

# Major works information

## What you need to know

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## Introduction

Planned investment works (also known as major works) are where we carry out renewals and refurbishments within or outside of your home, such as kitchens, bathrooms, doors, windows, boilers, roofs, fencing, and thermal insulation. This is usually done when an item has reached its natural lifespan and it's no longer easy or economical to repair or maintain, or it may be simply outdated and in need of modernisation.

Occasionally we may also carry out regeneration works to improve the surrounding environment, which might include new footpaths, walls, planting and/or improved external lighting.

We work on about 15,000 homes each year, and our average customer satisfaction is around 90%.

Clarion Housing and our contractors always aim to put our customers first. We fully understand the importance of making sure work is undertaken safely and with as little disruption as possible. Our aim is to ensure work is carried out to a good standard and on time, and that you're satisfied with the work we've done.

This booklet has been produced jointly between Clarion Housing, our contractors and resident representatives to demonstrate our commitment to you, to explain what you can expect, and to answer some frequently asked questions.

Our contractor will explain more about the specific work they'll be carrying out in, or around your home. They'll also provide you with contact and emergency details nearer the time they plan to start the work.

## Resident liaison officer

Your resident liaison officer (RLO) will be your main point of contact before work starts, and whilst it's being carried out.

Your RLO will:

- provide all information relevant to the work
- organise appointments for work to be carried out, including notifying you of any changes to timescales or delays to work
- help with any special needs you may have.

They'll contact you regularly to:

- make sure everything's running smoothly
- tell you about any changes
- respond to any questions, concerns or complaints you may have.

Our contractor will provide you with contact details for your RLO and key members of the site team before the work starts.

## Contacting Clarion Housing

If you have any queries about the work, your first point of contact should always be your RLO. You'll be given specific information about the work and who to contact nearer the time the contractor proposes to start work. But if you'd like to speak to someone from Clarion Housing about the work, you can contact us by:

Email: [customerservices@myclarionhousing.com](mailto:customerservices@myclarionhousing.com)

Post: Clarion Housing  
Reed House  
Peachman Way  
Broadland Business Park  
Norwich  
NR7 0WF

## Emergencies

We'll make sure that we leave your home safe at the end of the day. But, if you do have a problem with any of the work we're carrying out, please use our emergency call-out procedure:

**During normal working hours:** Emergencies should be reported to your RLO – please refer to the information our contractor will provide to you before the work starts.

**Outside normal working hours:** Before the work starts your RLO will also provide you with contact details for emergencies **relating to the work we're carrying out**, which are outside of our normal working hours **which can't wait until the next working day**.

**Out of hours emergencies which don't directly relate to the work our contractor is doing** — please contact us on **0300 500 8000**.

In the event of a suspected **gas leak** contact your gas service provider **immediately** on their emergency **FREEPHONE** number **0800 111 999**.

## Identification

**Important:** Please never let anyone into your home without first checking their identity.

Our contractors always wear uniforms and/or high visibility vests with their company logo on. They also carry official identification cards, which includes their photograph and company logo.



If you'd like to use a password system, please speak to your RLO.

If you have any concerns or if you'd like to check someone's identity further, please contact your RLO, or call our customer services team on 0300 500 8000. Our contractors won't mind waiting whilst you do this.

## Access to your home

**If our contractors have any problems with getting into your home, this could result in delays in completing the work.**

They'll usually need to get into your home between 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, whilst they carry out the work, so they'll need to discuss access arrangements with you.

If you can't be at home to let them in, and you can't arrange for someone else to be there on your behalf, some of our contractors offer a key holding service. Please ask your RLO about this.

Sometimes, due to unexpected circumstances, our contractor may need to arrange last minute access, cancel or rearrange appointments. Your RLO will contact you as soon as possible to let you know.

Please let your RLO know if you work shifts – they'll try to organise the work so there's minimal disruption to you. But we'd appreciate your patience and understanding if they need access to your home or need to carry out some noisy or disruptive work during the normal working day.

Please don't leave children under the age of 16 in your home without adult supervision. Our staff and contractors won't be able to work in your home if children are left unaccompanied.

If you are a disabled or vulnerable resident, or have any special requirements (eg mobility or health conditions) which may be affected by the work, please tell your RLO as soon as possible.

## What's included in the proposed work?

**The work will vary greatly from home to home, so you may have different work carried out to your neighbour.**

Our contractor will provide you with individual information sheets about the work we're planning to carry out **specifically to your home.**

Please take time to read the information they provide, as it will help you understand how the work might affect you, and what you can do to help.

## Pre-condition surveys and photos

Our contractor may need to complete a survey to record the condition of areas in your home before work starts. This might include the areas they'll need to pass through to get to where work is taking place. They'll take photos and notes of the condition of items such as furniture, white goods, floor coverings and decorations. This will help with investigations if anything is accidentally damaged whilst work is taking place, so we can clearly see the condition of the area(s) prior to the damage.

Any claims for compensation for damaged items may be weakened or rejected if you fail to keep the damaged items for our contractor to inspect.

In line with our 'retention policy' we'll need to keep photos beyond the completion of the project, in case we need to refer to them after the work is completed.

## Resident choice

You'll be given a choice of design and colour for certain elements such as kitchens, bathrooms, doors, and sometimes communal / external areas. Your RLO will give you more information if this is applicable.

### Work to your own home

You may change your mind about the colour/style of items you've chosen if the work is to your home. But you must let your RLO know about any changes within **seven days** from the date you agreed the design or choice. Any requested changes after this date may not be possible.

### Work to communal or external areas only

If you live in a block of flats, where possible we'll also seek your views on the colour to be used in communal / external areas (eg paint work, communal area walls or flooring). Depending on the work required, choices may not be possible, or may be limited if the building has certain listed status.

We'll offer you a selection to choose from, and will ask each flat to select their preferred colour by completing a choice form and returning it to us. You must return your completed form to us by the date we specify; otherwise we won't be able to consider your choice.

We'll then paint/install the one **chosen by the majority of residents**, (and we'll confirm the colour to you before work commences). If there's no clear majority, we'll use a pre-chosen/'default colour', which we'll tell you about on the choice form.

## Health & safety

We'll make sure that our staff and workers are suitably skilled and competent in the tasks they've been asked to carry out. We'll always follow health and safety procedures, and it's our aim to never put you or our workers at risk.

### Standards of behaviour

We expect our contractors to behave in a courteous and professional manner at all times.

We also expect residents to be polite and cooperative with our contractors at all times. We won't tolerate verbal or physically abusive behaviour, and will pull our contractors out from your home immediately should this happen. We will report unacceptable resident behaviour to your neighbourhood housing team.

### Essential Works

Some work, like electrical testing, is essential for your safety and that of your family, and any visitors. You **must** allow our contractor access to undertake essential work unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing this – in which case you should speak to our contractor as soon as possible, or contact us.

### Footwear

Our workers are required to wear safety footwear at all times.

We realise that some residents don't like outdoor footwear worn in their homes, so we'll ensure protective sheeting is laid on the floors, or workers wear protective overshoes.

### Asbestos

It's not unusual to find asbestos in houses and flats, as it was used extensively in the building industry until 1999.

If you have asbestos in your home, we understand that you may be worried about the possible dangers. The Health & Safety Executive (HSE) says that **as long as asbestos is in good condition and isn't disturbed or damaged, there's no risk to your health, or reason for any concern.**

We'd like to assure you that any work carried out won't put you or any resident at risk. If asbestos needs to be removed, the work will be done in accordance with the current regulations and procedures.

### Children, pets and visitors

Please keep your children, pets and any visitors away from the rooms or areas where we're working.

## Signs and notices

Please take special note of any barriers, warning signs or notices, and please don't remove or obstruct them in anyway. If in doubt, please ask us.

## Smoking

Our contractors will never smoke in your home. To protect them from passive smoke whilst working in your home, we request that you please don't smoke in their presence either. We appreciate your cooperation with this.

## Site welfare facilities and storage

On some of our larger schemes we may need to provide space for our contractors to install welfare facilities and/or storage for their operatives. If applicable, your RLO will provide you with more information about this.

## Installation refusals after items ordered

If you refuse us access, without good reason, to fit a kitchen, windows or a door after it's been ordered, or any other instance where we might incur a cost, **we reserve the right to recharge you for that item and/or any associated cancellation fees.**

## Requests for additional work

Unfortunately we're unable to consider requests for additional work outside of our standard specifications.

## Making your own alterations/ improvements

If you wish to make any alterations or improvements yourself, you must get written permission from your housing officer before you carry out any work. You may also need to obtain planning permission or building regulations approval. You'll be responsible for ensuring the work is fully certified by a qualified tradesperson where you're not qualified to do the work yourself. We reserve the right to recharge you for any work we may need to carry out straight away, or at a later date, if the alterations are unsafe and/or sub-standard. You can contact our customer services team for more information about this.

## Use of residents' own materials

We may consider using your own materials, such as tiles or taps – but this will be at the discretion of Clarion Housing and our contractor. You must discuss this with us before any work starts. You will be responsible for maintaining these elements going forwards.

## Disabled adaptations

If you need an adaptation in relation to the work we're planning, please let your RLO know at the earliest opportunity. You may be advised to request a visit from your local authority's occupational therapist. (Usually your doctor can refer you). The occupational therapist will visit and recommend any specialist adaptations to suit your needs. We may have to postpone our planned work to your home if an adaptation is recommended that triggers a requirement for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). When carrying out upgrade works, if you already have adaptations (such as lever taps) we'll replace like for like unless you tell us otherwise.

## Works agreement

We've had a solicitor to create an impartial works agreement to set out joint responsibilities between you, Clarion Housing and our contractor. Your RLO will provide you with a copy, which we'll ask you to read carefully, and sign before the work starts. If you're concerned with any part of the agreement please discuss it with your RLO. If it's not signed, we may not be able to go ahead with the work.

## Feedback and complaints

### Resident satisfaction survey

When the work has been completed, your contractor will give you a resident satisfaction survey form to fill out. Please take a few minutes to complete it, and return it to us in the envelope provided. Your feedback is very important to both Clarion Housing and our contractors. We'll read and discuss all comments we receive in our aim to continually improve customer satisfaction.

**As a thank you for completing and returning the survey, Clarion Housing will put your address into a 6-monthly prize draw. There are five great prizes to be won: £500, £400, £300, £200 and £100**

## **Complaints**

Even in the best run organisations, things can occasionally go wrong. If any problems do arise during the work, please contact your RLO as soon as possible so they can try to sort the problem out quickly.

The contractor will aim to sort out any complaints within ten working days.

If you don't feel that they've dealt with your complaint satisfactorily, you can then raise the issue using Clarion Housing's complaints procedure. But please ensure all complaints are made to the contractor first.

## **Compliments**

If you think our staff or contractors have done a particularly good job we'd love to hear from you – by phone, email or letter to Clarion Housing or to our contractor, by adding your comments onto the resident satisfaction survey, or via our website, [www.myclarionhousing.com/about-us/contact-us](http://www.myclarionhousing.com/about-us/contact-us). It's a real boost to their morale to know their hard work has been acknowledged.

## **Translation / interpretation services**

If you require a document to be translated, or need to have a conversation in another language, we'd generally expect you to organise your own translator or interpreter, but in some circumstances we may consider organising an interpreter or translation of a key document. If you need more information about this, please contact your RLO.

## **Foreign speaking operatives**

Some of our contractors may use operatives who don't speak English as their first language – some may also have a very limited understanding of English. Most residents find basic two-way communication is possible, but if you have a problem you'll always be able to contact your RLO or site manager/supervisor to answer any questions you may have.

## Data protection

In order to help us carry out the work safely and efficiently, we share resident information with our contractors, such as your full name, address and contact numbers, email address; whether you're a tenant or leaseholder; any communication requirements that you've told us about (eg mobility or language issues), and whether you prefer us to contact you via an alternative mailing address or prefer us to deal only with your officially appointed representative).

We operate under a strict data and information sharing protocol to ensure that your personal data will be held confidentially by our contractors, and will only be used for the purpose of delivering the works we've identified. We will also retain certain information beyond the completion of the project, in line with our 'retention policy'.

We and our contractors will fully comply with the requirements of the current Data Protection Act.

## What standards can you expect from our contractors?

We've introduced a set of site rules that our contractors have signed up to. It's our responsibility to ensure all our workers follow these rules. You can see a full version of them on our website, [www.myclarionhousing.com/contractor-rules](http://www.myclarionhousing.com/contractor-rules).

## Energy guidance

If you're worried about how to keep warm or want to know more about managing your energy bills contact the Clarion Futures Energy Guidance team who offer phone advice – email [guideline@myclarionhousing.com](mailto:guideline@myclarionhousing.com). (In some cases they will also offer in-home support for residents in more vulnerable situations).