of the planning permission. If this planting is within the boundary of your property, you will be required to ensure it is maintained. Should any planting perish due to lack of maintenance, you will be required to replace it. Lawns at the rear of properties are newly installed and require regular watering, until established. We will not replace lawns that have not been maintained.

## Lawn Care

New Turf must be watered regularly – we recommend:

Watering must be repeated until the turf has established into a lush green lawn. If the turf has not been watered properly gaps can appear in the turf joints and there can be yellowing  
April – October - Water every day (preferably in the early morning or evening)

October – March – Water as and when required or browning of the grass.

Refrain from walking on the turf -

April – October - wait approximately 2 weeks

October – March – wait for at least one month (longer in periods of heavy rainfall)

## **Lawn Maintenance**

Looking after your new lawn is very important.

- The first few cuts should be at the highest setting on your lawnmower.
- Reduce the cutting height of your blades gradually
- Do not let the grass get too long
- Do not cut the grass too short (scalping)
- Aim to keep the grass at approximately 25mm

## **Standing Water/Waterlogging**

Please note that the subsoil underlying your lawn may vary in its drainage properties. Following heavy rainfall or snow, standing water may be a problem. For Example, in gardens with clay subsoil, Bromford may advise you that a monitoring period is necessary before any remedial works will be considered.

## **Insects, bugs & wildlife in your garden**

We recognise that the presence of some insects, bugs, larvae & wildlife can be an unfortunate natural occurrence. Bromford are under no obligation contractually or in law to resolve this issue. Our repairing obligations do not extend to the garden and this is not deemed as an infestation or an environmental issue which we would be liable for.

## **Balconies**

The fire risk on balconies can also be increased due to the use of balconies as storage. A significant number of balcony fires start from the unsafe disposal of smoking materials and the misuse of barbeques.

Bromford does not therefore permit customers to either store or use barbecues on balconies. Customers found to be using their balconies to either store or cook with barbecues will be asked to remove them immediately.

# DIY & Safety Advice in your home



Once the defect period is over, you may be eager to carry out some DIY. You can find lots of information on how to carry out various DIY tasks on 'YouTube' or our website at [Bromford.co.uk](http://Bromford.co.uk), search for 'How to' 01869 390009

Type into the search function 'how to' followed by what you want to do and various instruction video's will appear, that will help you achieve your goal.

You can also access the various manufacturers of the components in your new home on line, for advice and helpful instruction videos.

**Remember you are not permitted to carry out any structural works to the property without Bromford's written permission.**

## Wall Fixings

The type of fixing you should use to attach items to walls depends on the construction of the wall and weight of the item. Pictures and other light items can be hung on most types of walls using steel picture hooks or masonry nails.

### Masonry (blockwork) walls - External walls only

Heavier items can be fixed using wall plugs and screws. You should ensure that the wall plug and screw penetrate through the plaster, well into the block.

### Timber stud internal walls

For heavy items, such as wall cabinets or bookshelves, you should find the position of the timber behind the plasterboard and screw into that.

The vertical timber studs are normally located at 600mm (2ft) centres and can be located using a detector.

If there is no stud where you particularly want a fixing, and the fixing is to carry a relatively light load, then you can fix to the plasterboard using a suitable plasterboard-fixing device.

## Floors

You can fix into concrete or screed floors using wall plugs and screws.

The upper floors used are designed to reduce the passage of sound and may be designed so that the top layer 'floats'. It is essential that any fixings do not prevent this by connecting the floating layer to the structural floor.

Before fixing to floors or ceilings, always check for buried pipes and cables using a detector.

## Decorating

The builder has painted the walls with emulsion paint. Further coats of emulsion and oil-based paints or wallpaper can be used for later redecoration, once the walls have dried out (this normally takes nine to twelve months). When you redecorate, use decorator's filler to make good any minor gaps and plaster cracks, which have arisen from normal drying out and shrinkage. If, later on, you want to remove wallpaper from a wall with a plasterboard finish, avoid scraping too vigorously; otherwise the surface may be damaged.

## Sustainable DIY

Every year in the UK more than £14bn is spent on timber, paints, varnishes and other materials for home DIY projects.

Some DIY projects will increase your energy usage significantly, raising your fuel bills and increasing your contribution to climate change.

Manufacturing tools consume energy and resources however many are hardly used. The average drill is used for less than 15 minutes in its entire lifetime. Consider borrowing or hiring power tools instead of buying.

The materials and finishes you choose for your DIY jobs can have an impact on the environment, so

- Choose friendly paints, finishes and preservatives. Most paints contain volatile organic compounds (VOC's), which can be harmful to humans, wildlife, plants and even building materials. When you are choosing a paint, finish or preservative, try to find one with the lowest impact possible for the job you are doing.
- Buy energy efficient appliances. Think about the running costs as well as the purchase price – a small monthly saving from a more efficient appliance could add up to a substantial saving over the lifetime of your appliance. When the time comes to choose, look for the smallest product for your needs to cut energy consumption and protect the environment – two different sized fridges can have the same efficiency

rating (for example a EU energy label 'A'), but the smaller one will use less energy and cost less to run.

### Safety Advice

By definition an accident is an unintentional occurrence which can be prevented. The first action to prevent an accident is to think and plan the operation or activity. Simple rules will help us in the home.

- Only use equipment designed for the purpose, e.g. don't use knives to turn screws or chairs and tables to stand on.
- Keep doorways, stairs, landings and passages clear of items to prevent tripping.
- Use suitable gates or barriers to prevent young children entering hazardous areas.
- Do not over reach or stretch.
- Store sharp objects e.g. knives, scissors etc. safely in drawers or blocks to prevent accidental contact with blades. Take particular care when unloading the dishwasher.
- Keep household chemicals e.g. bleach, cleaning fluids and polish stored out of reach of young children.

### Major Tasks

Extra care should be taken with the following activities:

- **Nails & Screws** – Before attempting to hang pictures or carry out any fixing to the walls check there are no cables or pipes buried in the wall, **observe electric, telephone, TV sockets and switch cables run from ceiling to floor**. Also ensure the fixing and wall material is suitable for the item and can hold the weight. If in doubt employ a suitable tradesman.
- **Work at Height** - Guttering repairs (high & low), flues and vents, cleaning windows. Falls from height (even less than 2m) cause serious debilitating injuries. The use of ladders and step ladders has limited use when being used to stand on when carrying out works involving tools and equipment. The limitations are due to the requirement for a person to have at least one hand holding the ladder which prevents many tasks being carried out effectively Prevent working on ladders and platforms by using long reach tools and clean windows from inside etc. If using ladders they must be secured or stabilised to prevent movement while in use. Wherever possible an effective guard rail should be fitted to any working platform.
- **Roof /Loft Space** – The area is not designed (unless otherwise specified) as a storage area. The hatch is provided for inspection of services and insulation materials. There

is no flooring within the roof space i.e. it is not safe to access the roof space. If works need to be carried out in the loft space this must be done by a competent contractor with the right health & safety equipment

- **Structural Alterations** – Your home has been constructed using materials and a design to ensure it is a stable structure to withstand pre-determined environmental conditions and stresses. Altering the layout may cause weakening of the structure.

### **Buried Services**

The Electricity, Gas, Telephone/TV and Water services normally enter the property from buried ducts at the front of the property. Dig your garden with care, a layer of topsoil is provided for planting, you should not dig below this level. Special care should be taken to prevent contact with services that are buried in the grounds of the property.

Drainage for the property is often routed across gardens and frontages; the system also includes inspection chambers that may be located on paths or in the soft ground. These chambers have an important role in the maintenance of a free running drainage system; they must not be covered or overgrown. If covers are found to be loose or ill-fitting they should be reported and suitable repairs arranged.

**You should not attempt any of the above operations unless you are confident and competent to carry them out safely.**

**Always request professional advice**

# Fire Safety

Please familiarise yourself and your family with your escape plan which you will have been advised of upon sign up of your property. Please check with your Neighbourhood Coach as to which escape method has been assessed for your home if you are unsure.

More information can be found on our website

<https://www.bromford.co.uk/customer-area/repairs-and-alterations/keeping-your-home-safe/> and <https://firekills.campaign.gov.uk/> and <http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/>

Most fires that happen in the home start accidentally. By following a few basic steps you can stop these fires from happening – you are responsible for fire safety in your home.

## Smoke Detectors & Alarms

There are two types of smoke alarms:

### Ionisation Alarms

These detect all types of smoke that contain small particles but they respond most rapidly to smoke caused by fires such as a chip pan fire.

The detector identifies any invisible smoke particles that are floating in the air. When particles in the smoke are detected, the alarm is set off.

### Optical Alarms

These detect all types of smoke but are ideal for smoke with larger particles such as burning furniture. In this alarm regular pulses of ultra violet light are sent to a detector. If the light is prevented from reaching the detector the alarm will sound.

Ionisation alarms are typically used for areas such as halls and bedrooms and optical alarms in the kitchen or sitting room.

Building regulations require that at least one smoke alarm, wired directly to the mains, be installed in every new property.

Your smoke alarm complies with BS5446.

Familiarise yourself with your smoke detector / alarm.

- Test your smoke alarm each week by using the test button.

- Change the battery every year or when the low battery warning sounds (an intermittent bleep)
- At the same time, use your vacuum cleaner to get rid of any dust inside the alarm.

## The Kitchen

More than half of all accidental fires in the home start in the kitchen. Nearly all of these involve the cooker. Here are a few simple rules to help you stay safe:

- Never hang tea towels on the cooker.
- Never leave the cooker alone when it is switched on.
- Make sure the cooker is turned off when you have finished using it.
- Don't let leads from other appliances such as kettles or toasters trail across the cooker.
- Don't let fat and grease build up on the cooker, especially in the grill pan where it can easily catch fire.
- Never allow children in the kitchen unsupervised.

## Cooking

- If your chip pan catches fire - don't panic. DON'T MOVE THE PAN
- Turn off the heat if it's safe to do so, but never lean over the pan to reach the controls.
- NEVER throw water or use a fire extinguisher on the fire.
- If you can, drape a damp cloth or towel over the pan to smother the flames.
- Leave the pan to cool down for at least half an hour.
- If you can't control the fire yourself, close the door to the room, get out and tell everybody else to get out.
- CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE. Don't go back inside whatever the reason.

## Electrics

**Electrical equipment is a common cause of fires; here are some simple rules to adopt in your home to reduce the risk of fires occurring.**

- At night, turn off and unplug all electrical appliances except those that are meant to be permanently switched on (like entertainment systems and fridges).

- Always make sure the electrical appliance has the correct fuse. Use a 3amp fuse for equipment up to 720 watts, a 13amp fuse for equipment over 720 watts.
- Avoid multi-way adaptors, overloading an electric socket by using several adaptors can cause overheating and fire. One plug, one socket is best.
- Don't run extension leads or cables under carpets. You won't be able to see any damage to them.
- Ensure appliances are in good condition and in no circumstance should you attempt to conduct repairs or modifications on electrical fixtures in your home.
- All repairs are carried out by an approved tradesman.

## Balconies

The fire risk on balconies can also be increased due to the use of balconies as storage. A significant number of balcony fires start from the unsafe disposal of smoking materials and the misuse of barbecues. Barbecues should only ever be used outdoors and should never be stored on balconies or in communal areas of blocks of flats or schemes.

Barbecues on balconies are a very serious fire risk. This is because embers from the coals and food can travel quite a distance and ignite curtains, dry grass verges, trees and nearby structures such as rubbish stores or sheds.

It is impossible to barbecue on a balcony safely and customers attempting to do so are putting themselves and everyone in their building at risk. Bromford does not therefore permit customers to either store or use barbecues on balconies. Customers found to be using their balconies to either store or cook with barbecues will be asked to remove them immediately.

If you spot a customer either storing or using their barbecue on a balcony, please notify the neighbourhood coach for the area.

# Maintenance

**Any work on the gas installation to your home should only be undertaken by a Gas Safe registered installer.**

## Connecting Appliances

Be careful if you are connecting kitchen appliances to the water supply and drainage. Check that all hoses are properly connected and tightened before turning on the water. It is a good idea to re-check the connections once the appliances have been in use for a day or two – dripping connections can cause serious damage.

## Venting Radiators (Bleeding)

If you notice that a radiator is cool at the top this may indicate that there is air in the system. This is common, particularly in systems that have been newly commissioned.

To release air, first turn off the heating and allow the system to cool. Attach the radiator key and turn it anti-clockwise to 'bleed' the valve. Open the valve with care – it can come out completely – open it just enough to hear the hiss of the air escaping. Hold a cloth under the bleed valve to catch the water when the last of the air is released. When water comes out, close the bleed valve. Please check the water pressure is correct on your boiler following the bleeding of the radiators. Radiator keys are available from DIY or hardware stores.

## Over-flow and warning pipes

If you notice water dripping or flowing from an overflow or warning pipe, you should contact Bromford without delay. (Refer to Repairs to Your Home) It may indicate that the float-operated valve on a storage cistern or w/c cistern, or that an unvented hot water storage system needs attention.

# Water Use

## Save energy and money

- 60°C/140°F is usually adequate for bathing and washing.
- Use a shower if you have one and you'll save time, money and water.

- Use the plug in your basin or sink – leaving hot taps running can be expensive.
- If you have a dripping tap ensure it is repaired quickly. In just one day you could waste enough water to fill a bath.
- Your property has been provided with a dual flush cistern and flow restrictors fitted to wash hand basin taps as water saving features.
- Turn off the tap when you are brushing your teeth.
- Make sure you have a full load before putting the washing machine on and use the lowest temperature cycle applicable for your load.

## Extreme Weather Events

### Flooding

During periods of heavy rain it is important to ensure that any drains, channels or gully's are kept clear of obstacles such as bins, garden planters or other obstructions such as leaves or a build-up of litter.

### Snow, Frost and Ice

During period of extreme cold ensure that any external taps are isolated and drained down, that any water discharge from overflows is reported to avoid ice build-up and that you have a stock of salt/grit to treat pathways and paved surfaces.

### Solar Gain

As new homes are built with high levels of thermal insulation it is important that during periods of prolonged sunshine windows, especially those on upper floors are left open whenever possible whilst the property is occupied or left with trickle vents open or catches on night vent position when unoccupied to allow air circulation and reduce overheating.

