

HRM FACT SHEET: DRAINAGE ISSUES



Introduction

Blocked drains can be a common cause of confusion for tenants, especially when it's not always clear who is responsible for a blockage.

You may view the drainage system as part of the building and assume your landlord should be liable for its upkeep, but determining the cause of the blockage will help clarify who should be responsible for the cost.

Common causes of drain blockages

The pipes in your home are designed to carry wastewater away to the main sewer system. They're not designed to handle everything, though, so knowing what not to flush or pour down the drain is crucial.

Most residential pipes are made of plastic or copper and are a specific diameter to allow for the flow of liquids. Introducing other materials can restrict or completely block these pipes.

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The most common cause of blocked drains are:

- Pouring cooking oils and fats down the sink
- Flushing wet wipes, nappies and other unflushable objects
- Hair build-up
- Paper towels and cotton wool
- Coffee grounds
- Food
- WC Blocks

You should avoid putting any of these items down your drains, even if labelled 'flushable' - these items belong in the bin.

The council is not responsible for the costs of fixing blockages caused by items in the pipework and these repairs will be rechargeable works.

As a tenant, you have a responsibility to look after your home. This includes general maintenance, upkeep, and not placing items in the waste drainage system that could cause the drains to block.

What is the council responsible for?

It is our responsibility to maintain the drainage, pipes and other areas of plumbing.

Should a problem originate from wear and tear or structural damage we are responsible. We are responsible for all the drainage within the boundary of your property.

There are many potential causes of structural damage to drains, including tree roots, age, and ground movement. The older the building, the older the pipes are likely to be, and when wear and tear gets too much, a drain can collapse.

If the drainage is shared with multiple properties and the blockage is located past your property boundary, then the issue is considered a shared amenity and the local utility company is liable for fixing it. Typically for our districts the utility provider for waste services is Anglian Water and you will need to report the blockage to them.



If you have a blockage

If you experience a blocked drain, you can try using a plunger or drain snake to clear the blockage.

If this does not work you can either arrange for your own drain clearance contractor to attend or call us on 0300 123 4000 to arrange a repair call out. We appreciate that you may not be able to identify the cause of the blockage at the time of reporting the repair so we will provide any evidence required regarding the cause after we have completed the repair.

If the blockage is found to originate from an inside drain and caused by tenant there's no ambiguity, we will reclaim the cost as a rechargeable repair.

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