

Papworth Trust

Tenant Newsletter

April 2026



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Keep your drains clear: A simple guide for tenants

Blocked drains are a common household problem and can quickly turn into a bigger headache if they're not prevented. The good news is that a few simple habits can help keep your drains running smoothly and avoid costly repairs.

Your drains work hard

The pipes in your home carry wastewater away to the main sewer system every day. Most of these pipes are quite small and are designed mainly for liquids. When other items go down the drain, they can build up inside the pipes, slow the flow of water, and eventually cause a blockage.

Knowing what should and shouldn't go down your sinks and toilets is the easiest way to prevent problems.

Beware of wet wipes

Wet wipes are one of the biggest causes of blocked drains. Even if the packet says they're "flushable", they don't break down like toilet paper. Instead, they stay strong in water and can stick together in your pipes or in the sewer system.

Over time, they can create serious blockages that may lead to sewage backing up into homes and streets. To avoid this, always put wet wipes in the bin rather than flushing them.

What are fatbergs?

Fatbergs are large blockages that form in the sewer system when fats, oils and grease mix with things like wet wipes and other waste.

When fats and oils are poured down the sink, they cool and harden inside the pipes. As more waste sticks to them, they grow into solid masses that can block entire sections of sewer pipes. These blockages are difficult and expensive to remove.



What not to put down your drains

To keep drains clear and protect the environment, please avoid putting these items down sinks, toilets or drains:

- fats, oils and grease (FOG) – cooking oil, butter, lard, margarine and greasy leftovers. Let them cool and put them in the bin.
- wet wipes – even ones labelled "flushable".
- paper towels, tissues and cotton wool – these don't break down like toilet paper.
- sanitary products – always wrap them and put them in the bin.
- nappies – never flush them.
- medications – return them to a pharmacy for safe disposal.
- chemicals, paints and solvents – take these to a recycling centre.
- food scraps – use your food waste bin or compost instead.



Simple tips to prevent blockages

Remember the golden rule: If in doubt, bin it – don't flush it.

You can also help keep your drains clear by:

- scraping food scraps into the bin before washing dishes.
- letting fats, oils and grease cool before throwing them away.
- using a drain strainer to catch hair and food bits.
- occasionally running hot water down the sink to help wash away grease.



Small changes can make a big difference and help keep the drainage system working well for everyone.

If you have a blockage

If you experience a blocked drain, try using a plunger, liquid unblocker or drain snake to clear it. If these methods don't work, please report it to our Repairs and Maintenance Team by:

- telephone: **0330 678 0008 option 1**



Making your homes better

We've been busy behind the scenes improving homes and boosting energy efficiency. These upgrades are all part of our commitment to providing safe, comfortable, and high-quality homes. Here's a look at what's been happening and what's coming next.

Electrical rewires

To help keep homes safe and ensure compliance with current regulations, our contractors, Riggall and Hawksford, along with AP Freeman, have completed a substantial number of electrical rewires this financial year.

If you are contacted regarding rewire work in your home, it is essential that you provide access so it can be carried out, as these works play a vital role in reducing the risk of electrical faults and potential fire hazards, helping to protect you, your household, and your home.



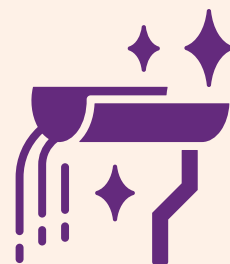
Kitchen, bathroom and external works

The contractor, Bell Group, is putting the finishing touches on this financial year's kitchen and bathroom upgrades. On top of that, they are also installing additional W.C.s this month to further improve comfort and convenience to some of your homes.



Gutter clearing and maintenance

BSG Property Services is nearly finished with this financial year's gutter and downpipe clearing programme with around 30 properties left to go. They are also carrying out moss removal to some homes where this has been identified from recent stock condition surveys.



Energy efficiency upgrades

We have started important energy efficiency improvements in partnership with EON and Dodds.

These upgrades include:

- better insulation and ventilation
- solar panel installations
- heating improvements



This work supports the Government's decarbonisation goals and helps make your homes warmer and more energy efficient. Works are expected to be completed by the end of this month.

Outdoor improvements: fencing and paths

External improvements are progressing well, with pathway upgrades on track to be completed this month.

Alongside this, we've been working with our contractor, Bell Group, to carry out measurements for potential fencing replacements. Please note that this work is part of our forward planning process and helps us budget for future years capital programmes; it does not mean that fencing work will take place in the next financial year.



Boilers and gas safety

Sureserve continues to carry out gas servicing, repairs and boiler replacements. New, energy-efficient boilers are installed when needed, based on stock condition surveys, helping to keep your homes safe and warm.

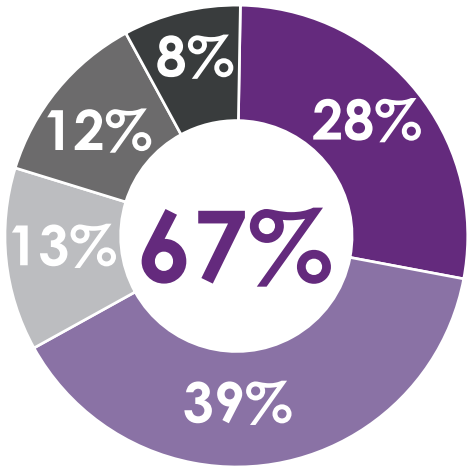


How we're performing: A look at your repairs service

We're aiming high to deliver the best possible housing service for our tenants. Our latest results from October to December 2025 show the progress we've made—and the work still ahead. Improving our repairs service remains a key priority, and we're pleased to see real progress being made. This is down to the hard work of our teams and our commitment to improving every day, and we'll continue working hard to provide a reliable service to our tenants.



Two-thirds of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by Papworth Trust **(67%)**.



- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied



Over six out of ten tenants are satisfied that they are provided with a home that is well maintained **(65%)**.



Slightly more tenants are satisfied that Papworth Trust provides them with a home that is safe **(69%)**.



Around two out of three tenants with communal areas are satisfied that these areas are kept clean and well maintained **(65%)**.



Around two-thirds of tenants agree that they are treated fairly and with respect by Papworth Trust **(64%)**.

Housing Management

Tenant satisfaction survey 2025-26

Between October 2025 and January 2026, 196 of our tenants took part in an important survey. All tenants were invited to take part in the survey by completing a postal, telephone or online questionnaire.

The survey was carried out by an independent market research company, Acuity Research and Practice. It focused on how happy you are with the way Papworth Trust maintains your homes and delivers key services. The survey also collected the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) as required by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Tenants who took part were entered into a prize draw, with three winning a £50 gift voucher. The findings will provide a view of the main drivers behind satisfaction levels and the issues tenants are most concerned about, informing Papworth Trust's future strategic and operational planning.

A big thank you to everyone who took part!

Carrying out this survey is just part of the work that Papworth Trust does to involve you in developing services. As well as publishing the results of the survey, we will use the findings to plan and improve the services we provide and identify ways in how we can involve tenants in shaping these service improvements. You can read the full report on our website:

www.papworthtrust.org.uk/housing/important-updates/



Or scan the QR code to be taken to our website

Rent changes for 2026-27

We've written to all tenants about this year's rent update. The increase follows the Government's Rent Standard and is set at 3.8% (September 2025 CPI) plus 1%, ensuring it remains fair and in line with national guidance. Please keep your rent letter safe, as you may need it for benefit claims. If you receive Housing Benefit, remember to update your local authority with your new rent, and if you're on Universal Credit, report the change in your online journal on the day it takes effect. If you pay by direct debit, there's nothing you need to do—we'll update it for you. If you pay by standing order, please contact your bank to amend your payment.



Need help?

If you have questions or would like support, please contact the Housing Team:

- Telephone: **0330 678 0008 option 2**
- Email: **housing@papworthtrust.org.uk**

Feedback and Complaints

Between October and December 2025, we received 8 complaints, up from 3 in the previous quarter. Two were withdrawn, leaving 6 investigated.

Outcomes and actions:

- 2 complaints were upheld and 4 were not upheld
- No compensation was awarded
- Actions included apologies, repairs to communal lighting (including new LED installation), and improvements to grounds maintenance

One complaint about shower size highlighted key learning:

- Consider larger minimum shower sizes in future developments
- Review similar showers as part of future improvement programmes
- Ensure all options are explored when resolving tenant concerns



Tenant Engagement

Tenant Scrutiny Panel

The Tenant Scrutiny Panel are a group of tenants who work with us to carry out reviews of the housing service. Panel members act as critical friends, giving us a customer perspective on our policies, procedures and working practices. There are currently 5 tenant panel members, 3 of which joined in 2023.

Between September 2024 and November 2025, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel carried out a detailed deep-dive review of how information about capital works (major improvement works to homes) is shared between Papworth Trust, contractors and tenants.

The panel's role is to review services from a tenant's perspective and help ensure they are working well. As part of this review, the panel looked at current processes, spoke with key staff and contractors and gathered evidence before making recommendations for improvement.

What the panel found

Overall, the panel found that while work was taking place, there were some areas where communication could be improved. For example:

- tenants were not always receiving the right information at the right time
- some appointments were missed or visits took place without prior notice
- contractors did not always show identification when visiting
- some internal systems required the same information to be entered more than once, which slowed processes down



The panel also learned that delays had sometimes been caused by budget approval processes. However, during discussions with the Finance and Housing Directors, the panel heard that improvements had already been made to these processes, which should help prevent similar delays in the future. The panel will continue to monitor this to ensure the changes are working as intended.



Recommendations and next steps

Following the review, the panel made 9 recommendations to improve communication and strengthen processes. These were discussed with Senior Housing staff in November 2025 and February 2026.



The recommendations focus on:

- developing a standardised stock condition survey template
- creating “meet the contractor” Q&A videos to help tenants better understand upcoming works
- providing a more structured and consistent communication schedule
- improving how capital works are tracked, including a shared system for monitoring progress
- including regular capital works updates in the quarterly tenant newsletter
- increasing contractor awareness of tenants’ individual needs
- introducing unannounced inspection visits while capital works are being carried out
- better coordination between contractors to ensure work is completed in the right order and at the right time
- monitoring approval processes and response times to ensure changes deliver the intended outcomes

The panel and staff have agreed updated timescales, and an action plan has been developed setting out each recommendation, along with responsibilities for delivery. Progress will be reviewed at quarterly Tenant Scrutiny Panel meetings, with regular updates shared.

You can view the action plan online:

www.papworthtrust.org.uk/Scrutiny%20Panel/scrutiny-reviews/

or request a printed copy from Tracey Croucher,
Customer Engagement Lead:

Email: Tracey.Croucher@papworthtrust.org.uk

Telephone: 0330 678 0008 (option 2)



Or scan the QR
code to be taken
to our website

Cost of Living

We recognise that there remains a continuing struggle with the rising cost of living. We are here to help and if you need advice about paying your rent or if you are worried about your finances then please contact us. You can do this by:

Calling your Housing Officer on **0330 678 0008 option 2**
Emailing: housing@papworthtrust.org.uk

Please do contact us if you are experiencing any problems paying your rent or other household bills. We can arrange to speak to you in a way and at a time that suits you.

Household Energy Support www.ofgem.gov.uk/get-help-if-you-cannot-afford-your-energy-bills From 1 April to 30 June 2026 energy prices will go down by £117 or 7% for a typical household who use electricity and gas and pay by direct debit.	Join your energy provider’s Priority Services Register. By doing this you will get a range of extra help when you need it. Contact your supplier straight away if you are worried about paying your energy bills. Ofgem’s rules mean they must work with you to agree a payment plan you can afford. Contact one of the organisations below who can provide you with advice and guidance.
National Energy Action Warm Homes, Healthy Futures Programme	Eligible tenants can access help with energy advice, efficiency tips, benefit checks, crisis support such as fuel vouchers, and more to help keep homes warmer and healthier this winter. Please contact your Housing Team who can support you by making a referral on your behalf: Telephone: 0330 678 0008 and select option 2 Email: housing@papworthtrust.org.uk
Household Support Fund You may be able to get some help with essential costs from your local council.	Check with your local council to find out what funding is available in your area: www.gov.uk/find-local-council

Citizens Advice www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/cost-of-living/get-help-with-the-cost-of-living/ A network of independent charities offering confidential advice online, over the telephone and in person for free.	Cost of living support information can be found on the website. National phone line 0800 144 8848 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday Calls are free Find your local Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/
Scope www.scope.org.uk/helpline The helpline advisors can answer questions and talk you through a wide range of topics connected with disability, including: • Benefits • Finance • Social care • Work • Equipment and assistive technology • Housing and home adaptations	Telephone helpline 0808 800 3333 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm Saturday Email helpline helpline@scope.org.uk Textphone dial 18001 then 0808 800 3333 Calls are free from UK landlines and mobiles
Food Bank The Trussell Trust provide foodbanks across the region. Your Housing Officer can support you to get a foodbank voucher *maximum of 3 vouchers per customer during any 6-month rolling period	Check where your nearest foodbank is here: www.trussell.org.uk/emergency-food Contact your Housing Officer for a voucher.



Handyperson service in Cambridgeshire

Age UK operates a handyperson service supporting disabled and older people in their own homes to live independently and safely for longer. It also completes minor DIY tasks, the jobs you maybe did in the past but feel unsafe to do so now. The handyperson Service supports people living in Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire, Huntingdon and Fenland.

Further information can be found here:

www.ageuk.org.uk/bp-assets/globalassets/cambridgeshire--peterborough-/original-blocks/cambridgeshire-handyperson-service.pdf

To find out if there is a handyperson in your area, please visit the Age UK website: www.ageuk.org.uk or call the Age UK Advice Line on **0800 678 1602**

Universal Credit – What you need to know

Universal Credit (UC) is a single monthly payment to help cover your living costs – including your rent. It's gradually replacing a number of benefits, including Housing Benefit.



Universal Credit rolls multiple benefits into one monthly payment, which goes straight into your bank account. It replaces:

- Housing Benefit
- Income support
- Child Tax Credit
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
- Working Tax credit

You don't need to do anything unless:

- Your **circumstances change** (like moving home), or
- You get a '**Migration Notice**' from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

telling you to move to Universal Credit by a certain date.

Don't ignore this letter – it's important!



What happens to my rent payments?

Under Universal Credit, you'll receive the Housing Element (the part that used to go to your landlord) directly as part of your monthly payment.

This means you'll be responsible for making rent payments yourself – usually by Direct Debit or Standing Order. If you need help doing this reach out to your Housing Team on **0330 678 0008 (Option 2)** or email housing@papworthtrust.org.uk – we're here to help.

Can my rent still be paid straight to Papworth Trust?

In certain cases where you are eligible you can ask for your Housing Element to be paid directly to your landlord – this is called an Alternative Payment Arrangement (APA). However, there are certain grounds for direct payments and requests are subject to UC's approval. Please contact us to enquire if you are likely to meet the criteria for direct payments.

First-time UC claim? Here's what to expect

- It can take at least 5 weeks to get your first payment
- Payments are made monthly in arrears
- Once it starts, you'll get your UC on the same day each month

You can apply:
Online at: **gov.uk/universal-credit**
Call UC Migration Helpline: **0800 169 0328**
Visit your local Jobcentre

When you log in, you'll see a 'to-do list' with questions you need to answer before you can submit your claim, to prevent any delays to your claim we advise you complete these actions promptly.

Who doesn't need to switch?

If you live in supported, sheltered, or temporary accommodation, or you get care, support, or supervision, you should continue to claim Housing Benefit from your local council and UC for everything else.

Need support?

- **UC Helpline:** 0800 328 5644 (Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm) *free from landlines and mobiles.
- **Sign Language users:** Use the Video Relay Service (VRS)

Papworth Trust Housing Team:

Tel: **0330 678 0008 (Option 2)**

E-mail: **housing@papworthtrust.org.uk**



If something in your home needs to be repaired, please report it as soon as possible.

Our telephone line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you call us on Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm, you call will be answered by us. Outside of these hours, your call will be picked up by a call centre.

To report repairs by telephone: **0330 678 0008 option 1**

To report repairs by email:

repairsandmaintenance@papworthtrust.org.uk

Housing Team

Contact the Housing Team if you would like to speak to your Housing Officer or discuss your rent. Our telephone line is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Telephone: **0330 678 0008 option 2**

Email: **housing@papworthtrust.org.uk**



Supporting disabled people to be seen for who they are.



01480 357200



www.papworthtrust.org.uk



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Papworth Trust, 1 Saxongate, Bradbury Place, Huntingdon, PE29 3RR