A GUIDE TO MAINTAINING YOUR HOME

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR HOME OWNERS
To make sure your home stays in good condition it’s important to inspect it at least once a year to check for any damage or disrepair which may have occurred.

Early repair will save you time, trouble and more importantly expense by stopping more serious issues arising in the future. Use the information and the diagram in this fact sheet to help you to identify and fix any problems that may exist and if necessary contact qualified tradespersons for advice. The Council’s leaflet ‘A Guide To Employing Tradespersons and Professional Services’ provides advice should you need to carry out works.

Remember 1 Stay Safe. Do not take risks! If you’re not sure if it is safe to do something, don’t do it! The following are examples of what to look for.

### Inside the Building:

#### Walls and Ceilings

Check ceilings and walls for signs of water coming in and try to find the cause of this by looking at the outside of the building.

#### Roof Space or Attic

Only go into the roof space if it is properly floored and has fixed loft ladders. Check joists, rafters, joins between roofs and walls and other visible surfaces for signs of rot, damp or water damage.
Outside the Building:

**Roof**

Don’t go up onto the roof itself, it is dangerous and can actually cause damage. Look at the roof from outside your home (using binoculars if possible) and contact a qualified roofing contractor if it is damaged or leaking. Check the chimney isn’t cracked or coming loose.

**Air Vents (at ground level)**

These should be clear of the ground and covered with a grate to stop vermin getting in.

**Damp**

This can be a serious problem. It can ruin interior and exterior décor, cause the growth of moulds and fungi and can result in wood rot and damage to the structure of your home.

**Walls**

Look for cracks, areas of decayed stone, gaps in the pointing (cement between bricks or stones) and bulging or leaning walls. If you discover any cracks in the walls don’t panic, these are often caused by settlement and are quite normal. However, if a crack becomes noticeably wider or goes through the stone and mortar of the wall contact a builder or surveyor for advice.

**Paintwork**

Check for any bare wood on windows or doors and repaint if necessary as exposed, untreated wood can rot. Check the mastic (sealant between the window frame and the wall) for signs of wear and repair any defects.

**Drainage**

Check gutters, down-pipes, drains and gratings for rust, cracks, leaks, loose fixings and blockages. Clear any plants or moss growing in the gutters which can cause a blockage and lead to leaks from the pipes and damage to the walls of your home. Damp patches on the wall can indicate a blockage in your drainage. Make sure drains are cleared properly, especially after heavy rain.

**Trees**

Are there any trees next to the building which could hit telephone or power lines or damage the building? If so action may be required to cut these back.
Things To Look For When Checking Your Building

Roof and Chimneys

- loose or missing slates or tiles
- holes or slits in flat roofs
- damage to flashings
- cracked or lose chimney pots

Maintenance:

- always call in a roofing professional to carry out any repairs
- if you have an open fire, get your chimney swept regularly

Roof Space

- damp patches in the attic or roof spaces
- damage to joists, rafters, other timber
- damage to joints between walls and roof

Safety First:

- don’t climb up onto the roof yourself – look from the outside, using binoculars if possible
Drainage

- blocked gutters and downpipes
- leaking gutters and pipes
- plants growing in gutters
- damp patches on the wall
- rubbish leaves or plants in the drains

**Maintenance:**

- clear out gutters out least once a year
- clear out drains regularly

**Safety First:**

- if you need to use a ladder to clear out the gutters, make sure you do this safely

Walls

- large cracks or crumbling in render
- eroding mortar between bricks or stones
- damp patches
- wide cracks that have recently appeared
- bulges/leaning walls
- damage to window sills and lintels above windows and doors

**Maintenance:**

- hire a builder to re-point the mortar between stones and bricks
- touch up paint or lime washed masonry if needed
External Paintwork

- cracked or splitting paintwork
- rotting wood

Maintenance:
- repaint every three to five years

Damp

- condensation
- mould and fungi
- damp patches on walls and ceilings
- leaking plumbing
- breaks in the damp proof course

Maintenance:

- Make sure kitchens and bathrooms have adequate ventilation – open windows regularly, use window vents and install an extractor fan
- Only dry laundry in well ventilated areas – preferably outside
- Line windowsills with absorbent strips purchased from DIY stores to collect condensation
- Put silica containers in areas susceptible to condensation, such as windowsills and kitchen cupboards
- Consider installing a dehumidifier if necessary
- Clean mould and fungi from walls with an anti-fungicidal wash
- Install or replace your damp proof course
Hiring a Contractor

Do

- Ask for references, quality tradesperson or professionals will be happy to supply details of happy customers.
- Ask if the tradesperson or professional is a member of a reputable trade association.
- Obtain quotations from at least 3 different contractors.
- Ask for a warranty or guarantee on the work and materials supplied and ensure you obtain any necessary certificates.
- Make sure you receive an invoice and a receipt for any work.

Don’t

- Trust companies when their literature does not contain an address.
- Employ anyone you do not trust.
- Pay cash upfront or before you are fully satisfied with the works.
Further Information

Local contractors are listed in directories including Yellow Pages www.yell.com and Thomson Local www.thomsonlocal.com. Alternatively, you can contact the following organisations, many of whom provide online search facilities to find local contractors:

- **Care and Repair** offer independent advice and assistance to help elderly and disabled homeowners repair, improve or adapt their homes so that they can live in comfort and safety in their own community.
  t: 0800 048 2882
  www.northlan.care-and-repair.org

- **The National Federation of Roofing Contractors** provides an online directory of roofing contractors.
  t: 020 7638 7663
  www.nfrc.co.uk

- **Federation of Master Builders** provides an online directory of building firms.
  t: 020 7025 2900
  www.fmb.org.uk/welcome

- **The Property Care Association (PCA)** provides an online directory of specialist contractors in the structural waterproofing, wood preservation, damp proofing and structural maintenance industries.
  t: 0844 375 4301
  e: pca@property-care.org
  www.property-care.org

- **Window Advice Centre** provides impartial advice and can assist homeowners to obtain quotations.
  t: 0141 332 7878
  www.windowadvicecentre.co.uk

- **Home Energy Scotland** provides information on all Energy Efficiency measures including any financial assistance which may be available.
  t: 0808 808 2282
  www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland

- **Gas Safe Register** provides an online directory of Gas Safe registered engineers.
  t: 0800 408 5500
  www.gassaferegister.co.uk
Scottish & Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation (SNIPEF) provides an online directory of licensed plumbers.

**t:** 0131 556 0600  
www.needaplumber.org

SELECT provides an online directory of electrical contractors in Scotland

**t:** 0131 445 5577  
www.select.org.uk/index.php

Under One Roof provides impartial advice on repairs and maintenance for flat owners in Scotland.

**e:** info@underoneroof.scot  
www.underoneroof.scot

Hiring an Architect, Surveyor or Engineer

Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) provides an online directory of Architects in Scotland.

**t:** 0131 229 7545  
www.rias.org.uk

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) provides an online directory of Chartered Surveyors.

**t:** 0131 225 7078  
www.rics.org

Find an Engineer provides an online directory of Structural Engineers.

**t:** 020 7235 4535  
www.findanengineer.com

Planning Permission and Building Warrants

North Lanarkshire Council Regeneration and Environmental Services provide information and advice on planning including applying for planning permission.

**t:** 01236 632500  
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

North Lanarkshire Council Building Standards Operations provide information and advice on building standards including applying for a building warrant.

**t:** 01698 812440  
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk
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