

Lambeth Tenants Handbook

Your Environment

Your Environment

We want to work with you to make your neighbourhood or community a place you are proud of and happy to live in. We can do this with your help.

You can help keep your neighbourhood clean by not dropping litter or dumping rubbish and by cleaning up after your pets. You can also report environmental problems like litter and fly-tipping to us on 020 7926 6000.

We encourage and support people who want to take a more active role in their community, in tenants' and residents' associations, or as a street or block representative. Ask your neighbourhood housing officer for more information or speak to one of our resident participation officers.

Responding to climate change

We have committed to lowering the carbon footprint in the borough, which includes achieving a net zero carbon footprint in the council's own operations by 2030. Preserving existing green areas on our estates to mitigate the impact of climate change is vital to this ambition. As part of our commitment to green our estates, we will not normally give you permission to do the following:

- lower your kerbs
- construct a concrete driveway
- Lay hardcore or concrete on any part of your garden

Keeping your home warm

There are many things you can do to keep your home warm and comfortable while also saving energy and cutting your fuel bills. The best way to make your home warmer and save money is to stop heat escaping.

Here are some tips:

- Draught-proof doors and windows with plastic foam strips or metal draught excluders
- Fit rubber or brush seals to the bottom of doors - they are cheap and easy to buy and fit
- If your letterbox lets in draughts, fit a brush-type seal cover
- Fill gaps between floorboards and skirting boards with beading, mastic or plastic wood
- If you don't have double glazing, you can use specially designed commercial window film across the window frame - this has almost the same effect and is easy to fit
- Close your curtains at night to avoid losing heat through your windows
- Don't let curtains hang in front of your radiators
- If you have a water filled radiator fitted against an outside wall, you can put aluminium foil or specially designed foil from DIY stores behind the radiator

Household rubbish

High-rise blocks have refuse chutes, large communal bins or underground refuse collection sites. The chutes can get blocked by big items, so please use the chutes only for normal household bagged rubbish. See the section 'getting rid of large, bulky items' for more information.

Some low-rise blocks have refuse chutes, while others have large communal bins. If you have to carry rubbish down to the ground level, take care to avoid spilling it in the shared areas.

Some maisonettes and street properties have individual wheeled bins while others have large communal bins.

To report any problems with your rubbish bins or for information about rubbish collections:

Telephone: 020 7926 9000

Visit: www.lambeth.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling

Recycling household rubbish

All Lambeth residents must recycle what they can. About 80 per cent of your household rubbish can easily be recycled.

You can recycle the following household items:

- Food and drink cartons
- Plastic pots, tubs, bottles and trays
- Cardboard and paper, including catalogues, brochures and magazines
- Glass bottles and jars
- Tins
- Empty aerosols

If you live on an estate, you can put your recyclable rubbish in the green recycling bins, which are usually near your household rubbish bins.

If your rubbish is collected from outside your home in a wheeled bin or sack, your recycling will be collected from the same place.

If you wish to dispose of chemical waste, like paint or motor oil, do not put it in your household waste. Instead, contact your local reuse and recycling centre.

For more about recycling

Telephone: 020 7926 6000

Visit: www.lambeth.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling

Getting rid of bulky items

You are responsible for safe disposal of your unwanted furniture and other bulky items of household rubbish, and we have a collection service that can pick up your bulky waste if you

need it to. If you live on an estate, contact us on 020 7926 6000 as your estate's cleaning contractor may be able to remove them

You can use the reuse and recycling centres in Lambeth below:

- Smugglers Way, Wandsworth, SW18 1JS
- Lambeth Reuse and Recycling Centre, Vale Street, West Norwood, SE27 9PA

Vale Street

Lambeth reuse and recycling centre on Vale Street accepts only household recyclable items. No vans are allowed onto the site. You will need to show proof that you are a Lambeth resident.

Smugglers Way

Smugglers Way is provided by the Western Riverside Waste Authority and is for all residents in that Authority's area, which includes Lambeth

Gardens

Responsibilities

We are responsible for maintaining communal gardens. However, if you have a private garden, yard, window box or balcony, you are responsible for keeping it tidy. For some small street properties with shared gardens, all the residents share this responsibility.

Keeping a garden tidy includes making sure it is free from rubbish, rubble, excessive weed growth and pet droppings, as these may cause a nuisance or health risk to other residents.

If you are vulnerable or disabled and can't look after your garden, we may be able to help you. Contact us on 020 7926 6000 for more information.

If you wish to keep a garden and you live in a flat, you must keep walkways clear and make sure your hanging baskets are secure.

Changing your garden

Contact us if you wish to put up a shed, porch, fence or similar structure, as you need our written permission and possibly planning permission. If you don't contact us, you may have to remove the structure at your own expense.

You may need our permission if you want to cut down or severely prune any tree in your garden. This is because many of the trees on our properties are legally protected. You will also need to contact us before moving, altering, replacing or planting hedges or trees.

If you put up any structure in your garden, such as a shed, you are responsible for keeping it in good condition.

Green waste

Lambeth Council collects garden waste every two weeks but you will need to pay a joining fee for this service. You can recycle your garden waste for free at the reuse and recycling centres. You can also buy subsidised compost bins or join a local community composting scheme to compost kitchen and garden waste.

For more information on green waste:

Telephone: 020 7926 9000

Visit: www.lambeth.gov.uk/rubbish-and-recycling

Managing pests

We are responsible for keeping all communal areas on estates clear of pests. However, it is your responsibility to get rid of pests in your own property, including the garden. Keeping your property clean will help control most pests.

If a pest problem poses a health and safety risk for the whole block of flats, we will investigate the cause and arrange for them to be removed. We may charge you a share of the costs, even if your flat was not directly affected.

To find out about pest control services:

Telephone: 020 7926 6000 or 020 7926 8860

Email: pestcontrol@lambeth.gov.uk

Vehicles

All vehicles parked on our land must be roadworthy, taxed and insured unless you can provide a valid Statutory off the Road Notice (SORN). If you want to keep SORN vehicles on our land, you will also need our permission and the maximum period you may keep the SORN vehicle on our land/estate is six months.

Garages

If you wish to rent a garage, you must show us proof that you own a vehicle that **it** is registered at your home address. Contact us on 020 7926 6000 if you are interested in renting a garage.

Parking large vehicles

You will need our written permission before you park any of the following on our land or on your front or back garden:

- Trailers
- Caravans
- Boats
- Commercial vehicles more than 16 feet (4.8 meters) long, 6 feet (1.83 meters) wide or 6 feet 6 inches (2 meters) high

Disabled parking

If you are a blue badge holder, we may be able to give you priority for a free or discounted parking space or garage. Let us know when you apply for a parking permit. You will be asked to provide a copy of your Blue Badge.

Vehicle repairs

You must not do large repairs to vehicles on our land, for example:

- Changing an engine
- Changing or replacing parts of the bodywork
- Paint spraying

You may only do routine minor maintenance work such as changing tyres, plugs or oil, provided this does not cause a hazard or nuisance to others or make a mess. You must not pour any chemicals like engine oil, petrol or brake fluid down drains or gullies or put them in domestic bins. You can usually get rid of these chemicals at your local reuse and recycling centre.

If you cause any damage to your home or communal areas while repairing or maintaining your vehicle, you will have to pay the cost of us repairing the damage.

Abandoned vehicles

We will remove from our land any untaxed vehicle without a SORN or any vehicle we consider a health and safety risk. If you find a red or green sticker on the windscreen of your vehicle, you must contact us and also call the number on the sticker. If you have a SORN, you need to display this with a resident permit. You may be allowed to park a SORN vehicle on our land for up to six months, after which we will consider it to be abandoned but you must obtain our permission in writing.

To dispose of or report an abandoned vehicle:

Telephone: 020 7926 6000

Anti-social behaviour

All residents have the right to enjoy their homes and live in peaceful neighbourhoods, free from crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance.

This depends on you, the members of your household and your neighbours being able to get on together. When neighbours are on good terms this makes for a friendlier, safer and better place for everyone to live.

Anti-social behaviour is any behaviour that could cause alarm, harassment or distress to another person, and negatively affects the quality of life of other people and the well-being of the wider community.

We try to resolve all anti-social behaviour issues as speedily as possible depending on the type of anti-social behaviour issue involved.

If you are a tenant, you are responsible for your behaviour and the behaviour of:

- Anyone who lives with you, including your partner, spouse and children
- Anyone who visits or stays with you
- Any pets belonging to you, someone living with you or your visitors

Your tenancy agreement prohibits:

- Illegal, anti-social or nuisance behaviour to other tenants or residents or their family, lodgers or visitors, council officers and contractors
- Damage to any property, fixtures or fittings belonging to us or to our tenants, residents, their families or visitors

Anti-social behaviour is a serious breach of your tenancy, lease or transfer agreement and it could result in you losing your home.

Types of anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour includes:

- Acts of intimidation or harassment; verbal abuse or bullying; hate crime; or domestic abuse
- Disregard for other people's or the community's well-being such as noise; vehicle-related nuisance; rowdy behaviour or hoax calls
- Misuse of public space such as drug and substance misuse; drug dealing; or street drinking
- Environmental damage such as criminal damage and vandalism; graffiti; litter, rubbish, fly-tipping, fly-posting; or abandoning vehicles
- Animal nuisance such as noisy pets, dog fouling and aggressive behaviour. All animal nuisances are dealt in accordance with our pet policy

Noise and annoyance

Noise is the most common cause of neighbour disputes/nuisance. It is important to keep your noise to a reasonable volume at all times, especially late at night. This includes keeping the volume down on televisions, radios, stereos and musical instruments.

Abusing our staff

We will not accept any abuse towards our employees, representatives or contractors. Your tenancy agreement says you must not be violent, abusive or threatening towards our staff. This also applies outside normal office hours and if you telephone or write to us.

Harassment

This is unwanted, repeated behaviour that is intimidating, hostile or offensive and which causes alarm or distress. Types of harassment can include violence, threats, abuse and property damage. It can involve offensive language, graffiti or letters, and can cause physical injury, stress and anxiety or insecurity. Many forms of anti-social behaviour are harassment.

Hate crime

Hate crimes are any criminal offences that are motivated by hostility or prejudice against a particular group of people. This could be based on their race, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, maternity, or disability, or their association with someone from one of those groups.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is one of the most common forms of gender-based violence, yet it is one of the most under-reported crimes because it usually happens behind closed doors. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone regardless of their race, gender, religion, sexuality, age or social background.

Domestic abuse often happens repeatedly over a period of time and includes coercive control, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between people who are or have been intimate partners or family members. This can include forced marriage and so-called 'honour crimes'.

Domestic abuse is unacceptable and support is available. Please contact the Gaia centre on 020 7733 8724 or email lambethvawg@refuge.org.uk there is more information in the contact page at the end of this handbook. Your information is always kept strictly confidential.

Gangs and serious violence

Gangs can destroy the peace of their local community and can lead other vulnerable young people into serious and violent crime. We define a gang as a group of people who associate with one another over a relatively long period. They see themselves, and are seen by others, as a clearly identifiable group for whom crime and violence is a key part.

If you or a member of your household is involved in any gang-related criminal offence, you will be breaking the terms of your tenancy and this may lead to you being evicted from your home.

Using your home for criminal purposes

You must not use or allow your home to be used for any criminal purpose. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Dealing in, possessing or growing illegal drugs

- Committing violence against anyone
- Storing or handling stolen goods or illegal weapons

Tenants can be evicted if they, their visitors, or anyone living with them are arrested and convicted of any offence that takes place in or around their home.

How you can deal with anti-social behaviour

How you deal with anti-social behaviour depends on how serious it is, how long it has been going on for, how often it happens, and how it affects you and your household. To solve anti-social behaviour problems effectively, it is important that you do something. We suggest you follow these three steps:

1. Try to talk about the problem

It is best to deal with problems early on, so first try talking with your neighbour about it. For example, if they are causing a noise nuisance, tell them in a friendly way how this is affecting you they may not realise it. Many problems arise because people have not talked or considered each other's point of view. Sometimes people just need reminding that their behaviour can affect others. If when you talk with your neighbour they become unreasonable or start arguing with you, do not get involved or try to argue back – this will only make things worse.

If you can't talk to neighbours directly or you have been unable to sort out the problem yourself, contact us for advice. We may suggest you use a mediation service, which may be a trained member of staff acting as a mediator, or we may decide to use an independent mediation service.

Mediation is a valuable early intervention tool that we use to resolve noise nuisance or neighbour disputes. All cases are referred to an independent service – the Lambeth Mediation Service – that attempts to persuade neighbours to work together to establish mutually acceptable behaviour.

Often the mediator will ask both sides for their point of view, and then help them resolve their differences. You may not have to talk to your neighbour directly at first. Mediation is about bringing neighbours together to work things out as quickly as possible, and has a good success rate, as long as everyone is committed and actively involved.

2. Keep a record

It is always a good idea to keep a record of any incident, even if you suspect it is only a one-off. By writing down the details straight away, you are more likely to be able to remember accurately what happened. If we have to take legal action, we must have evidence of exactly what has happened and when.

When you keep a written record, make a note of the following:

- The date and time of the incident
- How long it lasted
- What happened – the more detail you write down, the more helpful it will be
- The name(s) of who was involved, if you know
- The name of anyone who witnessed the incident

- Whether you reported it to anyone and who you reported it to
- Details of any investigation. For example a crime reference number from the police, or a visit from a noise patrol officer
- The effect of the incident or nuisance on your life - how does it make you feel or how does it affect you?

3. Report it

You should always report crime and serious anti-social behaviour to the police, who have the power to arrest the perpetrator and protect the victim. Contact the police on 101, or in an emergency always call 999.

You can contact us to report your concerns about any type of anti-social behaviour, including noise nuisance, graffiti, harassment, hate crimes and domestic abuse. When you call, you can be sure your concerns will be passed to the right team in Housing Management for investigation and action.

There are many organisations that can offer advice and support.

To report anti-social behaviour:

Telephone: 020 7926 6000

What we can do about anti-social behaviour

We will respond to all reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. When you report an incident, we will give you a call to assess the situation, and depending on the seriousness of the complaint, we will arrange a meeting urgently if need be. Once we have spoken with you about what is happening and how it is affecting you, we will agree an action plan with you.

With your permission we may contact:

- The person responsible for the anti-social behaviour
- The police or other agencies
- Neighbours or other witnesses to find out the facts and who else is involved

We will use all the powers at our disposal and act as we think fit. Legal action is not always appropriate, as most cases are sorted out before reaching this stage.

Before we take legal action, we may take the following steps to resolve anti-social behaviour:

- Suggest you talk to your neighbour and try to sort out the matter yourself, if you haven't done so already and this is appropriate
- Refer the problem to mediation
- Help make your home safe by improving the security, removing graffiti and doing repairs
- Warn the person who has carried out the anti-social behaviour that their behaviour is in breach of their tenancy agreement and could lead to them being evicted
- Work with other agencies, for example Lambeth Council's noise team if your complaint is about noise or the police if it is about a hate crime (domestic abuse, racial harassment or violence against members of the LGBT community)

Legal action

Legal action can be a lengthy process over which we have no influence. Our ability to take legal action will depend on a number of factors including:

- The type of problem being reported – legal action will not resolve every case of anti-social behaviour, and in the first instance we will try to resolve the problems through mediation or a similar intervention. Legal action will only be possible in many cases where there is an escalation of the nuisance
- The impact of the incidents on those reporting the behaviour, and others who may be affected
- The quality of the evidence – this is the most important factor and we will often rely on residents to complete diary sheets that provide us with clear information about the nature of the incidents

In all cases, we will keep you up-to-date with all the steps we have taken to resolve the problem and review with you how effective these steps have been. We will treat anything you tell us in strict confidence, but it may not be possible for you to remain anonymous. This is because the person you are complaining about may guess who made the complaint, unless several people have complained about them.

Support for victims

We work closely with the police and our other partners to give victims of anti-social behaviour and crime, practical and personal support. The staff at your Area Housing Office can discuss your housing options with you and can help you contact other organisations that can offer support. This could include applying to the courts if you wish the perpetrator to leave or to stay away from your home, or helping you to find alternative temporary accommodation.

Protecting our vulnerable residents

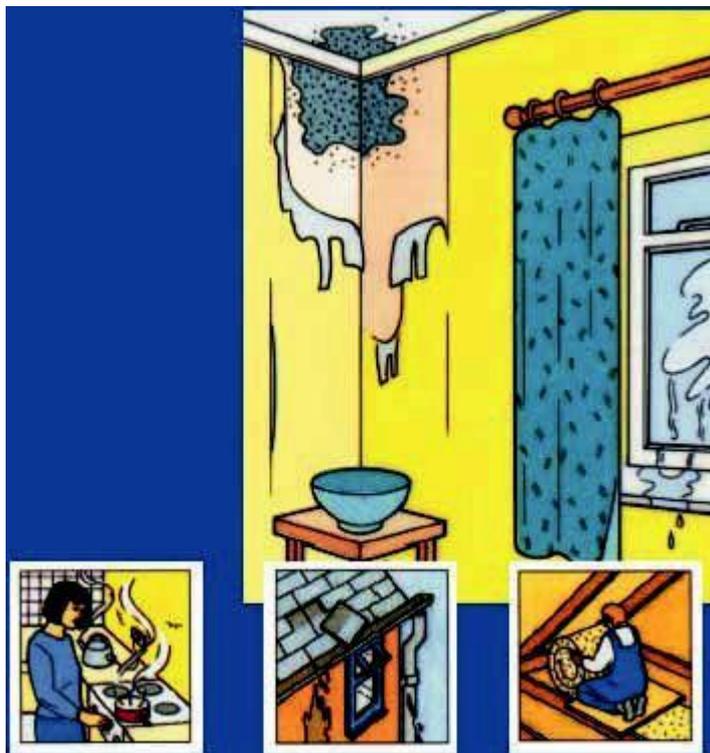
Some people become victims of abuse, harassment or violence because they are vulnerable, perhaps due to a disability, their age or simply because others view them as 'different'.

If you suspect a neighbour is being abused or treated incorrectly report it to:

- The police - call 101 (or 999 in an emergency)
- Your area housing office
- Us on 020 7926 6000

Your Home Environment

Keep your home free from damp and mould



Is your home damp? Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and make window frames rot. Damp cold housing encourages the growth of mould and mites, as mites feed on moulds and can increase the risk of respiratory illnesses in some people.

Some damp is caused by condensation. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum, so reducing the risk of dampness and mould growth.



First steps against condensation

You will need to take proper steps to deal with the condensation, but meanwhile there are some measures you can take right away.

Wipe down the windows and sills every morning. Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator.

Condensation channels and sponge strips can be bought at DIY shops. They are fitted to windows to collect the condensation and thus help prevent window frames from rotting and avoid damp forming under sills. Care must be taken to fit these devices properly.



First steps against mould

First treat the mould already in your home. If you deal with the basic problem, mould should not reappear.

To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive 'approval number'. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely. Dry-clean mildewed clothes, and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.

After treatment redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould. Note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper. When wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth.

The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness.



Is it condensation?

Condensation is not the only cause of damp. It can also come from:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows.
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe.
- Rising damp due to a defective damp-course or because there is no damp-course.



These causes of damp often leave a 'tidemark' and you should have the necessary repairs carried out to remove the source of damp.

If your home is newly built it may be damp because the water used during its construction (e.g. in plaster) is still drying out.



If your home is damp for any of these reasons it may take weeks of heating and ventilating to dry out. Hiring a dehumidifier will help.

If you do not think the damp comes from any of these causes, it is probably condensation.

What is condensation?

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. If the air gets colder it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You may notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a bath.

Condensation occurs mainly during cold weather, whether it is raining or dry. It does not leave a 'tidemark'. It appears in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It often forms on north-facing walls.



How to avoid condensation

These four steps will help you reduce the condensation in your home.

1. Produce less moisture

Some ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture very quickly.

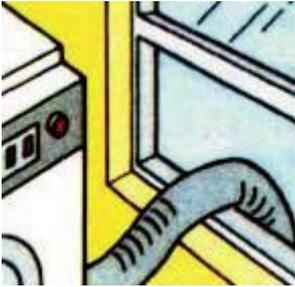
Cooking: To reduce the amount of moisture, cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling.



Paraffin and portable flueless bottled-gas heaters: These heaters put a lot of moisture into the air – one gallon of gas or paraffin produces

about a gallon of water. If you have a problem with condensation, try to find alternative means of heating.

Washing clothes: Put washing outdoors to dry if you can. Or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on. It is best to fit a fan that can be switched to run continuously for clothes drying. If you have a tumble dryer make sure you vent it to the outside (unless it is the self-condensing type). DIY kits are available for this.



2. Ventilate to remove the moisture

You can ventilate your home without making draughts.

Some ventilation is needed to get rid of moisture being produced all the time, including that from people's breath. Keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open all the time if possible, and especially when someone is in the room.

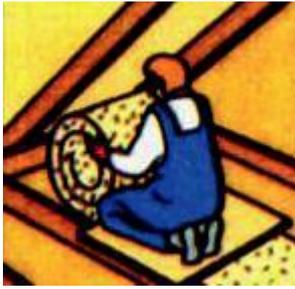


You need much more ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom when cooking, washing up, bathing and drying clothes. This means opening the windows wider. Better still, use a humidistat-controlled electric fan (these come on automatically when the air becomes humid and are cheap to run).

Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan. It will help to draught proof these doors. Doing this will help stop the moisture reaching other rooms, especially bedrooms, which are often colder and more likely to get condensation.

Allow space for the air to circulate in and around your furniture. Open doors to ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Leave space between the backs of wardrobes and the wall. Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls, i.e. walls which have a room on both sides, rather than against outside walls.

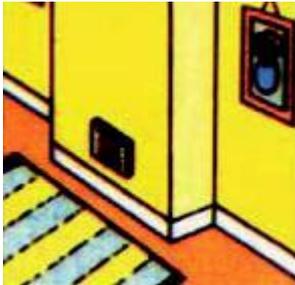
When you have a curtain or blind drawn, it makes the surface of the window cooler and increases condensation, especially with single glazed windows. Trickle ventilators can help reduce the problem. If you replace your windows at any time, make sure they are double glazed and fitted with trickle ventilators.



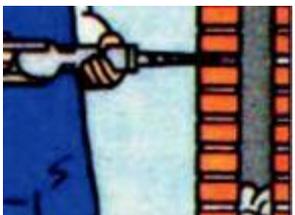
3. Insulate and draught proof

Insulation in the loft, cavity wall insulation and draught proofing of windows and outside doors will help keep your home warm and you will have lower fuel bills as well. When the whole home is warmer, condensation is less likely.

When draught proofing:



- Do not block permanent ventilators.
- Do not completely block chimneys (leave a hole about two bricks in size and fit a louvred grille over it).
- Do not draught proof rooms where there is a fuel burning heater (e.g. gas fire) or cooker.
- Do not draught proof windows in the bathroom or kitchen.



If you live in a house, insulating your loft is a cost-effective way of cutting heating costs. Remember to draught proof the loft hatch but do not block any eaves ventilation. Cavity wall insulation is also an effective way of cutting heating costs. Many properties, however, are built without suitable cavities. If you are in doubt, you should seek the advice of a building professional who will advise you on the need for a building warrant.



Secondary glazing of windows reduces heat loss and draughts but you must ensure that there is some ventilation and adequate means of escape in an emergency such as a fire. Remember that any alteration to your windows, including their replacement, must meet the relevant requirements of the Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations. You should consult your local authority on the need for a building warrant before any work is undertaken.

4. Heat your home a little more

In cold weather, the best way to keep rooms warm enough to avoid condensation is to keep low background heating on all day, even when there is no one at home. This is very important in flats and bungalows and other dwellings where the bedrooms are not above a warm living room. If you have central heating set it to provide background warmth in all rooms including unused rooms.

Otherwise install suitable thermostatically-controlled heaters where necessary (do not use paraffin or fuelless bottled gas heaters for this purpose). The thermostats will help control heating and costs. Remember to provide background ventilation at the same time.

Dehumidifiers will help dry out damp in newly built houses. They can also help reduce condensation but they are of limited use in cold damp rooms.

Points to remember

Produce less moisture:

- Cover pans
- Dry clothes outdoors
- Vent your tumble dryer to the outside
- Avoid using paraffin or fuelless bottled gas heaters

Ventilate to remove moisture:

- Ventilate all the time, especially when someone is in
- Increase ventilation of the kitchen and bathroom when in use and shut the door
- Ventilate cupboards, wardrobes and blocked chimneys

Insulate and draught proof:

- Insulate the loft
- Draught proof windows and external doors
- Consider cavity insulation
- Consider secondary glazing
- Find out if you are eligible for a grant or other help

Heat your home a little more

- If possible, keep low background heat on all day, with background ventilation
- Find out about benefits, rebates and help with fuel bills