

United Welsh wants to provide good homes for all its tenants and licensees. The following information will help you to help us get repairs done efficiently.

3.1 Our responsibilities

We are responsible for keeping the structure of your home in good repair. This includes:

- ▶ The roof, outside walls, doors and windows and outside painting
- ▶ Gutters, rainwater pipes and drains
- ▶ Basins, sinks, baths, toilets and waste pipes
- ▶ Electric wiring and fittings, gas and water services, pipes and taps
- ▶ Heating and hot water systems, radiators, fireplaces, fires and storage heaters
- ▶ Lifts, stairlifts and hoists
- ▶ Shared entrances and door entry systems
- ▶ Internal walls, ceilings, joinery, doors, handles, window catches
- ▶ But not any internal redecoration unless your tenancy agreement includes this. We will make good decorations that we damage during repairs.

3.2 Your responsibilities

- › Decorating the inside of the building
- › Keeping the garden tidy including control of bushes, plants and trees.
- › Heating and ventilating the house or flat to prevent condensation
- › Taking care that there isn't any damage by fire, frost, burst pipes or blocked drains.
- › Clearing blocked sinks and waste pipes
- › The cost of replacing keys or door locks if you lose your keys
- › Replacing plugs and chains on sinks, basins and baths
- › Keeping smoke detectors clean by removing dust and protecting them when decorating
- › Testing the smoke detectors once a week and telling us if they don't work
- › Not making any changes to the house or flat, including putting up a satellite dish, without our written consent
- › Letting our contractors in to do repairs or carry out safety checks

United Welsh will ask you to pay for repairs if you or your visitors damage or neglect the house or flat.

3.3 How to report repairs

You should report any repairs to us as soon as possible. You can report a repair by:

- ▶ Writing to us at: Ty Cennydd, Castle Street, Caerphilly, CF83 1NZ or Walters Buildings, Clarence Road, Cardiff CF10 5UU
- ▶ Visiting our office. The offices are open 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday.
- ▶ By telephone: 029 2085 8100 or our Freephone number 0800 29 40195, between 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. Monday to Friday
- ▶ By reporting your repair to the Association's Maintenance Officer when he or she visits your home.

Once your repair is reported:

We will order the work from our contractors. Sometimes our Maintenance Officer will need to inspect it first. Unless it is an emergency or very urgent we will write giving the name and telephone number of the Contractor who is going to do the repair. The letter will also tell you what the job is, how long it will take to do and the job number.

We also ask you to complete a satisfaction slip once the work is completed – this is important as it assists us in ensuring we are giving you the service you want

We aim to complete 95% repairs within these times:

Priority of Repair	Target response time
Emergency	Respond within 3 hours and complete within 24 hours
Very urgent	Within 3 calendar days
Urgent	Within 7 calendar days
Routine 1	Within 14 calendar days
Routine 2	Within 21 calendar days
Routine 3	Within 28 calendar days

If the repair is not done by the date it is due, please contact us. We will send the original contractor or a different one to do the work as soon as possible.

3.4 Emergency repairs

You can report emergency repairs when the office is closed by telephoning 01495 769624

An emergency repair is anything that may be dangerous to your health, safety or welfare or which may lead to further damage to the property.

Emergency repairs include:

- › Serious damage caused by storm, accident or flood
- › The property is insecure
- › Serious electrical faults and no lighting/power
- › No hot water
- › No heating during winter (1 October- 30 April)
- › Burst pipes and uncontrollable plumbing leaks
- › Blocked or leaking drains
- › Toilet not working, where there is only one toilet in the house or flat
- › No water from bath taps or shower not working, if you have a medical condition which makes this essential

3.5 Standards and complaints

We aim to inspect one out of every ten completed repairs and will tell the contractor to complete any unfinished jobs or put right any work that has not been done properly. You can help us by sending back to us the Repairs Report slip attached to your copy of the repair order. You don't need to use a stamp for this. Also, if you think a job hasn't been done properly, you can ask us to inspect it.

We have made an agreement between United Welsh, our tenants and the contractors we work with about the standards we will keep to when we do repairs. This agreement, called the Maintenance Service Standards Compact, is included in this folder.

3.6 Compensation

If we have failed to provide a service and this has cost you money or been inconvenient, you may be entitled to compensation. We won't compensate you if it is someone else who has failed to provide the service, for example a gas or electricity company. If you want to know more please speak to one of our Customer Service Advisors on 029 2085 8100 or our Freephone number 0800 2940195.

3.7 If you want to make any alterations

You must get our agreement in writing before making any changes to your home. At the end of the tenancy, tenants may be entitled to compensation for improvements. Licensees are not permitted to make alterations to the property because of the shorter period they live in the house/flat.

3.8 Grants for adaptations or equipment

Your local council may be able to help pay for special adaptations or equipment to your home if you need them. You will need to ask for a visit from an Occupational Therapist. For further information you should ring the Social Services Department of your local authority. Or United Welsh may be able to claim a grant from the Welsh Assembly Government. United Welsh's Maintenance Officer can advise you on this.

3.9 Planned and cyclical maintenance

We will do some of the maintenance to your home according to a plan, not just when you tell us that something needs repair. Some work needs doing every so often, like painting outside.

We survey all our properties every 5 years, to make sure that work that needs to be done is included in our plan in the right order.

Planned work includes:

- ▶ Painting the outside of the house
- ▶ Replacing kitchen units and bathroom suites
- ▶ Servicing gas fires and central heating once a year.

United Welsh and the contractor will contact you and your support provider before carrying out planned or cyclical maintenance. Wherever we can we will give tenants a choice of colour schemes, etc.

3.10 The contractor's code of conduct

We want our contractors to do repairs with as little disruption as possible to your home. Our contractors should:

1. Be polite and courteous and tell you who they are and show you proof of identity
2. Tell your support provider that they are coming to your home
3. Be dressed appropriately, wearing any uniform provided.
4. Not make judgements about any tenant or their lifestyle
5. Explain the job they are going to do, how long it will take and any disruption there may be.
6. Finish the job on the following day/s or at your convenience if it cannot be finished on the same day.
7. Not play radios, smoke or use unacceptable language or actions
8. Keep your home, visitors and other workmen safe, including storing materials and tools safely
9. Protect the house and your belongings from dust, paint and damage
10. Keep the property secure
11. Restore services such as gas, water, hot water, electricity and heating (or provide temporary heating) at the end of each working day.
12. Clear rubbish from inside and outside the home every day and remove it at the end of the job.
13. Comply with all health and safety and welfare legislation and codes of guidance
14. Not use a tenant's telephone unless you agree
15. Not enter a house where it appears that a child may be alone.
16. Keep all information confidential

3.11 Electricity, gas and water

The main switch for your electricity is near the electric meter and fuse box or circuit breaker box. If the electricity goes off, check your fuse box or circuit breaker box. It is a good idea to keep a torch handy in case your electricity goes off. Replacing blown fuses is your responsibility.

If your home is quite new or has been rewired in the last few years it may have circuit breakers instead of fuses. Circuit breakers are switches, which automatically switch off when a fuse would have blown.

a) To change a fuse:

- › Switch off the main electricity supply
- › Unplug the appliance you think has caused the fuse to blow
- › Check the fuses in the fuse box to see which one has blown
- › Replace the blown fuse with a new fuse of the same amp rating
- › Switch on the main supply
- › If the replacement fuse blows again before the appliance is switched on again, contact United Welsh as there may be a fault on the electrical system

b) Circuit breaker

- › Re-set the switch to 'on' after disconnecting the appliance which you think caused the problem
- › If the circuit breaker keeps switching off, contact United Welsh

If your electricity does not come back on, check if your neighbour's electricity is also off. If it is, ring 0800 052 0400

Gas

To work safely and well, gas fires, water heaters and boilers need fresh air. Your house may have ventilators fitted in walls, windows, and doors and sometimes floors. Never block ventilation openings as this can lead to a dangerous build up of poisonous fumes, which can kill people.

Servicing and inspecting your gas fire and boiler

We have legal obligations to inspect and service water heaters, boilers and gas fires once a year. If they are not serviced they may become dangerous. Telephone 029 2085 8100 to make an appointment if your appliances have not been serviced in the past 12 months.

If there has been a cut in the gas supply, remember to relight the pilot lights on all appliances as soon as the gas supply is back on.

Gas leaks

- › Telephone TRANSCO immediately on 0800 111999
- › Turn off gas supply at meter
- › Open front and back doors and windows
- › DO NOT switch any electric lights or sockets on or off
- › DO NOT disconnect plugs or appliances
- › DO NOT use matches or lighters

Water

Make sure that you know where the stopcock is for turning off the mains water supply to your home and that it can be turned off easily. It may be under the kitchen sink or in the bathroom, the hall or under the stairs. If it won't work, please tell us straight away.

Overflows

Overflow pipes prevent flooding from cold-water tanks and toilet cisterns. If an overflow pipe is running you should contact United Welsh on 029 2085 8100 or our Freephone number 0800 2940195.

Frozen pipes

United Welsh should have insulated all exposed pipes in outhouses and lofts to stop them freezing. If any of your pipes are not insulated please let us know. If your pipes become frozen and you can't see any damage, you should open all the taps and try to thaw out the pipes with an electric fan heater or hair dryer. Cloths soaked in hot water can also be applied to the pipes. If water is leaking from burst pipes, you should:

- switch off gas fired water heaters
- turn off the mains water supply at the stopcock
- drain the water system by turning all the taps on
- switch off the electricity at the mains
- contact United Welsh as soon as possible

Protecting your home from frost

If dripping taps are not repaired, the waste pipe and overflow pipes may freeze and cause flooding. Contact us to have dripping taps repaired. Keep the house temperature above freezing by using the central heating. If you are going to be away from home for more than a few days during the winter, leave your heating on to keep the home warm. Generally it is quite safe to leave the central heating on and the thermostat set to normal while you are away. As a general guide, if your heating system works without attention while you are at work or away from home, it should also work while you are away for a few days and the system need not be drained down nor switched off.

3.12 Condensation and mould growth

If your house seems damp or you find patches of mould on the walls, your furniture or clothes, this may be caused by condensation.

You can get rid of small patches of mould by washing the surfaces with a diluted bleach solution or an anti-mould product available from DIY stores. You can buy special paint, which may help to prevent

mould growing back. However the only permanent cure is to reduce the amount of moisture in the air in your home.

Condensation is caused when warm moist air meets a cold surface such as windows or external walls. You can reduce the risk of condensation by keeping your home ventilated and heated.

How can you reduce condensation?

1. Heating and insulation:

- ▶ Try to leave some heating on through the day. This may be cheaper than trying to heat the home up quickly at the end of the day

2. Ventilation:

- ▶ Open a window near to the cooker or washing machine when you use them
- ▶ Open a window while bathing/ showering/ washing up.
- ▶ Never block up air vents in walls, door, floors etc
- ▶ Make sure that extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms are switched on and working and that trickle vents in UPVC windows are open
- ▶ Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed, particularly when cooking or bathing. This will stop moisture spreading through the house.

3. Cupboards and wardrobes

- ▶ These should not be overfilled. Air must be able to circulate freely around your clothes. If possible, ventilators should be fitted within the cupboards.

4. Paraffin and gas heaters

- ▶ Paraffin and bottled gas heaters must not be used because they produce a huge amount of moisture and can be the cause of extreme condensation.

5. Drying laundry

- ▶ Laundry should not be dried on radiators
- ▶ Tumble driers must be vented to the outside

3.13 Safety and Security

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms operate from mains electricity. You should test the alarm once a week according to the instructions. If it doesn't work, please tell us straight away.

If fire breaks out:

- › Close the door of the room where the fire is. This will delay the spread of the fire and keep the smoke in
- › Make sure everybody leaves the house
- › Call the fire brigade and give your exact address
- › DO NOT return to the house unless you can safely put out the fire

Home security

- › United Welsh does not keep spare keys, if we have to force or change a lock we will charge you for this
- › At night and whenever you go out close windows and lock doors
- › Don't leave keys under a mat or on a string inside the letter box
- › Don't leave notes saying that you are out
- › Don't allow callers into your home unless they can prove their identity. If you are suspicious, call the police
- › Keep communal entrance doors closed; never leave them 'on the latch'

Contents Insurance

Home contents insurance is something everybody thinks they will not need. If you are not insured and there is a fire, flood or burglary at your home, you will not be covered for anything you lose. Can you afford the risk of losing all your belongings?

United Welsh tenants sometimes have no insurance and contact us only to find that we cannot help. Please do not let this happen to you. Contact us and ask about our home contents insurance scheme with Sun Alliance. We can give you an information leaflet.