



CONNECT

Winter 2023/24 Issue: 18

Winter office opening hours and emergency contact numbers

CVHA offices will be closed over the Christmas break from 12.30pm Friday 22nd December 2023 and reopen 9am Thursday 4th January 2024.

If you need an emergency repair during this time you will be able to contact our office on 01698 268 855 and you will be transferred to our out-of-hours service.

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Frozen Pipes

As the temperatures drop, the water pipes in your home may be at greater risk of freezing and bursting. Frozen pipes can cause problem's with your heating and boilers and this ranks among the primary reasons for callouts when temperatures take a plunge.

In such instances, the occurrence is typically widespread, happening in significant numbers simultaneously, making it challenging to implement a solution within a single day.

An unmistakable indicator of a frozen pipe is the minimal to no water flow when you open a tap in freezing conditions. Wondering how to prevent and address this prevalent issue? Explore our comprehensive step-by-step guide here.



1

- Firstly identify any taps that continually drip. Even a small trickle can lead to a frozen pipe when temperatures drop below zero. **Don't wait**, report those issues to us now.
- You should also find out where your stop tap (stopcock) is, (most are fitted under the kitchen sink), and understand how to turn it off so you can complete step two.



2

- Turn off the water supply at the stop tap (stopcock).
- Check any pipes that run outside of your property. If the pipe has burst, you will need to contact us, move to step three.
- If it hasn't burst, slowly thaw the pipe by holding a hot water bottle or a towel soaked in hot water around the pipe. You can also use a hair dryer on the lowest setting. **Do not use boiling water!**
- When it has thawed, reset your boiler by holding in the reset button for 10 seconds and waiting for the boiler to re-fire.



3

- Turn off the water supply at the stop tap.
- Turn on all your taps to reduce any flooding and soak up any escaping water with towels.
- Report it to our repairs team immediately.



Fire Safety

Your safety is our number one priority. As a landlord we're responsible for making sure our buildings are safe. We carry out regular fire risk inspections in our flats, developments and other multi-occupancy buildings; fit smoke alarms in homes and give practical advice on how to avoid a fire.

What you can do to stay safe?

1. Regularly check your interlinked smoke alarm(s).
2. Make sure you have a working smoke alarm on each floor of your home.
3. Book a visit/call from your local fire service for advice on fire safety in your home.
4. If you live in a flat, call us if you spot any fire hazards in your building including fire door damage.
5. Don't cause an obstruction by leaving furniture, bikes, prams and mobility scooters in communal areas.
6. Don't use the lift when evacuating a building as fire can cause a power failure.
7. Plan a safe escape from your home and make sure you know the evacuation plan if you live in a flat.

Gas Safety

Immediately call the Gas Emergency Line on 0800 111 999 and then:

- Turn off all gas appliances
- Open all doors and windows to ventilate the area
- If possible, turn off the gas emergency control valve (also called gas emergency shut off valve) at your meter
- Put out all naked flames (including candles and cigarettes)
- Do not operate any electrical switches, including turning lights on or off, because this can ignite escaping gas
- Do not open the fridge or freezer

We are legally responsible for carrying out an annual Safety Check of all gas appliances belonging to CVHA. It is important that you allow access to your home for our engineer to carry out these safety checks.

If you refuse to allow us access, or you do not keep your appointment, we will have no other option but to force access. You will also be charged for any related costs. This is of course a last resort, and we will always make reasonable efforts to gain access at a time suitable to you.



Repairs & Maintenance

When you contact us with a repair, we will agree on an appointment with you, it is very important that you let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to keep the appointment for our operative to visit your property.



Emergency Repairs

These are repairs which are needed to avoid serious health and safety problems; or prevent serious structural damage to your home. This service is to make your home safe, and a full repair may not be completed at this stage.

Examples of Emergency Repairs:

- Gas Leaks
- Total Electrical Failure
- Burst Pipes
- Total Communal Lighting Failure



Urgent Repairs

An urgent repair is when the problem seriously affects your comfort or can cause potential damage to your property.

Examples of Urgent Repairs:

- Leaking Pipes
- Gas Repairs
- No Hot Water
- Heating Failure



Routine Repairs

A routine repair is when the problem does not seriously interfere with your comfort and convenience. Most minor repairs will fall into this category.

Examples of Minor Repairs:

- Small Areas of Paving
- Minor Plastering
- Door and Window Repairs
- Guttering / Down Pipes

Alterations to your Home

If you wish to make an alteration or improvement to your property, you must first gain the permission of CVHA. Permission will be given where this is reasonable.

Please visit <https://cvha.org.uk/alterations/> and complete the alterations request form, or scan the QR Code to the left.



Managing Damp & Mould in your Home

What is damp?

Damp refers to the presence of excess moisture in a room.

This can show as:

- condensation on your windows
- black mould on walls, around windows or on fabrics/soft furnishings
- staining rising from the floor or coming from a ceiling/window
- a damp musty smell in your home



What to do if you have damp in your home

If you have damp in your home, please contact a member of our contact centre.

Our friendly team are here to help. We will ask you some questions about the dampness in your home to better understand what type of damp may be affecting it.

Our current service standards in respect of responding to Damp and Mould

You can expect the following service standards from us in respect to the reporting of an instance of damp or mould in your home:

- We will visit a customer's home within **3 working days** when they report dampness or mould to us
- We will complete remedial work within **6 working days** unless a specialist contractor inspection is required. In such cases we will look to complete remedial work within the timescales proposed by the specialist contractor
- We will follow up each completed repair within **6 weeks** of any damp and mould repair work being carried out.
- We will programme further visits every **6 months** until both the customer and the association is happy that the issue has been resolved
- All logged repairs must have evidence of at least **3 attempts** to contact the customer



In most cases we will send out one of our experienced Technical Inspectors to look at the issue. The team may ask an independent specialist to carry out a Damp Survey that will investigate the reasons dampness or mould has appeared, if the reasons are not immediately clear. We will discuss this with you and look to put in place any recommendations from the survey results where we can.

However, dampness that is not caused by a building defect may need to be managed by the household. We will help you do this by giving you all the information you need to control excess condensation in your home and we will support you in making small changes that should help manage the problem.

Managing condensation in your home - What causes moisture to build up?

Some examples of household activities that can contribute to condensation and dampness are:

- Cooking – steam from cooking produces 2.3-2.6 litres of moisture
- Drying clothes inside our homes can produce 4-5 litres of moisture
- Washing and bathing can produce 0.4-0.5 litres of moisture

If this moisture isn't removed from your property, it will condense on cold surfaces and create the ideal environment for mould to grow. Mould spores can be dangerous to you and your household's health, so it is very important that their growth is prevented.



Scan the QR Code to view our video



What you can do to reduce this moisture

1

Keep air moving in your house – do this by keeping all vents open and clear. Open windows every day for at least 15 minutes to let air out, even in cold weather. It's helpful to remember that moist, warm air takes longer to heat up than cold dry air, so if you let the moisture out regularly, your home will heat up quicker.

2

If you see condensation on your windows, remove the condensation using a wet cloth and wring the cloth out to remove the moisture.

3

Where possible dry clothes outside or in the tumble dryer. If drying clothes in your home, put your laundry in a well-ventilated room; for example hang your laundry in your bathroom with the bathroom extractor fan on or the window open and the door closed.

4

When cooking and bathing, keep the door closed and the window open and/or extractor fan on until all the moisture has been removed from the room.

5

If you have mould anywhere in your home, clean it off straight away using a fungicidal wash. This can be purchased in all supermarkets or from homeware/hardware stores etc.

6

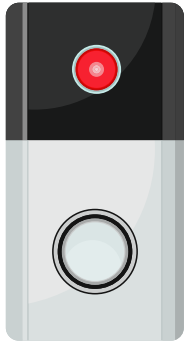
Do not have furniture pushed hard against a wall to allow air to circulate. This reduces the risk of mould growing behind these areas.

7

Heat your home, where possible, to a minimum of 18 degrees, though this can be cooler when not at home and overnight. You don't need to keep your home at these temperatures all the time, but you should aim to bring it up to these temperatures at least some of the day.

CVHA will continue to support you in managing dampness in your home and will check in with you over a period of time to check that any measures put in place by ourselves and/or you are working.

Domestic CCTV & Smart Doorbells



Using CCTV and Smart Doorbells at your Home

Are You Using a video-equipped doorbell device or CCTV system? The installation of a video-equipped doorbell (ring doorbell) or CCTV requires written permission from Clyde Valley Housing Association and must be in accordance with the Association's policy on alterations. Please note that all customers must request permission to fit a device onto a CVHA property, <https://cvha.org.uk/report-repairs/>

As CCTV cameras, ring doorbells and smart phones have become more affordable and accessible, CVHA has seen a significant increase in people using them within our developments. Although use of these devices can be one possible solution to crime reduction, the owner must ensure they are following the principles of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The following advice from GOV.UK's website will help you to understand what you need to do if you are considering installing, or have already installed, a CCTV system (or similar technology, such as video-equipped doorbell devices) on your home. A CCTV system includes the camera, storage, recording and all associated equipment.

Information Commissioner's Office

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regulates and enforces the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

If your CCTV system or doorbell captures images of people outside the boundary of your private domestic property – for example, from neighbours' homes or gardens, shared spaces such as corridors, or from public areas – then the GDPR and the DPA will apply to you. You will need to ensure your use of CCTV complies with these laws. If you do not you may be subject to appropriate regulatory action by the ICO which can include a fine, as well as potential legal action by affected individuals.

The ICO has published guidance on the use of domestic CCTV and a CCTV checklist, which will help you to better understand and meet your obligations under data protection law. It is important that you read this guidance as well as the checklist, as this provides a fuller explanation of your obligations under data protection law. The ICO has also published guidance for people being filmed by domestic CCTV.

If you have any questions about the use of domestic CCTV, you can contact the ICO <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/> or call 0303 123 1113. If you are unhappy about the use of a domestic CCTV system, use the ICO's online tool to determine the best course of action in your situation.

You may be considering using a CCTV system as a necessary means to protect your property from acts of crime and anti-social behaviour. A domestic CCTV system needs to be operated in a responsible way that respects the privacy of others.

Scan the QR Code to read the CCTV Advice from Police Scotland.



Rent First This Christmas

Christmas is an expensive time when we are all tempted to overstretch our budgets during the festive season. In addition, the Association is aware people are feeling the impact of the cost-of-living increase. Whilst CVHA acknowledges that our tenants' financial priorities may change in the run up to Christmas, we wish to encourage all customers to pay your rent to prevent any risk to your tenancy.

You could try getting ahead by making additional payment to your rent account every week and if possible, accrue one month's rent in advance. This may give you peace of mind and ease the pressure in the run up to Christmas. We would urge you to continue to make payments throughout the festive period to prevent falling behind. It will be easier to do this than have to make additional payments to catch up after the Christmas period.

It's important you speak to us if you think you will struggle to pay your rent during December. Get in touch with us by calling your Revenue Officer now to set up a payment plan, our Officers will be happy to help you. We can make referrals to Income Maximisation Officers and Advice Agencies who can offer you additional support. We're sending payment reminders to all our customers this year to help prevent our customers from falling into arrears and avoiding associated problems.

We want you to enjoy your Christmas and New Year celebrations particularly since it's been a very challenging year. We don't want you to stop buying presents for your family and friends, but we would suggest you budget wisely and prioritise rent payment above all else to prevent any risk to your tenancy.

Contents Insurance

During this season, we strongly encourage those without contents insurance to seriously consider purchasing it. We understand that it may be an overlooked expense at the start of a tenancy, but it's crucial to ensure you're safeguarded in case of any damage to your home's interior.

Last year, due to frost, there were incidents of pipes bursting, leading to ruined carpets for many. As your landlord, we're unable to replace flooring in such situations, and if you received carpets through the Social Work Fund, they won't cover replacements either. Without insurance, you'll unfortunately have to bear the cost yourself, which can be a significant financial burden.

The Thistle Tenant Risks Home Contents Insurance Scheme specialises in insurance for social housing tenants. Their affordable policies cover the contents and personal belongings in your home.

If you're without insurance, please don't delay. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk of damage to your possessions. For more information about Thistle, you can read more on their website or call them to discuss options over the phone.

[Thistle Tenant Risks \(thistletenants-scotland.co.uk\)](http://thistletenants-scotland.co.uk)



Staying well in winter

Cold weather can make some health problems worse and even lead to serious complications, especially if you're 65 or older, or if you have a long-term health condition. We've listed our top tips to keep you healthy this winter.

- Get your flu vaccination.
- Heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom.
- Get financial support, and ensure you have claimed all the benefits you're entitled to.
- Prepare for adverse weather, and keep up to date with weather forecasts.
- Make sure you have prescription medicines before the holiday period starts
- Keep active and hydrated.
- Look online for some nutritious recipes, soup or stews are great when you're on a budget and packed they're packed full of immune boosting ingredients as well as being easy to prepare.
- If you need help over the holiday period when the GP surgery or pharmacy is closed or not sure what to do, go to 111.nhs.uk or call 111.
- Remember to be a good neighbour, look in on any vulnerable neighbours and relatives.

Keeping warm and well in winter

1

Keep moving

A little bit of activity now and then is a great way to help you keep warm, as well as help you maintain strength and mobility. So try not to sit still for more than an hour at a time. There's no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to keeping moving, so it's important you do something that feels right – and safe – for you.

2

Eat well

It can sometimes be difficult to keep up the motivation to prepare meals. But it's good to try and keep to a routine where you can. Hot food and drinks can help you to keep warm, so try to have one hot meal a day and as many hot drinks as you can.

3

Wrap up well

Wearing plenty of layers is the best way to keep warm in winter. If you're heading out, make sure you take some extra layers – even if you don't need them immediately. It's a good idea to be prepared because the temperature can drop significantly when the sun goes in. Wearing several thin layers will keep you warmer than wearing one thick layer, as layers trap warm air between them.

4

Stay stocked up

It's a good idea to make sure you're prepared – winter weather can be unpredictable and can stop you from getting out and about. Think about stocking up on cold and sore throat remedies as well as food, in case it's harder to leave the house.

5

Reduce heat loss

Close the curtains as soon as it gets dark, to prevent heat loss. Close doors to stop draughts and get draught excluders fitted. Make sure furniture isn't blocking radiators to allow the hot air to circulate around the room.

Loneliness at Christmas

Hundreds of thousands of adults in Scotland experience loneliness that negatively affects their mental health

- Attend local community events
- Reach out to an old friend
- Tell people how you're feeling
- Take up exercise, join a walking group or join a gym
- Read a good book
- Join a club or social group
- Volunteer
- Take up a new hobby
- Check out resources and programmes running in your local community.
- Call Samaritans on 116 123

For many, Christmas is a joyous time to relax and enjoy the festive season with our loved ones, but Christmas can also be a time where people can feel overwhelmingly lonely. When you add in the isolation many of us have experienced over the past few years, it's not surprising that people are feeling increasingly lonely. Everyone can feel lonely, and there are things you can do to feel less isolated and alone.

You're not alone

Find a Warm Welcome Space near you

Warm Welcome Spaces are opening their doors to local communities, offering everyone a free, warm, welcoming and friendly space. Why not explore your local Warm Welcome Space, it's a great place to connect with your community and to make new friends.

Warm Welcome wants everyone to access a warm and welcoming space in their local community, to connect with others, make new friends, and feel part of your community.

It's your open invitation to come in, keep warm, connect with others, and make new friends.

To search search for Warm Welcome Spaces near you go to their website <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/> and enter your postcode.

It's never been easier to join a local community!



Cost of living



Warm Home Discount Scheme

Did you know you might be eligible for £140 off your electricity bill this winter through the Warm Home Discount Scheme? The scheme is open to people who receive the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit or those who fulfil their energy supplier's low-income criteria. How you apply for the Warm Home Discount Scheme depends on how you qualify for the discount. To find out more, please visit the government's website dedicated to Warm Home Discount Scheme.

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>



Cold Weather Payment

If you receive Pension Credit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit or Support for Mortgage Interest, you might be eligible for £25 for each seven-day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March. After each period of very cold weather in your area, you should get a payment within 14 working days. It's paid into the same bank or building society account as your benefit payments. Find out more about the Cold Weather Payment.

<https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment>



Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born on or before 5 October 1954, you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. You usually get this Winter Fuel Payment automatically if you're eligible and get the State Pension or another social security benefit (not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit). If you're eligible but don't get paid automatically, you'll need to make a claim.

<https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/how-to-claim>



Energy and household bills

Household expenses, rents and travel costs are increasing. If you're finding that paying bills is becoming too difficult, you might be eligible for several benefits or schemes which could help.

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/energy-and-bills>



Children and Families

Parenting is hard at the best of times, but when money worries hit it can be overwhelming. From free school meals to help with day-to-day costs, you could be eligible for support.

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/children-and-families>



If you need urgent help with money, food or fuel

If you need urgent help with food or money you should contact your local council first.

The help they could offer includes:

- loans or grants, such as the [Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grant](#)
- food, fuel and other essentials, such as through referrals to community food organisations and food banks
- mental health and wellbeing support

Each local council has their own service and their processes might be different. You need to contact your local council to find out what support they can offer.

Some grant applications can take up to 2 days to process. If you think you'll need help sooner than that, you should let your local council know.

<https://www.mygov.scot/urgent-help-food-fuel-money>



Health and wellbeing

The rising cost of living is on everyone's mind and can have an impact on our mental health and wellbeing. If you feel overwhelmed, support and tips are available to help you cope. <https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/energy-and-bills>



Older or disabled people

Rising costs can have a bigger impact on some people including older people, disabled people and those who care for them. Make sure you're getting all the assistance you're entitled to.

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/older-or-disabled-people>



Benefits and income

Many people are worried about money just now. There are benefits, grants, and free services available which may help you increase your income, if balancing household costs is becoming too difficult.

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/benefits-and-income>



Please remember to keep your pre-paid meters topped up and in credit.




Staying safe online

Think Twice Click Once.

With holiday season days away it's important to keep in mind the “digital grinch” that lurk online. Holiday seasons are prime time for scammers and phishers to get hold of your data as they know you're likely to impulse buy or click things and they take advantage of the last minute rush to get something in time for the 25th.

- Likely if something seems “too good to be true” it often is, only the big guy in the sleigh delivers a brand new iPhone out of nowhere!
- Before trusting an email or message have a think “was I expecting this?” again scams/phishing attempts often come out of the blue so if you think something is out of place trust your instincts!
- Don't assume because it's personalised that it's trustworthy, some information on you is available publicly online (Facebook, twitter, Instagram) and these can be used to send what appears to be something from someone you know, following our previous points it's wise to take some time and be sure the message is genuine.
- Double check the URL of the website you are shopping from, it should start with “HTTPS://” if it's just HTTP:// then the site isn't secure and may not be the website you were actually trying to reach or could be fake entirely.
- Keep your devices up to date. This may seem simple but often software updates include important security and bug fixes that left unchecked can be used by online criminals to get control of your device.
- Avoid public Wi-Fi. Public Wi-Fi is seen as a fantastic resource to use when out and about as you don't have to use up your phones data plan however, most public Wi-Fi's are open ended meaning anyone on the same network can see your traffic and possibly steal your data. As much as possible avoid public Wi-Fi and stick with your 4/5G plan and home Wi-Fi.



The real secret is thought, it's very simple to be safe online just as it's easy to get scammed. Before clicking / opening / downloading / buying anything take an extra minute and check that it's really safe before committing.

10 seconds of thinking is all it takes.



Your Safety at christmas

Christmas is a time when your home is likely to be full of people, and it's in the excitement of the season that accidents can easily happen.

Cooking

Don't leave food cooking in the oven whilst you are out shopping, or when you are sleeping.

Christmas Trees

Artificial is best! If you must have a real tree, purchase trees in soil and ensure they are kept watered to reduce the risk of fire.

Candles

Never leave a candle lit if you are not in the room. Keep candles away from trees, cards and never under a wall mounted TV.

Christmas Pudding

Have a jug of water close to hand if you are lighting your Christmas pudding, and clear away any paper hats/crackers before lighting.

Wrapping Paper

It gets everywhere on Christmas morning and can easily get knocked into the fire place, or lit by a cigarette – so please bag it up.

Don't overload plug sockets

Make sure to avoid overloading your plug sockets with extensions and instead just use one plug per socket.

Fairy Lights

If you have been using your fairy lights for a few years, it might be time to replace them. Newer models such as LED lights will meet higher safety standards and are more energy efficient. Remember always switch these off when you are not at home or are in bed.



Info Point

Repairs

Emergency Repairs	0800 073 0703
Scottish Gas (smell gas)	0800 111 999
Scottish Power (no electricity)	0800 092 9290
Scottish Water (no water/burst pipes)	0800 077 8778
Gas heating repairs (City Technical)	0333 202 0708
All other emergency repairs	0845 877 0411

Please call the freephone Emergency Repairs number in the first instance.

Tenancy related

Anti social behaviour / dog fouling/
vermin / roads:

- North Lanarkshire **0300 123 1382**
- South Lanarkshire **0800 389 1105**
- East Dunbartonshire **0300 123 4510**

Anti social behaviour complaints should in the first instance be reported to Police Scotland by calling **101**.



Facebook messenger

(scan our QR code to view our FB page)

Please call 01698 268 855 or email cvha@cvha.org.uk if you would like to receive any of our information by email or in another format such a different language, large print, Braille or audio.



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MERRY
Christmas

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



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Accessibility:

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You can also access the document by using the text to speech icon on our website.

要以您选择的语言阅读文档，请使用 CVHA 网站上的“更改语言”图标

Aby wyświetlić ten dokument w preferowanym języku, użyj ikony zmiany języka w witrynie internetowej CVHA.

ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਨਪਸੰਦ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ CVHA ਵੈੱਬਸਾਈਟ 'ਤੇ 'ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਬਦਲੋ' ਆਇਕੋਨ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰੋ

Щоб прочитати документ обраною вами мовою, скористайтесь значком «змінити мову» на веб-сайті CVHA

ویب سائٹ پر ' زبان بدلیں' آئیکن کا استعمال کریں۔ CVHA دستاویز کو اپنی پسند کی زبان میں پڑھنے کے لیے براہ کرم

