

Tower Hamlets Homes



Better Neighbourhoods Programme of Works information booklet

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Introduction to major works

We know your home is important to you. Our aim is to invest in homes residents are proud of, and to do this we sometimes have to carry out major refurbishment works.

We need to keep the structure, exterior and any communal areas of all our buildings and services in good condition. We currently have extensive programmes of repair and refurbishment works for all properties, allowing us to address any issues with your building.

This guide tells you about the type of major works we undertake on blocks to make sure they are warm, modern, secure and weather-tight for current and future generations. It also tells you about on-site arrangements, how the works will affect you and how long they generally tend to take.



What are major works?

Major works comprise of large renewal, repairs and maintenance schedules of work that we carry out to your building. These are planned for in advance. They include work to external brickwork, the roof, communal windows and internal communal decorations, mechanical and electrical services, structural repairs and fire related works arising from Fire Risk Assessments. Our current programme of works is called 'The Better Neighbourhoods Investment Programme of Works' and will cover the period 2018 – 2023. We manage more than 900 blocks and each one is different,

which means the works to each block will be different too. We survey all blocks to see what work is needed and we will advise you once we are on site if there are any significant changes to our original proposals. If we are carrying out work to your block, we will write to you to let you know what we will be doing, as well as giving you the opportunity to comment on the type and design of works. This may include giving residents choices in terms of colours and styles of some items.

We will do our best to minimise disruption caused by major works.

Who to contact



Before the works start:

We will write to you to let you know what is happening – the details of the works we plan to carry out, when we plan to start and how long we expect the work to take. Some works will not impact on your day-to-day activities but we will always let you know what is going on and be available for you to contact us. For works that do impact on your day-to-day activities, we'll let you know when we'll be holding face-to-face meetings with residents in your block.



During the works:

Your first point of call will be the main contractor as they are generally best placed to answer questions about the progress of works and what is happening on-site. They'll be able to answer your questions about the works, how long they will take and anything else you are unsure about. We will let you know the contact details of your contractor.



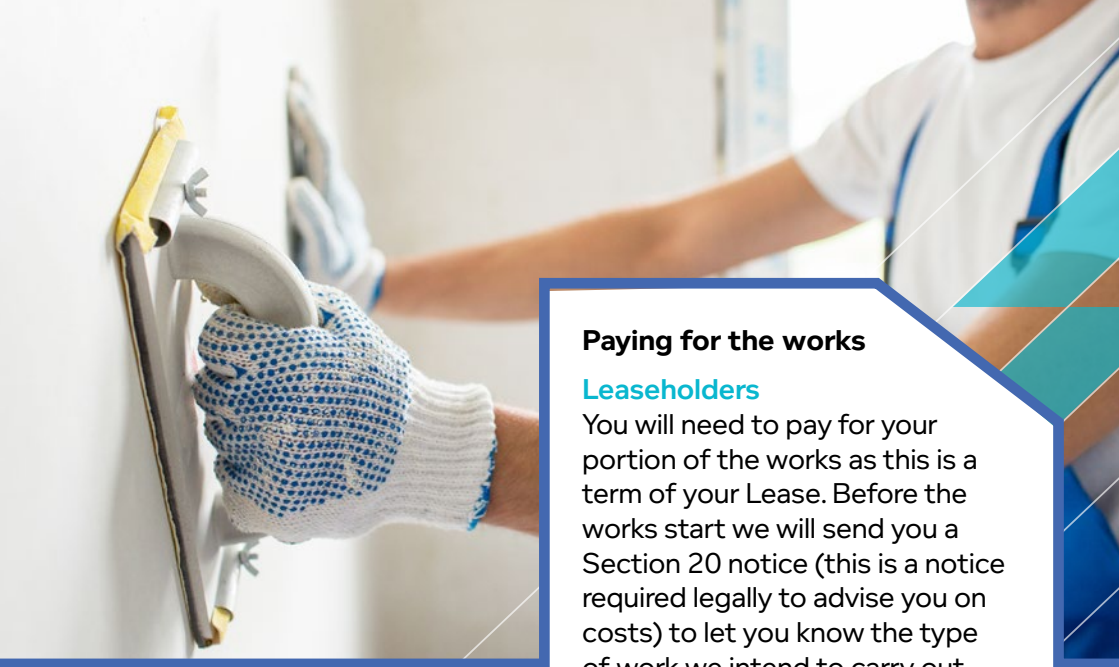
If something goes wrong:

Send us a message via our online platform at **my.thh.org.uk**
Call us on **020 7364 5015**

Minimising inconvenience during works

We know that building works can be an inconvenience and a nuisance. We hope to minimise the disturbance to your lives but we recognise that, on occasions, things may go wrong. We always welcome your comments, good or bad, and use your feedback to improve how we do things in the future.

- 1** If you have a problem, please speak to the contractor straight away. They will answer any queries or explain in more detail anything you may be unsure about.
- 2** If the contractor is unable to resolve your issue or you are unhappy with the outcome, please contact us on 020 7364 5015 as THH has a Resident Liaison Co-ordinator in charge of all of the works we do. If we can't resolve it quickly or you're unhappy with the response you can make a formal complaint. *You can find out more about our formal complaints process on our website.*
- 3** The contractor is responsible for clearing up any mess caused from their works. They will also take preventative measures to stop mess impacting on areas where residents need access. They will also take preventative measures to avoid causing damage to floors, walkways and the building. During major works, we always try to maintain the normal routine of cleaning your block and we may add additional resources to keep up the standards during the works. If we need to make any changes, we will of course let you know. If there are any issues or concerns with mess caused by the contractor, contact them first as they will be best placed to deal with it soonest. Our caretaking team will always try and help if there are any issues.
- 4** Any Health and Safety concerns, however small, should be reported to THH on 020 7364 5015.



Paying for the works

Leaseholders

You will need to pay for your portion of the works as this is a term of your Lease. Before the works start we will send you a Section 20 notice (this is a notice required legally to advise you on costs) to let you know the type of work we intend to carry out and an estimate of how much it will cost. You can find out more on our website.

For questions about payments, including the options to help spread the cost, contact us or visit our website for more information. If you think you might find it difficult to pay your bill, talk to us. We are here to give you the help and support you need to manage your payments. We can talk you through your options and check that you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

Tenants

As a tenant, your portion of the cost of the works is already covered in your rent. You will not have to pay any extra for the works.

Comments or complaints?

Speak to the contractor on site first – they can often resolve your issue. If they can't resolve the issue, contact Tower Hamlets Homes directly.

If you need extra help or support:

Contact us if you have any particular needs as we may be able to offer you extra support while work is happening in your block, for example:

- language and translation support for non-English speaking households
- support if you decide to live with relatives during work
- additional care support.



Safety and security

All Tower Hamlets Homes and contractor staff will carry photo ID and will show you their ID if you ask them to. All contractor staff will also be wearing their company branded hi-visibility jackets, so they are instantly recognisable.



Contractor code of conduct

We insist that our contractors behave and operate in a way that minimises disruption to residents. This is outlined in our contractor code of conduct.

What we'll be doing and why

We'll write to you and let you know what works will be taking place in your block. The following pages tell you more about what may happen to your block.

Fire safety measures



Why

We need to ensure the fire safety measures in your block will keep you safe in the event of an incident. We carry out fire risk assessments in line with guidance. These can sometimes spot work that needs to be done or changes that need to be made to bring buildings in line with current thinking or regulations on fire safety.

What

The works can be wide ranging and will vary depending on the design of your building. They will often include things like

works to communal fire doors to make sure the flats are compartmentalised (to contain the spread of fire) and all materials are resistant to fire.

How long

It depends on the nature of the work, however we will always advise you beforehand.

Access to your home

We may need access to your home for works such as making sure that flats are compartmentalised. If we do need access to your home, we will write to you beforehand.

Concrete and brickwork repairs



Why

This work is to prevent leaks, building cracks or any other issue which may alter the building's structure.

What

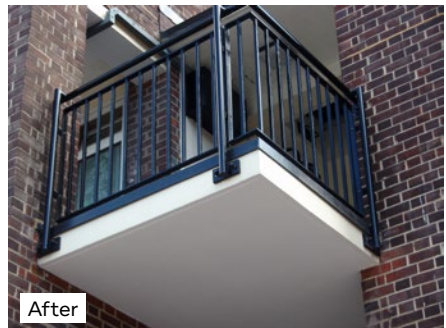
We may need to replace bricks, repoint mortar, repair concrete render, concrete panels and coverings. We might have to cut out bad concrete and replace it with new concrete.

How long

It depends on the size of the block and the number of repairs we have to carry out. We will let you know how long we expect it to take before we start.

Access to your home

We may need to access your home if we are making repairs around boiler flues and exhausts. If this is the case in your block, you will need to turn off your boiler for the duration of the works so our contractors can carry out repairs safely. Your boiler will always be switched back on at the end of the day.



Communal door entry system



Why

Keeping your block secure is our priority. We will review the condition of your doors and if they are in good condition, we won't change them. If they are not in good condition, we will replace them. The new door will be secure and safer for residents, as well as being cheaper to maintain.

What

We look to install a door entry system which provides the best value for money as well as being strong enough to withstand daily use and damage. Where possible we look to include:

- full colour video door control system
- audio and video messaging – so you can see who you missed a call from
- new electronic fob entry keys which cannot be copied
- new 'secured by design doors' – made to resist forced entry and certified by the Police
- system capabilities to help

residents with specific hearing or visual needs.

How long

It normally takes us 16 weeks to manufacture and install a new door entry system.

Access to your home

We will need access to your home to install your handset. This work will take about two to three hours. Our contractor will contact you to arrange a convenient time to do this.

Disruption

We will need to disable your door entry system for about six weeks while we carry out the work. During this time the main block entrance door will be open. Please make sure you keep your home secure during this time. We will also ask Tower Hamlets Homes ASB Team officers and local Police Safer Neighbourhoods Teams to increase patrols of the public areas of the building.

Front entrance door



Why

We replace front entrance doors and door frames to make sure that your block meets fire regulations. Your new door will be “secure by design,” making your home a safer place to live and may help to lower the cost of your home insurance.

What

We offer choices of door types and colours. We will ask all residents in a block to vote for their preferred door. We will install the door type and colour that the majority of residents have chosen to maintain a consistent look across the block. Should your block be in a conservation area, we will need to meet the planning requirements for doors and therefore it may not be possible to offer a wide range of choice.

Who

If you're a tenant we may replace your front entrance door if it needs to be done. Leaseholders are responsible for making sure

their front entrance door and door frame meets fire regulations. THH will check that your door meets the fire regulations so everyone in your block remains safe. Please see our website to find out more about your responsibilities as a leaseholder.

How long

The survey before the works usually takes about two hours. It will take one day to install the new door in your home, followed by an inspection appointment on the following day which will usually take two hours.

Access to your home

We will need access to your home to fit your new front door and frame. Our contractor will contact you to arrange a convenient time to do this.

Disruption

This job is noisy and involves us removing your old door and frame and fitting a new one. We will not leave until your home is secure.

Heating and hot water – communal boilers



Why

We will replace communal boilers with new ones when they become too old, break down or become expensive to repair. Old boilers often cost more to run and are harder to repair with parts becoming difficult to buy.

What

We will replace old communal boilers with more energy efficient boilers. For most communal boilers, we will install condensing boilers which recycle heat - making them cheaper to run and better for the environment.

When we fit a new communal boiler, we may also have to make changes to the boiler house to accommodate the design of the new boiler and pipes.

How long

On average it takes four to eight weeks to fit a new boiler but this will depend on the type and size of the boiler.

Disruption

While we carry out the work we will have to turn your heating and/or hot water off, but this will usually be between 9am and 4pm to minimise disruption. We will write to you to let you know when we will turn off your heating and/or hot water.

Access to your home

We don't normally need to access your home to carry out communal boiler repairs. If we do need to access your home it will be to check the heat is flowing and this will only take a few minutes.

Heating and hot water – individual boilers in flats



Why

We will replace individual boilers in flats with new ones when they become too old, break down or become expensive to repair. Old boilers often cost more to run and are harder to repair with parts becoming difficult to buy.

What

We will replace boilers in flats with more energy efficient boilers. For most boilers this will mean we will install condensing boilers which recycle heat making them cheaper to run and better for the environment.

When we fit a new individual boiler in flats, we may have to make changes to the boiler cupboard or surrounding area to accommodate the design of the new boiler and pipes.

How long

On average it takes one to two days to fit a new boiler but this will depend on the type and size of the boiler.

Disruption

You will be without heating and hot water while we carry out the work. We will write to you to let you know when your boiler will be replaced to minimise disruption.

Access to your home

We will need access to your home to carry out boiler repairs.

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Kitchen and bathroom

Why

We replace tenants' kitchens that are more than 20 years old and bathrooms that are more than 30 years old, depending on their condition.

What

The following steps let you know what you can expect from the works.



1 Strip out your kitchen

(estimated time taken: 1-2 days)

This step will be messy and noisy. Your kitchen will be left bare apart from a temporary kitchen sink and a cooker. If you have an electric cooker, the contractor will reconnect it where possible. If you have a gas cooker, we will provide you with a temporary cooker.



2 Renew your bath, basin and toilet, and renew your boiler (where needed)

(estimated time taken: 1-2 days)

We will remove your old bath, toilet and wash-basin, and install the new bathroom fittings. You will not be left without a toilet or washing facilities overnight.



3 Rewire the electrics in your kitchen - where necessary

(estimated time taken: 1-2 days)

This is the noisiest and most disruptive stage as we will be drilling new holes in the walls for the electrical cabling. We will also need access to your fuse board and possibly to other parts of your home. The electricians will let you know in advance if they need to switch off the electricity.



4 Plastering your kitchen and bathroom

(estimated time taken: 2-3 days)

The plastering could be limited to patch repairs or cover whole walls - this will be assessed on your home's needs. Your plaster will need to dry before we can redecorate.



5 Fitting your kitchen

(estimated time taken: 1-2 days)

This is when we fit your new kitchen units and worktops chosen by you. At this stage we will also carry out any other carpentry such as fitting the bath panel, boxing in pipes and so on.



6 Tiling your kitchen and bathroom

(estimated time taken: 1 day)

In the kitchen, we will tile to a height of three tiles high above worktop surfaces. We will also extend this down to the skirting board behind the cooker. In the bathroom we will tile the three sides of the bath and the splashback to the basin.



7 Decorating

(estimated time taken: 3 days)

We will decorate the walls in your kitchen and bathroom with your chosen colour paint from our colour choice range. bath and the splashback to the basin.



8 Levelling your floor and laying vinyl flooring

(estimated time taken: 1-2 days)

This is a two-stage job. In the first stage we will apply a levelling compound (latex) to concrete floors or plywood to timber floors. The levelling compound will take approximately 4 hours to dry so you will not be able to get into rooms during this time. In stage two we will lay your chosen vinyl flooring.

9 Finishing (estimated time taken: 1 day)

The process is nearly complete. We will carry out the little bits and pieces and finishing touches, ready for the inspection.

10 Checking the work (estimated time taken: 1 day)

We will be in to check the work the contractor has done, if they have missed anything, they will come back to put it right. This is called 'snagging'.

11 Final inspection and approval (estimated time taken: 1 day)

We will inspect your home and if we and you are happy, we will agree the works are complete. Please note that not all of these works will necessarily be happening in your home. The contractor will discuss with you what work will take place in your home.



How long

It will take between 15 and 20 days to replace your kitchen and/or bathroom.

If you are a leaseholder you are responsible for repairs, maintenance and replacement of your kitchen and bathroom.

Who

If you're a rent paying tenant we may replace your kitchen and/or bathroom.

Access to your home

We will need to be in your home to carry out the work.



Why

In most cases we replace lifts that are old (usually 25 – 30 years old) and have become both unreliable and expensive to repair.

What

We replace old lifts with new ones that are more durable and more energy efficient. New lifts are designed to last longer than your current lift and will have many new features – such as LED lighting.

How long

It normally takes about 12 weeks to replace a single lift.

Access to your home

We do not need to access your home to carry out this work.

Disruption

Your lift will not be in service while we replace it.

Blocks with one lift

You will need to use the stairs while we replace your lift. Our contractor will contact you before they start the works to check if you need help to get into your home. There will be support available if you are not able to use the stairs at all.

Blocks with two or more lifts

We will work on one lift at a time. This means that you should have one lift in service while we do the work.

If we are replacing your lift and you need extra support to get in and out of your home – please contact us to discuss how we can support you.



Why

We will repair or replace roofs that are old and worn out or have been leaking.

What

Pitched roofs

Work will normally include replacing the tiles or slates (with a like-for-like finish), and renewing guttering, down-pipes, fascias, soffits and barge-boards. We will put up scaffolding around the whole of your building. We will ensure that the roof remains weather-tight throughout the work.

Flat roofs

We will survey your block's flat roof to find out what work is needed: full replacement, partial replacement or repair. If we can access your block's roof easily, we may not need to use full scaffolding. Instead, we may put up access scaffolding with a mechanical hoist to move materials to and from the roof.

How long

The length of time it takes to replace the roof depends on the size. We will let you know how long we expect it to take before we put up the scaffolding.

Access to your home

If you live on the top floor we may need to access your home to check the condition of the roof.

Disruption

We may have to put scaffolding up around your block. The contractor will do everything they can to minimise any disruption, especially if you live on the top floor. You may wish to take measures such as closing windows and removing any items from your balcony in case they might get covered with dust.

Typical warranty period

- Sloping roofs – 25 years
- Flat roofs – 20 years

Why

We install new windows for a range of reasons - including if they are old, worn, do not open safely, or are draughty in winter.

What

The type of windows we install in your block may vary depending on the block and other planning and building requirements. In general, our window specification is:

- like for like design – where possible we will use the original window design layout
- frames are durable and easy to maintain and good value for money– we prefer uPVC frames because they are durable and easy to maintain. They are also good value for money
- glass is double glazed
- secure by design – windows that are rated by the Police to design out crime
- they meet or exceed British Standards and Building Regulations.

Please note, if new windows are needed:

- we include all of the homes in a block for replacement windows
- where there have been individual replacements, these

will be checked to see if they can be kept

- you'll need to allow our contractors access to survey and install windows in your home. This will include the removal of any security grills
- we do not give permission to residents to install their own windows if we already plan to install windows in the block.

How long

As an example, a two bed property would take two to three days to replace all the windows in your home.

Access to your home

We will need to access your home to replace the windows. We will remove and replace each window in turn and we will not leave you without a working window for any longer than is necessary and never overnight. We'll ask you to clear approximately one metre of space around the inside of each window before the window fitters arrive and remove all curtains or blinds. If you require help, please contact the Resident Liaison Co-ordinator, who will be able to help you.

Disruption

We will normally put up scaffolding to install the new windows. We will take care when inside your home and try not to disturb your decorations. We normally have to do some work to the area around your

new windows but this will be minimal and we will repair where necessary ready for you to decorate.

Typical warranty period

- Windows – 20 years

Scaffolding



Why

If we are doing major work to your block we will probably have to put up scaffolding so we can carry out the work safely as required by regulations.

What

We will put up scaffolding on some or all of the sides of your block. We will do everything we can to make the scaffolding as secure as possible, enclosing the base of the scaffold to prevent access, installing scaffold alarms, and removing or locking and access ladders.

How long

The length of time it will take to put up the scaffold will depend on

the size of your block. Normally it takes between four and eight weeks to put up scaffolding.

Disruption

It can be noisy while we put up scaffolding. The scaffolding delivery trucks are usually large, so we may need to suspend parking bays while they put the scaffold up.

Important! Please do not trespass on the scaffolding or allow any of your family members or visitors to do so. It is very dangerous and could result in injury or death. Please also keep pets off the scaffolding. Please let us know straight away if you notice anything suspicious in relation to the scaffolding. If you notice unauthorised people on the scaffolding outside of office hours, please call the Police on 101.



Why

Communal areas often need a refresh of decorations due to normal day-to-day use. Some decorations need to be completed following communal works in order to complete the job to a high standard.

What

We will paint and decorate communal areas where required.

How long

The length of time will depend on the amount of decorations required, however we will let you know and try and keep the disruption to a minimum.

Other works

Why

As buildings have many parts, there are a variety of other works that sometimes need to be undertaken. This may include the removal of asbestos, communal electrical works and works to TV aerial systems.

What

The extent of these works will depend on what's required in each block, and we will always let you know what is happening and the potential impact on you. For asbestos removal and electrical works, we use specialist contractors who will ensure the safety of residents.

How long

The length of time it will take depends on the extent of the works and we will let you know how long the works are likely to take.

Contractor Code of Conduct

All people working for the contractor and their sub-contractors must act in an appropriate way. All employees or sub-contractors are expected to follow this Code of Conduct and action will be taken against anyone found breaking the Code.

Presentation and attitude

Contractors will:

- be presentable and tidily dressed at all times. They should not wear shorts or remove their shirt at any time
- be polite and friendly to residents, but concentrate on their work and not take unnecessary breaks
- introduce themselves and show their ID before entering the resident's home and whenever they are asked for their ID
- treat people equally without discrimination and with respect. Do not use any unkind, embarrassing, inflammatory or rude words or gestures - including racist and sexist remarks
- pay attention to residents' individual needs and work around these as much as possible
- be professional and not gossip or moan about other residents, Tower Hamlets Homes, our staff or other contractors.

Behaviour in residents' homes

Contractors will:

- not to use radios or MP3 players while working in residents' homes
- not to smoke in residents' homes,

- even if they say it's ok
- to ask before using the toilet or bathroom in the home. To respect the resident if they say no, and use alternative facilities
- not use any of the resident's belongings
- to keep the area being worked in clean and tidy. To clean up at the end of each working day and carry out a final clean when the work is finished
- to keep people and their belongings safe by asking the resident about their preferred access arrangements should you need to enter and exit the property during the works
- not to enter the resident's home unless there is someone aged over 16 present
- to make sure materials and tools will not be a danger to anyone. Take extra care by making sure things aren't left out that could be tripped over, or leaving dangerous items, such as electrical wires, exposed. This is particularly important where elderly, disabled or young children are at the property
- to keep noise to a minimum and warn residents and neighbours of loud noise
- to protect the resident's home and possessions from damage, dust and paint.

And finally, contractors will not:

- accept gifts from residents.
- work in the home alone.
- take possession of property keys.

How to contact us



MyTHH

You can manage all your information, including rent accounts and service requests (such as repairs) online by signing up to MyTHH – our online service portal available 24/7. Sign up quickly and easily at my.thh.org.uk

Phone

020 7364 5015

When you contact us, the Housing Service Centre will help you. These experienced and knowledgeable staff will be able to assist you with almost all of your enquiries, or point you in the right direction if needed.

Email

contactus@thh.org.uk

Website

thh.org.uk

Facebook

[facebook.com/
towerhamletshomes](https://facebook.com/towerhamletshomes)

Twitter

[@THHomes](https://twitter.com/THHomes)