

E-bikes – don't risk a fire

The London Fire Brigade says that e-bikes and e-scooters are the capital's fastest growing fire risk.

There were 155 e-bike and 28 e-scooter fires recorded in London last year – including some in social housing properties. Three people died in these fires and around 60 people were hurt.



Most e-bikes and e-scooters are powered by lithium-ion batteries, which can be charged in the home.

It is essential to charge, store and dispose of them safely, because if they fail, they can explode and/or cause a rapidly developing fire.

Don't put your family at risk

- Buy e-bikes, e-scooters, chargers and batteries only from reputable retailers. Many fires involve fake electrical goods.
- If you are converting your bike to an e-bike, only buy a conversion kit from a reputable seller and check it complies with British or EU standards.
- If you buy components separately, make sure they are compatible.
- Register your product with the manufacturer – and check for any product recalls.
- Don't leave batteries to charge while you are asleep or away

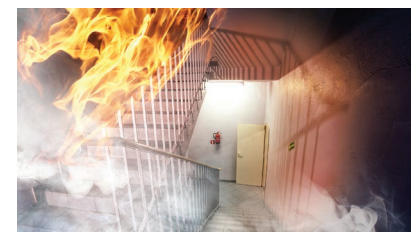
from the home. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and only use an approved charger, that is also in good condition.

- Do not cover chargers or battery packs when charging, or store your items near combustible or flammable materials, or overload sockets.
- Do not leave your e-bike, e-scooter or battery in communal areas. Keep them in a cool place.
- Batteries can be damaged by being dropped or during crashes, making them very dangerous. Check regularly for damage.
- Do not dispose of batteries in your household waste or recycling. Check for special recycling schemes in your area, or contact your local authority.
- In the event of an e-bike, e-scooter or lithium-ion battery fire – do not attempt to extinguish the fire. Instead, you should get out, stay out and call 999.

Don't put your home and tenancy at risk

Please note the following, if you let a lithium battery fire occur in your home.

- We don't have to rehouse you and your family – either temporarily or permanently (though you might get some temporary help from your local authority).
- You risk being taken to court and having a money order made against you, to cover the costs of the damage.





A new email address for housing enquiries

We have introduced a new email address for housing enquiries – housing@odu-dua.org – to give you a better and more responsive service.

You can use this email address to follow up on your:

- rents and arrears queries
- transfer and rehousing options
- estate services such as cleaning and garden maintenance, and
- anti-social behaviour reports.

The new email address goes straight to staff who can attend to your message – reducing the risk of messages waiting in individual inboxes while staff are away.

Please continue to use our separate repairs email address – repairs@odu-dua.org – to ensure we are handle your repair-related issues as efficiently as possible.

Your new rent and service charges

Your rent and service charges changed from Monday 1 April – and we wrote to give you notice in advance.

As soon as possible, please make sure you tell your Housing Benefit office (if your benefit is paid directly to you), or update your online Universal Credit account, with the correct new rent, if you claim these benefits.

You must also make sure you update your payments to Odu-Dua, so that you don't get into arrears.

This year's rent increases

The rent you pay allows us to provide, manage, repair and improve your homes.

When we set our rents each year, we follow Government guidelines.



This year, we were allowed to raise your rents by inflation plus 1%. The figure for inflation has to be taken from the Consumer Price Index in the previous September.

Inflation last September was high – at 6.7%. However, we know that a rise of 7.7% would be unaffordable for many. We decided instead to limit the increase to 5%.

A year with 53 weeks

If you pay your rent monthly, you will need to factor in that there are 53 weeks in this financial year and not the usual 52.

To work out your monthly rent, you need to multiply your weekly rent by 53 then divide it by 12.

For example, if:

- your weekly rent is £139.11
- $£139.11 \times 53 \text{ weeks} = £7,372.83$ for the year
- $£7,372.83 \text{ divided by } 12 \text{ months} =$ (when rounded up) £614.41.

Your service charges

On top of your rent, we make a charge for any additional services provided to your home or scheme.

If you pay a service charge, we have sent you a schedule with a breakdown of our costs. Our policy is to fully recover these costs.



Stock condition surveys are now complete

We have now completed the property surveys we arranged to check on the condition of our stock.

As well as helping us to plan future works, the report from our surveyors, Rand Associates, will identify problems that need sorting out straight away.

Thank you to all our tenants who helped in this process by providing access to their homes.

Don't get behind with your rent

We know times are hard for many, but please remember that paying your rent on time and in full is your most important responsibility as our tenant. Don't risk losing your home.

If you are struggling to pay your rent, contact us straight away. We are here to support you and we will help you get back on track if you:

- contact us straight away and keep us up to date
- open our letters and return calls
- work with us to set up a payment plan
- send income and expenditure forms back straight away, and
- consider a referral for debt advice (where this is needed).

These actions show you are making an effort to manage your situation.

We can also offer support if you claim benefits.

Upset about repairs? Don't withhold your rent

If you are upset about your repairs, please be aware you don't have the right to stop paying your rent. If you do, we can start formal action, putting you at risk of eviction.

To sort out your repairs problem, start by contacting our repairs team. Email repairs@odu-dua.org or



phone 020 7625 1799. We will try to sort the problem out quickly and, if that isn't possible, tell you what action we plan to take.

If you still aren't happy, you can raise a complaint for us to investigate.

If we do not carry out key repairs as

agreed in our repair policy, you can, in certain circumstances, use your right to repair.

To use your right to repair, there is a set procedure, which both you and we would need to follow.

Contact us for further information.



Are you insured?

We insure the building you live in, including the walls, floors, doors, windows, fixtures and fittings. We don't insure your possessions, or your internal decorations. To get cover for these items, you need to take out your own contents insurance.

Contents insurance will typically cover you for damage caused by fire, burglary, flooding and accidental damage. It will normally also cover you if a leak from your home causes damage in your neighbour's home.

Finding an insurer

To get a good deal, you can:

- search comparison websites like www.confused.com, or www.gocompare.com, for a choice of low-cost policies for people who rent their homes, or
- check out the My Home scheme, provided by Thistle Tenant Risks for the National Housing Federation. Phone them on 0345 450 7288 or go to: www.thistlemyhome.co.uk – you can request a callback if you need additional assistance.

Moving to Universal Credit

Universal Credit is replacing six benefits for working age people.

The benefits affected by the move to Universal Credit are:

- Housing Benefit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- Income Support

Unless you are over state pension age and applying for Housing Benefit, you can't usually make a new claim for these benefits.

If you have been on one of these benefits for a while, you can stay as you are for now. However, you will eventually have to move to Universal Credit. This will be by 2029 at the latest, or sooner, if:

- you get a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) telling you to claim Universal Credit by a certain date, or
- if you have to make a new claim

because your circumstances have changed (for example, if you've separated from a partner or moved to a different council area).

What to do if you get a letter about Universal Credit

If you've had a letter about Universal Credit, look closely at what it says.

- If the letter gives a deadline for you to claim Universal Credit, it qualifies as a 'migration notice'. The deadline should be at least three months after the date the notice was sent.
- If your letter doesn't have a deadline, you don't have to claim Universal Credit unless you want to – even if the letter says you'll have to claim Universal Credit in future. Bear in mind that you wouldn't be able to go back to your old benefits after you made your claim.

If your letter is a migration notice,



you must take action to claim Universal Credit by the deadline on the letter. Your old benefits will stop after the deadline – the switch to Universal Credit is not automatic.

If you claim Universal Credit before the deadline, the DWP might pay you extra to stop you being worse off. This is called 'transitional protection'. You would get an extra amount to cover any loss compared to your old benefits. However, the DWP will reduce the extra amount over time – so you'll eventually get the normal Universal Credit payment.

What happens when you claim Universal Credit

On Universal Credit, you will usually get one payment each month and have to manage your claim online.

It usually takes five weeks to get your first Universal Credit payment – but it could take longer.

Your old benefits might stop before your Universal Credit starts.

If you won't have enough money to live on while you wait for your first Universal Credit payment, you can ask for an advance payment. The advance payment is a loan and you will have to pay it back later.



We will charge you for some repairs

As part of your tenancy agreement, we carry out certain repairs in your home. Other repairs are your responsibility.

The table opposite shows who is responsible – you or us – for some of the main repairs that may be needed to your home.

In addition to the items listed in the table, you are also responsible for repairing or replacing any items that have been damaged or neglected by you, someone in your household, your visitor or your pets.

You can either do the work yourself, or pay someone else to do it for you. If you have contents insurance, you may be able to claim for accidental damage.

Recharges

If we have to carry out a repair that is your responsibility, we will recharge the cost back to you. When the total cost of the repair, including VAT, is below £50, we will need you to make an upfront payment before the repair can be scheduled.

If the total cost of the repair, including VAT, exceeds £50, we will require a deposit of at least £50. In addition, before work starts, we will ask you to complete a form agreeing your commitment to settling the balance.



Item	Responsibility	
	Odu-Dua	Resident
Structure and exterior of building, external redecoration	✓	
External doors and window frames	✓	
Fences, gates, boundary walls round communal gardens	✓	
Paths/external steps at front of building	✓	
Paths/steps/washing lines in a tenant's garden		✓
All communal areas and facilities, including TV aerials	✓	
TV aerial – individual		✓
Sanitary fixtures: baths, washbasins, sinks, WCs, soil pipes	✓	
Service installations: water pipes, taps, gas pipes, electrical supply, sockets, switches, consumer units	✓	
Insulation to pipes		✓
Water heaters, fireplaces, fitted fires, central heating	✓	
Broken glass in doors or windows		✓
Internal redecorations		✓
Replacing lost keys, gaining entry, replacing locks		✓
Providing/renewing lightbulbs		✓
Replacing gully covers to a particular home		✓
Sweeping chimneys		✓
Replacing batteries in smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms		✓
Bath panels		✓
Wooden airing cupboard slats/shelving		✓
Cupboard door catches, hinges, handles, including for kitchen units		✓
Cookers and fridges		✓
Curtain rails and battens		✓
Electricity and gas meters		✓
Disconnection/reconnection of appliances such as cookers and washing machines		✓
Plugs, chains to hand basins, sinks and baths. Replacing tap washers		✓
Toilet seats		✓
Blocked WCs, sinks, wastes		✓
Electric showers if installed by you		✓
Draft excluders to windows and doors		✓
Fitting door numbers, knockers, bells, door chains, if installed by you		✓
Repair, replace handles, ease and adjust internal doors		✓
Skirts to ceiling lamp holders		✓
Fuses to plugs and appliances		✓
Resetting electrical trip switches		✓
Adding additional electrical sockets		✓
Bleeding or venting central heating radiators		✓
Providing refuse bins to one property		✓
Additional home improvements, with written permission of Odu-Dua		✓

Key performance indicators: Jan-March 2024

Rent	Target 2023-24	Jan-March 2024
Rent arrears	3%	3.14%
Rent collected	100.5%	101.9%

Gas and carbon monoxide emergencies

If you have a suspected gas leak, or your carbon monoxide detector is activated, you should contact Cadent on 0800 111 999 immediately.

- Do turn off the gas at the meter unless the meter is in a cellar/basement.
- Don't smoke or strike matches.
- Don't turn electrical switches on or off.
- Do put out naked flames.
- Do open doors and windows.
- Do keep people away from the area affected.

If there is a fire, you should dial 999 to call the Fire Service and follow the fire safety procedure for your building, or the instructions given by the Fire Service.



No more fly tipping

Do the right thing with your waste and unwanted items!

It is illegal to dump your waste. Anyone caught doing this could face an on-the spot penalty of up to £400.

Across the country, it's known that the biggest dumping problem is domestic waste – from a single black bag to a lorry load. It affects the areas we live in, our environment, wildlife and biodiversity. Dumped waste can also include hazardous materials.

Fly tipping directly affects our tenants.

- When you fly tip, you are breaking your tenancy agreement. You are putting your tenancy and home at risk.
- Fly tipping affects the condition of your estate – making it less clean and safe.
- Refuse collectors don't collect dumped items. We have to pay for rubbish to be removed – a cost we have to pass on in your service charges.
- Dumped rubbish attracts mice and rats, creating health and hygiene hazards. Getting rid of infestations costs us time and money, which we have to pass on in your service charges.



Bulky waste collections

You can get bulky waste (such as beds, mattresses, furniture and old appliances) collected by contacting your council.

Barnet Council collects items for free. Book a collection online at: www.barnet.gov.uk/bulkywaste or phone: 020 8359 2000

Brent Council provides one free collection a year to people on benefits. Go to: www.westlondonbulkywaste.com to book online, email brent@anyjunk.co.uk or phone 020 3141 6007

Camden Council provides free collections to people over 65, or who get 100% Council Tax Support. Otherwise, there are charges (see: www.camden.gov.uk/bulky-waste-collection). Contact Veolia direct to arrange your collection, by phoning: 020 3567 8105.



Phone:
020 7625 1799

Email:
repairs@odu-dua.org
housing@odu-dua.org

Office address:
84–88 Kingsgate Road
West Hampstead
London NW6 4LA

Type of repair

All non-gas repairs during normal office hours

Non-gas emergency repairs outside office hours

Gas boiler/gas central heating breakdown (including an out-of-hours emergency)

Gas leak/smell

Total loss of gas/electricity

Total loss of water/external leak

Who to contact

Email repairs@odu-dua.org, OR phone 020 7625 1799 (option 2) to be directed to the team at Shian HA

Phone 020 7625 1799 (option 5) to be directed to Pinnacle

Phone 020 7625 1799 (option 3) to be directed to K&T Heating, OR 020 8269 4500 (direct line)

Phone the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999

Call your energy provider

Call Thames Water on 0800 316 9800