

Summer | 2024

*special  
edition*



# Repairs special

**Welcome to a special edition  
of your Cobalt newsletter.**

This newsletter will update you on the significant changes we are making to our repairs service.

@CobaltHousing   

**Cobalt**   
■■■ Housing  
**Property Services**



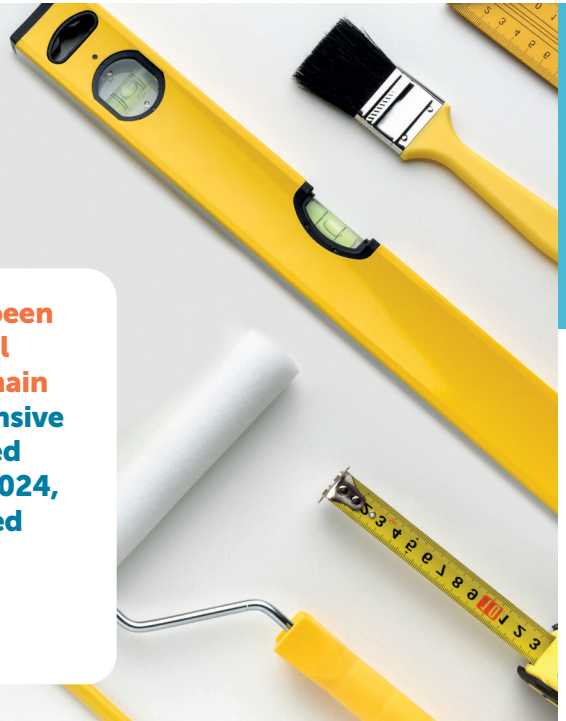
# 1 | Changes to our repairs service



*new*  
repairs team

**In recent years, your repairs have been carried out by a number of external contractors, with HMS being our main repairs contractor. Following extensive discussions, HMS and Cobalt agreed that our contract will end in July 2024, and we will grow our own dedicated in-house repairs team.**

This means that, after July, HMS will not carry out repairs to Cobalt properties.



## Why are we making these changes?

We've listened to our customers and colleagues and used your feedback to plan significant changes to our repair service and bring this service in-house. Cobalt Board agreed to these plans.

## New contractors

Growing our repairs service will take time and we have appointed two local contractors to work alongside us while we expand our in-house team.

We have partnered with Carroll Group and Penny Lane Builders, who will deliver day-to-day and emergency repairs alongside our current team.



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Scan here to watch a video explaining these changes and a summary of this newsletter.



## 2 | Meet the contractors

We held a number of Meet the Contractor events across our communities, giving customers the opportunity to speak to teams and ask any questions. We will hold repair surgeries throughout the year, where you can drop in and talk about any issues you are experiencing.

If you couldn't attend our Meet the Contractor events, here is an introduction to our new teams:



### Cobalt Housing Property Services

We have renamed and rebranded Cobalt Plus and will continue to grow this department to deliver responsive repairs and maintenance services. Our new in-house repairs service is called Cobalt Housing Property Services. You'll start to see our new vans on the road from August 2024.



### Penny Lane Builders

Penny Lane Builders has been delivering repairs, maintenance and construction services for housing associations since 1996.



### Carroll Group

Carroll Group has been delivering repairs, investment works and construction services for over 20 years. They specialise in working with housing associations.



### HMS

HMS will continue to carry out repairs to homes until their contact ends at the end of July 2024.

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### 3 | Who will carry out my repair



**We have split our repairs service across four neighbourhoods. Who carries out your repair will depend on which neighbourhood you live in:**



Repairs in Croxteth will be carried out by Cobalt Housing Property Services.



Repairs in Norris Green North (Baybrooke, Scarisbrick, Sedgemoor) will be carried out by Penny Lane Builders.



Repairs in Fazakerley and Sparrow Hall will be carried out by Carroll Group.



Repairs in Norris Green South (Coles North, Coles South, Ellergreen) will be carried out by Carroll Group.



## 4 | Reporting a repair

The ways you can report a repair won't change. For emergency repairs, such as an uncontrollable leak, damage to your home that means it is unsafe or dangerous or a complete electrical failure,

**Call us 24 hours a day,  
365 days a year on  
0330 303 2222.**



### For all other repairs, you can:

#### Go online

You can report your repair whenever it suits you through **My Cobalt**, our customer portal.

Visit to get started.



#### Phone us

**Call 0330 303 2222**

Our phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and Wednesday from 9am to 3pm.

#### Contact us through social media

Report your repair by sending us a direct message through Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.



#### Visit or write to us:

199 Lower House Lane  
Liverpool, L11 2SF.

Our reception is open  
Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

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# 5 | Appointments



**We offer a range of appointments to suit you.**  
**For repairs, you can choose from:**



**A morning appointment:**  
we'll visit your home between 9am and 1pm



**An evening appointment:**  
We'll visit your home between 5pm and 8pm



**An afternoon appointment:**  
we'll visit your home between 1pm and 5pm



**Saturday appointment:**  
We'll visit your home between 9am and 1pm

We offer morning and afternoon appointments as standard. However, if this is not suitable, you can ask for an evening or weekend appointment when you contact us. You can also let us know if you need to avoid visiting during the school run.

If you report a gas repair to us, morning appointments are between 8am and 12pm and afternoon appointments are between 12pm and 5pm.



# 6 | Repair promises

Our repairs standards have been developed based on feedback from customers and were shared with our Homes and Neighbourhood Committee, Tenant Consultative Panel, Repairs forum, engagement platform and our Improving our Repairs Task and Finish Group, which is made up of Board members and customers.

These are the final standards, approved by colleagues, customers and contractors.

These new repair standards will come into effect from 1st August 2024.



## Emergency repairs



4 Hours

We will attend emergency repairs within 4 hours. During the first we visit, we will make safe and will complete the repair within 24 hours.

### Emergency repairs includes:

- An uncontrollable water leak
- Damage to the property that means it is unsafe or dangerous
- Complete electrical failure.

## Urgent repairs



5 Working Days

We will complete urgent repairs within 5 working days.

### Urgent repairs include:

- A minor leak to the roof
- Partial loss of heating
- Broken extractor fan
- Door entry phone system not working.

## Routine repairs



20 Working Days

We will complete routine repairs within 20 working days.

Routine repairs are anything that won't cause damage to your home or an inconvenience to you.

### Routine repairs include:

- Damaged kitchen unit
- Leaking or blocked gutter
- Repairs to doors or windows that are not a security risk
- Plastering or repairs to wall tiles.

If we need to send a surveyor to your home, we will offer an appointment within 5 working days.

## Damp and mould



5 Working Days

If you report damp and/or mould to us, we will visit your home within 5 working days to carry out an inspection. Based on the results of this inspection, the following timescales apply:

- If the damp or mould is classed as severe and/or there are vulnerable people living in your home (young children, older people, people with health conditions), we will visit your home within 24 hours to make safe
- If the damp or mould is classed as moderate, we will carry out necessary work within 10 working days
- If the damp or mould is classed as slight, we will carry out necessary work within 28 working days.

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## 7 | What to expect from our contractors

**We have worked with our colleagues, contractors and customers to agree a set of standards, so you know what to expect when we visit your home to carry out a repair or safety inspection.**

### Before we visit your home, we will:

- Agree in advance the date and time of any home visits.
- Arrange for a surveyor to visit to assess the works and discuss what is required, if necessary.
- Let you know if we need to change your appointment and will re-book the appointment.



### During the works, operatives will:

- Introduce themselves and explain what they are going to do.
- Be polite and not use offensive language.
- Wear identification badges with their photograph and wear a clean and branded uniform.
- Wear plastic protectors on their boots
- Carry out all work in a safe and professional manner and follow health and safety regulations.
- Treat your possessions with respect.
- Clear away all dust and rubbish from your home once the repair is complete.
- Make sure your home is always secure, and let you know if doors and windows must be left open.
- Take a photograph of your front door to record attendance.
- Take before and after photos of the repairs.
- Agree the condition of furniture, carpets and other fittings and fixtures before work starts. This will be written down and you will be given a copy.

### Our trade colleagues and contractors will not:

- Use a radio in your home or in the immediate vicinity.
- Use a personal mobile phone to receive calls or texts while attending to the repair, except in an emergency.
- Smoke, vape or eat in your home.
- Move any of your possessions without your permission.
- Remove any carpets without your permission.
- Use anything in your home, including electricity, gas or water, without your permission.
- Enter your home if only a child is present. If no adult over 18 is in the home, they will have to cancel the appointment and you will need to re-book it.





### After the work is completed:

- We will make sure you are completely satisfied with the work and leave the area clean and tidy.
- If it is not possible to complete the work, we'll make sure your home is safe and arrange a new date to finish it.
- Show you how to work any new items, for example heating controls.

### In return we hope you will:

- Keep appointments and allow us to enter your home.
- Let us know if the appointment is not suitable.
- Be ready for the repair to be carried out, including moving anything that may get in the way of the work if you are able to.
- Be polite and considerate towards our employees and contractors.
- Keep your children and pets well away from the working area.
- Not smoke or vape while our employees or contractors are in your home.
- Not touch or interfere with the works while they are being carried out.
- Move or protect any fragile items in or near the working area.
- Accept that there is likely to be some disruption while the works are being carried out.



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## 8 | What to do if you are unhappy with your repairs service

### What you can do if you are unhappy with the service you have received

We want you to be happy with the service you receive first time, every time, but we know we don't always get it right.

If you have an outstanding repair or are unhappy with the service you have received, please tell us straight away so we can put it right.

### I have reported a repair but no one has been to my home

If you have reported a repair and have not yet had an appointment or if your appointment was missed, please call us on **0330 303 2222**. We can check the progress of your repair and can raise a complaint on your behalf.

### I have reported a repair but it hasn't been finished

If we have partially completed your repair but have not finished it, please call us on **0330 303 2222** and we will arrange a follow up appointment.

### You have carried out my repair but I am not happy with the quality

If you are unhappy with your repair, please call us on **0330 303 2222**. We will arrange for the contractor to visit you to discuss your concerns. Following this, a Cobalt surveyor will visit your home to make sure that you are happy.

### I want to make a complaint

If you are unhappy with the service you have received, you can make a complaint by:

- Calling **0330 303 2222**
- Sending us a direct message through Facebook or X (formally Twitter)
- Go to **[www.cobalthousing.org.uk/contact-us/make-a-complaint](http://www.cobalthousing.org.uk/contact-us/make-a-complaint)**
- Visit us or write to us at  
199 Lower House Lane, Liverpool, L11 2SF

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### I have already complained but I'm still unhappy

If you have followed our complaints procedure and are still unhappy, you can make a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Scan here to find out more or call **0300 111 3000**.

Scan here



### I have been contacted by a solicitor about making a disrepair claim

It's important to understand what will happen when you sign a contract with a claims management company or solicitor. These are legally binding contracts and you could be charged thousands of pounds if you change your mind at a later date. You may have to appear in court to give evidence.

Before you sign a contract, please speak to us first. If you have outstanding repairs, we will carry them out and you may be entitled to compensation.

### I have signed a contract and have been told not to let you in

You may be told not to let Cobalt or our contractors into your home while your case is underway. This is a breach of your tenancy agreement, and we will seek legal action to gain entry to your home if required. The cost of this will be passed back to you.

### What are you doing to improve the service I receive?

The significant changes we are making to our repairs service aim to improve the service that you receive. We have worked closely with our customers, colleagues and the Cobalt Board to agree a new set of standards and have put measures in place to monitor performance and satisfaction.

# 9 | Ways to stay in touch

## Ways to stay in touch



**Book repairs, reschedule appointments, pay your rent or check your rent balance by messaging Cobalt Solutions 24/7.**

MyCobalt allows you to manage your home and tenancy online, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Through the MyCobalt portal, you can pay your rent, view your rent account, report a repair and communicate with our Cobalt Solutions team. Registration is quick and easy, scan the QR code to find out more.



### Visit us

**199 Lower House Lane  
Liverpool  
L11 2SF**

**Our reception is open  
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.**

### Telephone

**Call Cobalt Solutions on  
0330 303 2222**

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