

Taylor
Wimpey



Home maintenance guide



Handy guide to looking
after your new home



Taking care of your home

A new home is an individually-built hand-crafted product. This handy guide covers many different aspects of how to effectively take care of your new home.



You'll find lots of helpful tips and tricks, FAQs and other useful information about your new home on Touchpoint.



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Your home warranty

Your home comes complete with a warranty which lasts for two years from the date of legal completion and covers items not included in the NHBC Buildmark cover. For that period, we guarantee items supplied as part of your new home, covering defects caused by any faulty workmanship or materials.



Quality check

Our homes are quality checked before you move in, but in the unlikely event you should find a cosmetic defect, this must be reported within the **first seven days** after your agreed move in date.

Change of ownership

Your warranty is not affected if you sell or let your home. It would help if you could pass on the details about the warranty and what it covers to tenants or subsequent buyers. If you sell your home, whilst it is still within warranty, the cover automatically transfers to the new owners.

Your rights

Your warranty does not affect your statutory rights. Some manufacturers also offer warranties to Taylor Wimpey customers over and above the initial Taylor Wimpey two year warranty. Please contact the manufacturer's own Customer Services department.

Please note that we do not protect you against every problem that may occur and you are obliged to carry out maintenance on your home. Several limitations and conditions apply.



Alterations

Any alteration or extension made to your home or garden following legal completion may adversely affect all or part of your warranty. Please liaise with your Taylor Wimpey regional office if you plan to alter or extend your home.



Appliances

All of your appliances come with a manufacturer's warranty – it is your responsibility to register the appliances to ensure the validity of the warranties. They are not covered by the Taylor Wimpey warranty.



Smart meters

Please note that the installation of a Smart Meter may invalidate your warranty cover. Always check first with your installation engineer and warranty provider.



Our warranty does NOT cover:

- Problems with any workmanship, materials or appliances that you have brought or added to the property
- Damage caused by storms or accidentally, by negligence, abuse or poor maintenance of the property or appliances. This includes blockages caused by inappropriate disposal of waste
- Any cosmetic defects such as scratches, chips or marks that have not been reported within seven days of legal completion. This includes decoration, flooring, tiling, textured ceilings, kitchen units, fitted bedroom and bathroom furniture, worktops, sinks, sanitary ware, appliances, glass and other similar items.

Outside of this time frame, it may be difficult to establish how the damage was caused

- Any problems caused by shrinkage or condensation
- Any inconvenience, distress, consequential loss of enjoyment or income loss caused by remedial works, assuming all reasonable steps have been taken to minimise disruption.

If you experience a leak, please contact your home insurer for advice. Depending on what's caused the leak, they may be able to help in a number of ways – including covering the cost of repairs.



More information

For more general advice on caring for your new home, explore the website or log in to your TouchPoint account.



Home safety



It's important to maintain your home, but safety should be your first consideration before doing anything.

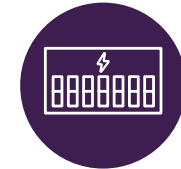
Below is a list of jobs we suggest should be carried out by a qualified professional. However, if there are any other jobs you do not feel comfortable doing yourself, always seek professional help.



Any structural alterations to your home



Testing and repair of all gas and heating appliances



Replacing and testing of RCDs as instructed by the manufacturer



Testing and repair of all electrical appliances



Replacing smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors



Testing of security alarms (where fitted)



Installing child safety measures

When installing child safety measures such as safety gates or cupboard safety catches, always follow manufacturers installation guidelines. Taylor Wimpey cannot be held responsible for any damage caused when installing such items.





Emergencies

Emergencies should be reported by telephone. If it is an emergency, we will endeavour to respond to you within two hours. Before you call us, it may help to visit our website – www.taylorwimpey.co.uk/customerservices – where there is some useful advice which may assist you in resolving any issues you are experiencing.



Non-emergencies

Our Customer Service team will deal with all calls and correspondence within office hours. Outside office hours, we can only respond to emergencies.



What is an emergency?

Central heating and hot water

Complete failure of the combined central heating/hot water system. Before calling, please check that this has not been caused by local electricity or gas supply problems or by incorrectly setting your timers or thermostats, or by any shut off device that can be reset by the user. Please refer to boiler/cylinder instructions for further details.

Water supply

Complete loss of water supply. Before calling, please check that your water supplier has not turned off the water to carry out repair work in the area.

Water leak

When a leak cannot be contained and is causing damage, particularly if it is leaking into an electrical fitting.

Gas leak

Please contact your gas supplier on the emergency number 0800 111 999, before calling us. They will be able to isolate the meter and make your home safe.

Total loss of gas

Before calling us, please check that your gas supplier has not turned off the mains to carry out repair work in the area.

Loss of power supply to socket outlets

When there is a total loss throughout the property and it cannot be solved by resetting the master trip switch, or if the loss is partial but there is a potential safety hazard (such as in a communal hallway). Please check that your electricity supplier has not turned off the mains to carry out repair work and that there is no local power failure.

Blocked drains

When they are causing a flood or overflowing internally or externally.

Blocked toilet

When you have no other usable toilet.

Please see page 18 for more information about maintaining and unblocking your drains and toilets.

What to do when it is not an emergency?

For all non-emergencies, please call us during office hours only. We will endeavour to resolve all issues within seven days if parts are not required and within twenty eight days if parts are required.

We would like to advise you that all non-emergency issues will be attended to at a mutually convenient time during normal working hours.

Examples of non-emergencies are:

- Dripping taps
- Faulty kitchen appliances.

Taylor Wimpey has arranged for you to have access to some manufacturer's own Customer Service departments. These numbers are with your appliance instructions. Please refer to Touchpoint or our website for further details.



Your home inside & out

From what you need to know to routine
maintenance tips – it's all covered here.



What you need to know

The following pages cover
what you need to know.

General

Extreme weather conditions

Taylor Wimpey is not responsible for any damage caused to your property by extreme weather conditions i.e. storms, high winds, freezing temperatures etc.

Particular attention should be paid to external taps (if fitted) to ensure they are lagged and drained. Any problems that arise should be covered by your own home insurance.

Holidays/extended periods of non-occupancy

We would recommend that you take all necessary precautions before going away on holiday or leaving your home unoccupied for long periods of time.

Taylor Wimpey cannot be held responsible for any damage caused if the correct precautions are not taken during these periods.

Don't forget to check that your insurance will cover you if you are going to be away from your home for an extended period.



To minimise shrinkage, try to keep a reasonably even temperature throughout your home, even in rooms which are not occupied.



Structural

Homes should be run-in gently over the first few months. This is because concrete, bricks, timber, plaster and other materials will have absorbed water during construction.

You may not be aware of it, and it certainly will not do you any harm, but it does need to evaporate slowly and be ventilated away.

Shrinkage

Shrinkage will affect all new homes to some degree. As your home is lived in and heated, timber, flooring and other materials will shrink and this can cause small cracks on wall and ceiling finishes.

The length of time your house takes to dry out depends on how it was built and what sort of weather conditions there are when you first move in.

Small cracks or gaps may also appear at joints and corners of skirting boards and other interior joinery. These natural cracks are an unavoidable part of the build process and Taylor Wimpey are not responsible for correcting them.

It's extremely unlikely that these cracks are anything structurally significant, and they can normally be put right very easily with ordinary filler and a simple lick of paint during routine redecoration.

Drying out

To keep shrinkage to a minimum, you need to allow all the materials used in constructing your home time to dry out gradually. Try to maintain a reasonably even temperature throughout your home for at least the first 12 to 18 months, even in rooms which are not occupied.

If you move in during winter months try to use the central heating sparingly at first, so that the structure of your home warms up and dries out gradually.

Your home needs to be kept well ventilated to allow moisture to evaporate as the structure dries out. Leave windows or, at least, the trickle vents (slotted vents in the window frame) open for as long as you can safely each day.

If your home has a mechanical ventilation system this should be left running at all times. It must be used and serviced as per manufacturers' instructions.

Efflorescence

A consequence of drying out may be the appearance of a white deposit on walls, called 'efflorescence'. This is caused by natural salts coming out of the wall materials and is quite normal. It is not harmful and usually disappears over time. If efflorescence occurs on internal walls it can be wiped or brushed away.

If efflorescence persists internally, it could indicate a water leak, in which case you should contact the Customer Service team within the first two years of warranty.



Kitchens and bathrooms

Reducing condensation

Condensation is caused by steam or water vapour when it comes into contact with cold surfaces (in the same way that steam in the bathroom condenses on the window). Condensation is common in new and newly converted homes while construction materials dry out. If allowed to persist it can sometimes cause mould on walls and ceilings. In exceptional circumstances, condensation and mould can damage clothes, bedding, floor coverings, decorations and the home itself.

There are several things you can do to prevent condensation – please see the diagram opposite for some ideas.

Once materials have dried out, you should no longer experience significant condensation. However, normal daily activities produce a great deal of water vapour, which may cause condensation if allowed to spread around the home.

In cold weather you may notice some moisture on the felt under the roof tiles of your home. This is due to warm moist air from inside your home passing through the ceiling and condensing on the cold timber or felt and should gradually disperse.

Further information is available in the NHBC Guidance leaflet 'Condensation in your new home' and 'Condensation in your roof space'.

Ventilate moisture away

Ventilation is needed to get rid of the moisture that is naturally produced every day in your home and ensure good internal air quality. The trickle vents (slotted vents in the window frames) are intended to provide constant 'background' ventilation and should be left open when rooms are occupied.

Provide even heating

Homes where the heating is off all day because the occupants are out, are more likely to suffer condensation problems than those heated more continuously. This is because, when normal activities such as washing and cooking are carried out in the evening, the home has been unheated for long periods and so surfaces are cold.

Make sure the central heating timer is set so that your home is warm by the time you return home. During very cold weather, it may better to leave the heating on during the day to maintain an even temperature. The temperature can be set a few degrees lower and turned up when you return.

! **Induction hobs**
Always ensure you are using pans that are suitable for an induction hob. If you have a pacemaker fitted, ensure the induction hob will not interfere with its functionality before using the induction hob.

Use your cooker hood and/or extractor fans and keep the doors closed when cooking, washing, bathing and drying clothes indoors. Use the boost mode on extractor fans when cooking.





Electrical



Where recessed down lighters have been installed within your property, any replacement lamps should match the existing specification. Alternative lamps such as halogen can give off more heat and can cause overheating which could potentially result in a fire.



Plumbing

Winter precautions

To ensure your house is kept safe from frozen/burst pipes, keep your heating on a constant setting during extreme weather conditions.

For radiators fitted with a manual radiator valve, and to protect your pipework, please ensure the valves are kept open to keep the system running smoothly when your heating system is on.

If you have had an external tap fitted to your home it is important that, as winter approaches, you turn off the shut off valve on the pipe and the tap/pipe is drained. The valve is located where the external tap is connected to your water supply, this is usually beneath your kitchen sink.

Toilets and drains

You are responsible for the upkeep of the pipes in your home. Sewers are only designed to take water from your toilets, sinks, baths and showers along with human waste and toilet tissue.

Blockages are normally caused by:

- Fat, oil and food leftovers that solidifies in pipes
- Wet wipes – even the ones labeled ‘flushable’ can block your pipes
- Sanitary items, including towels and tampons.

Leftover fat, oil and grease cool, are to be placed in a suitable container and disposed in the bin. Everything else should be put in the bin.


Unblocking drains and toilets

If your sink or toilet is blocked and overflowing, it is recommended that you call a plumber.

If the water in your toilet or sink is slow moving, before contacting a plumber, there are a few things you do to try and release the blockage yourself.

A plunger is one of the most effective methods of moving small blockages.

You can also try pouring boiling water and household detergent down the plughole or toilet, then leaving it for 10 minutes before flushing or rinsing through with hot tap water. This will help melt and break up grease and soap residues.

 **Boiling water can cause serious, sometimes life-changing injuries if it comes into contact with skin. It is therefore essential that you take extra care at all times to:**

- Ensure children are made fully aware of the work you are carrying out and that they are safely out of harm's way before you begin work.
- Move pets to another room and keep them there for the duration of the work.
- Check that pathways are free of from potential trip hazards.
- Always wear practical, long sleeved garments (a waterproof jacket for example), heavy duty rubber gloves and leave no skin exposed.



Fixing to walls

Most light pictures can be hung on a steel pin or hook (the type obtained at any DIY store) and hammered into the plasterboard.

However, for heavier items such as wall mirrors, floor cupboards or wall cupboards, we recommend a sturdier fixing. Before applying any type of fixing to a wall or surface, always check for wires or pipes beforehand.

Walls and ceilings

The walls in your home are either timber frame, metal frame or block construction, lined with plasterboard.

It is important to know what type of walls you have prior to attempting to attach anything to them. You will need to ensure that the correct fixings are used depending on the wall type.

Ceilings and wall linings of plasterboard may perform essential fire, noise and vapour insulation functions, so please bear this in mind when considering any alterations or work to these.

Internal walls generally have a hollow cavity, so such items may need to be attached with a steel cavity fixing, mounted through holes in the wall, gripping the plasterboard from behind.

All of the walls in your house have been painted, however this is a temporary coating whilst your house dries out until you decide to decorate.

Should you wish to paint, we recommend a water based paint as this will allow the home to continue to dry out. We do however recommend you wait at least 12 months to decorate your home.

Fixing to ceilings or walls

Always check for cables and pipes prior to attempting to fix anything.

For heavier items, always follow the manufacturer's guidance when affixing to walls or surfaces.

Party walls

Don't make holes in a party wall that separates you from your neighbour as this will cause sound to travel easily and will reduce fire resistance.

Fixing to a partition wall

Locate the position of the framework by tapping across the wall. The studs are usually about 600mm or 450mm apart and produce a dull solid sound.

If you can't find the studs, make a small hole where you think the stud may be – if you hit the cavity you've missed the spot.

If your fixing is to go on a stud, drill through the plasterboard into the timber until you get to the metal and use recommended fixings. If you are not sure, do not proceed without professional advice.



Fixing to ceilings

Ceilings are made of the same construction as walls and you should fix to them in the same way – locate the joists and fix to them. If you do not do this, use a toggle or patent anchors.

Make sure you don't suspend heavy weights from the ceiling, it is not designed for this purpose. Make sure you locate wires and pipes prior to installation of fixings.





Windows & doors

External condensation

Condensation, and in very cold scenarios, ice can form on the external pane of some modern glass units.

This is a sign that your new windows are doing the job you bought them for, to retain more heat inside the home and to save money on heating bills.

External condensation will disappear as the day warms up.

Internal condensation

The use of highly efficient sealed units has vastly reduced the incidence of internal condensation. Modern window units prevent the heat from escaping, or put another way, stop the cold from 'getting in'.

For this reason the internal face of the glass is much warmer than it otherwise would be, and condensation is far less likely to form.

As with any internal condensation good ventilation is the key. Regardless of how good the window system is, excessive volumes of moisture in the air from drying clothes, bathrooms, cooking etc may ultimately end up forming as condensation on your glass.

During the colder months, regularly open windows and vents, particularly in small spaces, to clear condensation and ventilate your home.

Other spaces

Roofs

Tiles on sloping roofs are brittle and easily cracked. They are not designed to take a person's weight. Anyone working on the roof, for example to install a television aerial or window cleaners, must use suitable access equipment.

Flat roofs are also not designed to take heavy loads and can be easily damaged. Do not allow window cleaners or decorators to use the roof for access without protecting the surface. Stone chippings on the roofs are to protect the felt from strong sunlight. Do not remove them.

Fire Doors

It is your responsibility to make sure that all fire doors are kept closed within the property. No alterations can be made to the fire doors this includes adding hooks to the back of the doors.



Garages are not designed to be used for general storage, as they are not designed to be weather tight and items stored there could get damaged. Taylor Wimpey are not responsible for any damage caused to items stored in the garage.



Routine maintenance

As you would expect, there are many areas within your new property that will benefit from regular maintenance.

For example, we recommend that locks and hinges to windows and doors, together with garage doors and cables are regularly lubricated to help keep the mechanisms in good working order.

If at any point you are unsure about the maintenance of your new property, we recommend seeking professional help.



Taking care of your home requires regular maintenance. This helpful checklist is set out according to the seasons and will guide you through the basics of routine maintenance.



Ensure any wooden garden furniture is oiled and fully prepared for the drier summer weather.



Spring

Spring is the perfect time to check walls, windows, gutters and other external features of your home and plan any summer remedial works.

- Check the roof for any damage sustained over winter and for moss growth.
- Inspect and, if needed, clean guttering and drainage holes. Leaves, moss and debris should all be removed to ensure water drains efficiently and effectively away from walls and outdoor spaces.
- If you have air bricks make sure they are clean and clear. These bricks allow air to circulate under the floors of buildings that have a suspended timber floor. If they get blocked you risk damp.
- Check window frames for damage or condensation between the panes.
- Check your exterior paintwork and patch up flaking areas. You may want to look to arrange any decorating works for the summer.
- Shift sofas and other furniture to one side and clean underneath and behind them. While furniture is away from walls you can also check for damp.
- Check your loft for any signs that water got in over winter and everything is as it should be.
- While you are up there measure your insulation. It should be at least 270mm deep. Top it up if needed.

Summer

Summer is for outdoor repairs, garden maintenance, and perhaps taking time to review utility bills in time for the coming of autumn.

- Clean your garden furniture.
- Clean patios and jetwash decking at the start of summer to prevent them getting slippery.
- Repair and paint any external woodwork including fencing, fascias and doors.
- Repointing is best done in the warmer, drier summer months.
- Prune any large trees or shrubs that are close to your home in order to reduce their water consumption which can contribute to subsidence.
- Trim any climbing plants and don't let them grow across windows, vents or guttering.
- Get your boiler serviced.
- Take a look at the seals around your baths and sinks to make sure there aren't leaks. Where sealant is discoloured it may be showing signs of wear which could lead to a leak. Prevent this by re-doing it yourself or finding a handyman to do it for you.
- As summer draws to a close shop around to make sure you are still getting the best price for your gas and electricity.



Autumn

It's time to pack away all the outdoor furniture and prepare your home for the coming winter months.

- If you have a flat roof check it for damage and any sitting water.
- Bleed radiators so they work effectively in heating your home.
- Clean and store away garden furniture, barbecues and outdoor toys.
- Once the leaves have dropped, clear your gutters and drainage holes. At the same time make sure all pipes are securely fixed to walls.
- Clear leaves and debris that has gathered around your external walls to prevent any risk of damp.
- Clear leaves from the lawn and leave the grass a little longer to help protect it against the impending cold weather.
- Make sure there is at least 150mm clearance between your damp proof course and the ground.
- Insulate any external pipes or taps to prevent them freezing and bursting over winter.
- As the nights draw in make sure any security lights are working and outbuildings and sheds are locked.

Winter

Stay observant over the winter months, and don't forget to let some air in to help prevent damp.

- Check your fences and trees for storm damage regularly. Undertake repairs quickly to prevent a fall causing further problems.
- Take a look at your roof – from across the street or the bottom of the garden – for slipped tiles after windy weather.
- Clean leaves and debris from the garden and trim trees to avoid loose or dead branches coming down in strong winds.
- Prevent damp by opening windows occasionally and using extractor fans.
- Check your pipes for leaks after particularly cold weather.
- Tether down any large garden items in case of storms. Trampolines and garden play tents have been thrown huge distances by strong winds.



Buy a basic toolkit from your local DIY store and maintain and repair as you go. Taking care of the little things when they pop up is the key to keeping costs to a minimum further down the line.

Monthly maintenance essentials

Check, inspect and maintain these monthly essentials to keep your home performing at its best all year round.

- Check the boiler pressure and bleed all radiators.
- Clean and clear drains of debris.
- Check and clear air vents of blockages and debris.
- Follow the manufacturer's cleaning guidelines for all your kitchen appliances.
- Check bath and shower sealant and repair where required.
- Test your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Top up salt and rinse aid in the dishwasher.
- Submit your gas and electric meter reading to avoid unexpected bills.
- Do a little garden maintenance.





Rinse boiling water mixed with detergent through the sink and basin pipes to keep them clear and clean.*



Regular maintenance of bath and shower seals helps prevent leaks and the formation of mould.



Regularly replace the carbon filters in your extractor hood to help keep cooking odours and discoloured ceilings at bay.



Do not use abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, powders or wire wool on taps, or let them come into contact with paint stripper or chemical de-scaling agents.



Kitchens & bathrooms

Looking after tile grout and bathroom sealant

Follow our top tips for maintaining the condition of tile grout and mastic:

- After you take a bath or shower, wipe moisture from the tiles to prevent a build up of dirt and check for any gaps that might appear
- Should mildew or mould appear, use a recommended household product to clean it
- Check your bath and shower sealant regularly and carry out any repairs promptly as required.

Steam cleaning

Steam cleaning appliances should not be used on laminate and Amtico flooring, as this may have an adverse affect or reaction to the surface causing damage or distortion. Nor should they be used on kitchen surfaces for the same reason. Be aware that using a steam cleaner will add more moisture to your home.

Pipes

It is a good idea to regularly check that the pipes under the kitchen sink have not loosened.

Descaling

If you live in a hard water area, which is prone to scale and calcification, you may need to descale the shower head every few months (or as and when needed).

An effective way to do this is to soak the head in a mixture of water and white vinegar, then the flakes of scale should rinse away.

To avoid rapid scale build up, we advise that after use you tilt the shower head at an angle, which will allow any excess water to drain away.

*Please refer to page 18 for health and safety risks when using boiling water.

Extractor hoods

If you have a recirculating extractor hood fitted in your kitchen, it will work by sucking in the cooking air, absorbing dirt and odours through a carbon filter fitted inside the hood, then blowing it back out.

The hood extracts about 85 to 90 percent of the odours from the cooking air. Over time, the carbon filters will deteriorate and cooking odours will hang around for longer. The ceiling above your cooker area may also become discoloured, especially if you cook with a lot of oil.

It is at this point you should change your carbon filters. How long you use a filter for depends on the type of filter, how often you use the cooker hood, and what you cook.

A normal filter lasts an average of six to eight months, but if you cook with a lot of oil, we suggest you replace your carbon filters every four months.

Plumbing

Shower surrounds

In certain regions of the country, temporary or permanent hardness in the water may be evident.

Whether you live in a hard water area or not, it is advised that immediately after showering, the enclosure screen and wall tiles be cleaned with a propriety brand of glass/shower cleaner. If cleaned daily, it will help prevent a build up of limescale and watermarks on the glass and around the transparent seals in the enclosure.

Taps

In 'hard' water areas, limescale may build up around the spout of your tap. To clean, just wipe with a soft soapy sponge, rinse and wipe dry.

Do not attempt to remove this with a knife or sharp instrument as this may lead to scratching on the surface and could be dangerous. A variety of hints and tips for removing limescale can be found online.



Power failure?

Check with your neighbours and look at street lighting to see if it is a power cut to the whole area

If not, check your home to see where the problem lies – have the fuses blown?

Check the consumer unit to see if the circuit breakers are on – in the ‘up’ position. If the circuit breaker trips it signals a problem that needs solving – for example, faulty plugs, leads or sockets. If the circuit breaker has tripped ‘down’, check for damage

If it is not damaged, reset it

If the circuit breaks again then unplug or turn off all appliances and reset the circuit breaker

If it trips again, you might have a short circuit and will require help

If it did not trip, test all your appliances until you find the one that is faulty.

Electrical

Before carrying out any electrical works:

- 1. Always seek professional advice and get an electrician to carry out any works**
- 2. Switch off the mains before working on electrical circuits.**

Plumbing

Radiator valves

As a general guide, settings for radiators are either numbered or colour coded. A clicking mechanism has been incorporated and by counting the number of clicks between each of the settings, the desired position is easily identified.

To change the radiator setting for the manual valves, simply rotate the head anticlockwise to turn the radiator on, or rotate the head clockwise to turn the radiator off.

The thermostatic radiator valve can be switched off fully to stop any water passing through. This means that radiators could be removed for decoration or maintenance purposes as long as the valve has been fitted with a drain off facility and all the water has been drained off. We recommend the assistance of a qualified plumber when doing this.

Cleaning

Keeping your radiator valves clean is very simple. Use a warm damp cloth with a mild detergent to ensure your valves look at their optimum.

Guide for cleaning Ceramic tiles

Remove the accumulated layer of dust on the surface. Use a dry microfibre cloth to avoid scratching the tile. Clean the joins between the tiles, an area often forgotten during the weekly clean.

To remove stains without scratching the enamel, use a soft nylon brush dipped in warm water. With circular movements, rub the stains until they disappear.

To keep the shine on glossy tiles, use the following natural solution: a quarter cup of white vinegar diluted in 7 litres of water. With a soft cloth, allow the solution to work on the tile for 5 minutes. Then remove it using a clean cloth.

For deep cleaning, apply the non-abrasive cleaning liquid to the tiles, before it dries completely, dampen a cloth with hot water and rub over the surface. Avoid using liquids such as bleach or calcium carbonate.

To perfect the clean, make sure there are no drops remaining on the surface, as they could stain the surface once dry. After cleaning, dry all ceramic tiles completely with a clean microfibre cloth.



Fluorescent tubes and energy saving bulbs (compact fluorescent lamps cfl)

Fluorescent tube and compact fluorescent lamps (CFL) also known as energy saving bulbs, contain mercury. It is most unlikely to cause any harm when the bulb is broken. We recommend, however, to avoid contact with mercury as well as the sharp pieces of glass. Such breakages should be handled as follows:



Vacate the room and allow to fully ventilate before cleaning up (if there is a central air conditioning system – shut it off temporarily)



Do not use a vacuum cleaner but clean up using rubber gloves, avoiding creating and inhaling airborne dust as much as possible



Sweep up with a piece of stiff cardboard (that can be disposed), using sticky tape for small pieces or powder. For hard surfaces, wipe with a damp cloth



Put all the debris, together with any cardboard and cloths used, into two sturdy plastic bags and seal it (not necessarily airtight) and dispose of as waste.



Outside electrics

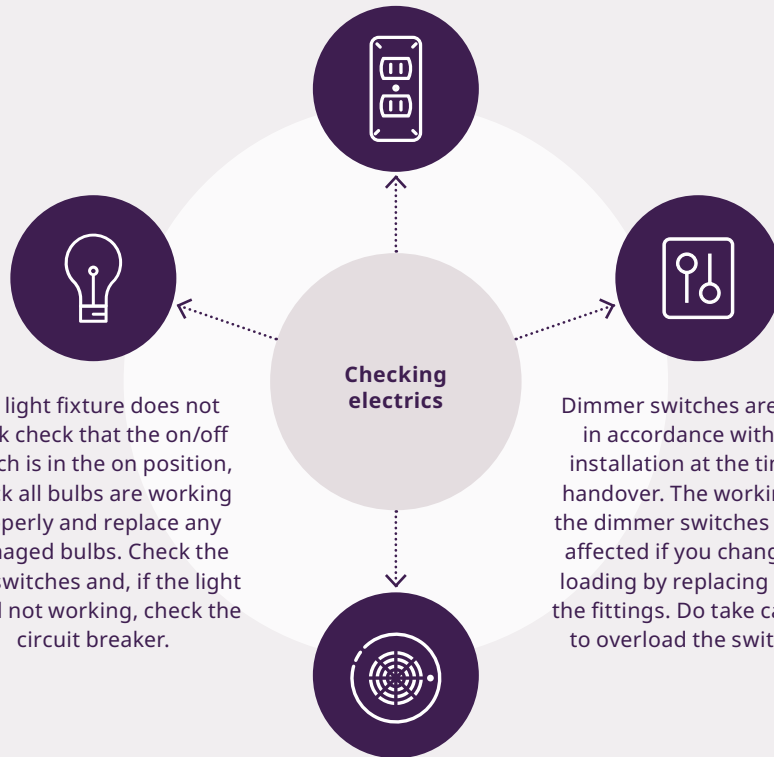
if you wish to supply power to an outside shed or to an external light fitting, you will need specialist advice on the best way to do this. We would recommend getting a professional electrician to carry out such works.



Appliances

All of your appliances come with a manufacturer's warranty. It is your responsibility to register the appliances to ensure the validity of the warranties. They are not covered by the Taylor Wimpey warranty.

If an electrical outlet does not work, check whether it has an on/off switch on the actual fitting. If not, then inspect all circuit breakers including the main breakers. If a breaker appears damaged, leave it off and call for service. If not, follow the circuit breaker procedure. If the consumer unit continues to fail please switch off all appliances and try them one by one to find the fault. If you are unsure at any point, please consult a qualified electrician.



If a light fixture does not work check that the on/off switch is in the on position, check all bulbs are working properly and replace any damaged bulbs. Check the wall switches and, if the light is still not working, check the circuit breaker.

Dimmer switches are sized in accordance with the installation at the time of handover. The workings of the dimmer switches can be affected if you change the loading by replacing any of the fittings. Do take care not to overload the switches.

Should your smoke detector start beeping for no apparent reason, check the power supply. It may need the internal battery replacing, even if it is mains powered. Never ignore a smoke detector when it's beeping, always check to see the problem.



Vacuuming regularly will help prevent premature wear and will also allow for loose fibres that may be shed by some cut pile carpets, and appear as 'fluff' on the surface, to be removed. The excess fibre is only a small fraction of the total fibre contained in the carpet and its removal will not affect the wear performance. Always vacuum as per the manufacturer's recommendations.



Floor coverings

Any floor coverings not supplied or fitted by Taylor Wimpey will be the responsibility of the supplying contractor as to the suitability of any sub floors. As with all floor coverings please refer to manufacturer's guidelines.

Carpets

- Gripper rods should not be nailed to stairs
- All cut pile carpets are liable to shading. This will appear as light and dark patches due to uneven crushing on the surface. Please note that crushing is not a defect but a natural occurrence of this soft material.
- Do not block the small gap under internal doors. This allows air to circulate in your home.

Vinyl

- When fitting vinyls to concrete sub floors an assessment of the suitability of any floors should be done prior to fitting and any concerns raised with Taylor Wimpey
- Please follow manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning
- Never use an abrasive powder or alkaline detergent and cleaners, which claim to need no rinsing, as they may cause permanent damage
- Stubborn marks may be able to be removed with white spirit or gentle rubbing with a fine grade nylon pad.

Laminate

- Your laminate flooring can be vacuumed using a specific hard floor attachment for everyday cleaning. Stubborn dirt can be cleaned using a slightly damp mop, which has been thoroughly wrung out
- It is advisable that you protect your laminate floor by covering the feet of furniture with felt or plastic pads to avoid scratching
- Steam cleaning appliances should not be used on laminate and Amtico flooring, as this may have an adverse affect or reaction to the surface causing damage or distortion. Be aware that using a steam cleaner will add more moisture to your home.



Chimneys

Depending on the house type, your property may have an external brick chimney or internal ridge flue vent chimney. Where the house is purchased without a fitted fireplace, the opening will normally have plasterboard over it to leave a continuous wall.

Please ensure that flues are periodically inspected to prevent blockages from birds' nests etc. Should you choose to install a gas fire yourself, please check with a GasSafe registered installer as to the kilowatt output to ensure that it will operate with the flues installed within the property. Finally, an air supply to the lounge will have been installed via an airbrick – for your safety do not obstruct or restrict its free flow.



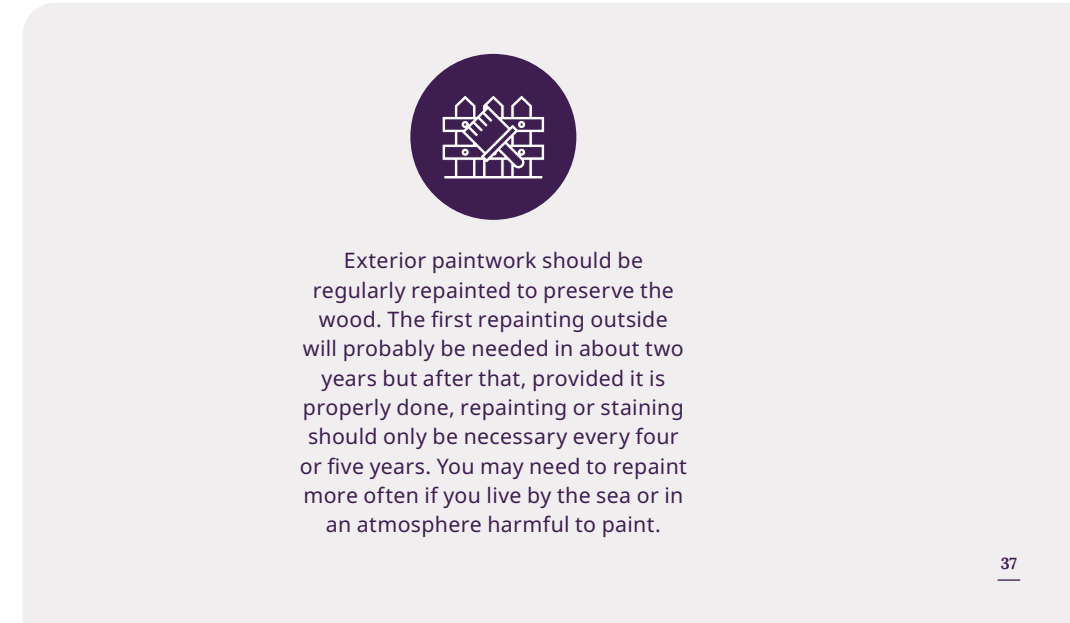
Exterior paintwork should be regularly repainted to preserve the wood. The first repainting outside will probably be needed in about two years but after that, provided it is properly done, repainting or staining should only be necessary every four or five years. You may need to repaint more often if you live by the sea or in an atmosphere harmful to paint.



Please be aware of the safety risks and possible damage to roof tiles caused by window cleaners standing on the low level roof to clean the external side of your first floor windows. Should your windows be fitted with 'easy-clean' hinges, we recommend you take advantage of this by cleaning the windows from the inside.

Paintwork

There is a trend in recent years towards the use of 'micro-porous' paints which are water repellent, but allow wood to breathe. Tests have shown that these paints are less likely to trap water in the wood (if there is a crack in the paintwork) and therefore less likely to lead to rot. They are a lot easier to apply and require less preparation than conventional paints.



External fixtures

PVC-u doors and windows

- Clean and lightly oil moving parts
- Frame – wipe frame regularly both internally and externally using a solution of water and washing up liquid. Do not use any form of abrasive or alkaline cleaners that can damage the surface
- Glass – is not scratch resistant, so take care when cleaning and remove any jewellery. Use any household glass cleaner applied with a soft cloth to clean or polish, alternatively use soapy water applied with a sponge and removed with a soft cloth. Do not use abrasive cleaners
- Handles – gently remove dirt with a solution of warm soapy water on a sponge or soft cloth, then buff with a clean cloth.

External doors

- Door – to prolong the furniture and the paint finish of the door, regular dusting with a soft cloth or brush, supplemented by occasional washing with warm soapy water, is recommended. Lubricate door mechanisms with light oil as required
- After three years the factory finish may begin to wear and the colour or stain will need to be reapplied on a regular maintenance cycle.

Guttering

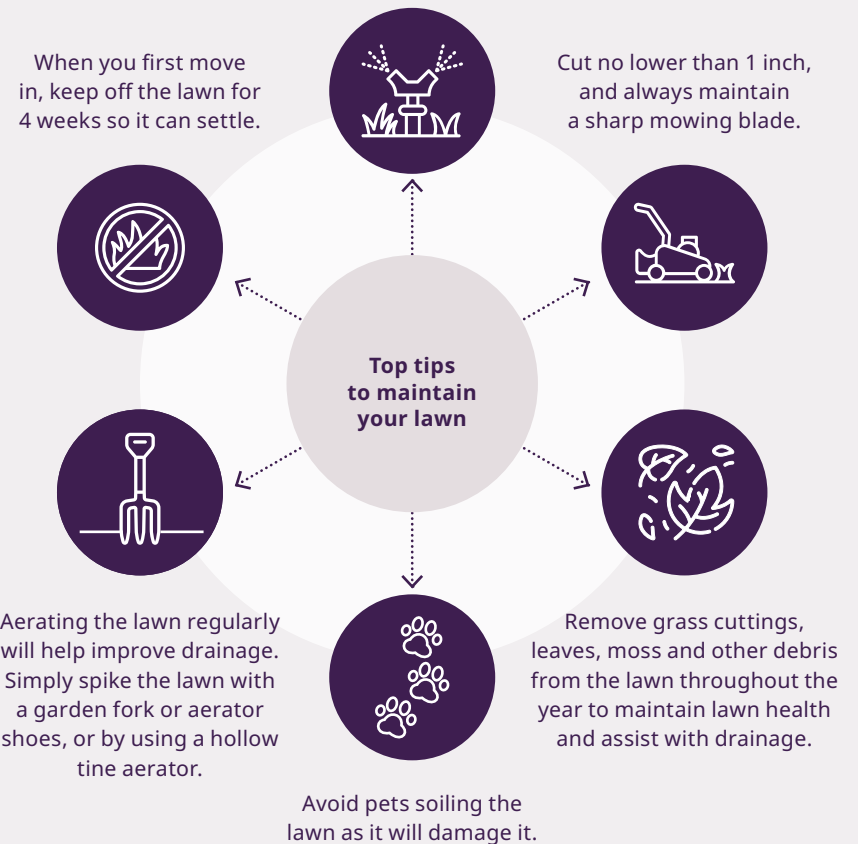
Gutters should be cleared of leaves and dirt regularly to prevent them from overflowing.



Gardens

Get your garden off to a great start and maintain your lawn all year round with these simple tips. For more detailed information on annual lawn care, visit our website.

Water your turf thoroughly and don't feed it for at least 3 months. Ensure you also water your garden during periods of hot weather to prevent it drying out.



Other spaces

Garage doors

- Garage doors should only be opened using the designated handle. Failure to do so may invalidate your warranty
- Regularly check all wear items including cables over their full length. If any wear is detected, contact your local door specialist and arrange for a replacement. Non-replacement of items may invalidate your warranty
- Tighten screws, nuts and bolts as required periodically
- Quarterly: all springs, latches, wheel spindles and pivot points should be lubricated using a light lubricating oil. Lock cylinders should only be lubricated with graphite dusts. Track runners must be kept clean and free of obstacles at all times (do not grease)
- Springs should be inspected for adverse wear at least once a year and replaced if necessary
- Please note that garage doors are not water tight.

Lofts

The roof space in your home is not designed for storage; condensation and damage may be found if used.

Carrying out any alterations including boarding out of the loft space may affect your warranty.

Outside taps

If you have had an external tap fitted to your home it is important that as winter approaches, you turn off the shut off valve on the pipe and the tap/pipe is drained. The valve is located where the external tap is connected to your water supply, this is usually beneath your kitchen sink.

Access chambers

Access chambers give access to the drains, usually where branch drains join together. Do not obstruct or cover them with soil, you may need to get access to them quickly if there is a blockage.

Damp-proof course and air bricks

If soil or other garden material is piled up against the outside walls it may cover the damp-proof course and cause rising damp. If the air brick is covered and you have a suspended timber floor, this can block under-floor ventilation and lead to dry rot. Keep soil and paving 150mm (six inches) below it.



If you do get a pest infestation

Pest infestations in new homes are not covered by Taylor Wimpey and are the responsibility of the homeowner.

You will find numerous links to expert pest control services online. Many of them also provide advice on how to recognise pests and tackle small problems yourself.

However, if you do have a significant infestation, always look for a reputable specialist (your local council website will often list them), check their reviews online, and get a guide on prices on the phone before engaging with one.

Fences and gates

The expected service life of your fence and gate is between 5-10 years, although this is not guaranteed. However, you can actively assist in lengthening the service life of your fencing and gate by following our recommended maintenance schedule, carrying out regular checks on your fence and by proactively identifying and treating potential problem areas.

The maintenance schedule is highly recommended. Just as you would service and maintain your new boiler system the same should apply to your fence. The better maintained, the longer its service life.



You should obtain advice from an expert before planting new trees, if a large tree dies or if one has to be severely pruned.

Pest control

Pests, like all living creatures, seek food, water and entry points to shelter – and they don't need much of an invitation.

Remove garden debris that can serve as pest hiding places or homes. Regular sweeping of leaves from around your foundation, cleaning household gutters, and keeping your garage clutter-free, will all help keep your home free from pests.

Check the loft regularly, along with any warm and unused nooks and crannies that might harbour a nest.

Leftovers, especially meat and sugary foods, can be very tempting to all sorts of pests, so ensure you keep your food waste bin locked shut and the area around your bins as clean and tidy as possible at all times. Rinsing out cans and jam jars before they go into the recycling bins is a handy tip.

Trees

There may be an approved landscaping scheme for the development, which requires the builders to plant trees or shrubs in your garden during the appropriate season. Check with your Customer Service team before planning any of your own landscaping.

Planting trees and shrubs can make your garden more attractive, but be careful as trees and hedges take moisture out of the soil. If you have a clay soil, new planting may cause the earth to shrink, while removing existing trees and hedges may make it swell.

Excessive shrinkage or swelling could damage foundations. Much depends on the type, size, and location of trees and the type of clay so please always check and always seek professional advice.

On all soils, allow enough room for trunks and large roots to grow safely and be particularly careful if you are planting near lightweight structures or near drains.

Recently planted trees and shrubs may need to be watered copiously during their early life. Before cutting down or pruning a mature tree, check with your local authority to make sure that it is not protected by planning conditions, conservation area restrictions or a Tree Preservation Order.

Paths

Paths may develop cracks as the ground slowly settles and therefore you may need to take action to refill these. This is an unavoidable consequence of the build process and is not a defect.

Driveway

If your house has a block paving drive this is a finished surface and should require little or no maintenance.

However, the joints between the paviors are filled with sand and persistent hosing or cleaning with a jet washer will remove the sand and encourage weeds to grow in the gaps.

- The driveway has not been designed to accommodate the weight of the removal van on the day of your move
- Please make every effort to park your car in the garage for the first month as hot tyres standing on a newly laid drive can cause depressions
- Always try to drive straight on/off wherever possible and avoid hard breaking on the drive. Ensure the car is in motion before turning the wheel, as this may cause the wheels to damage the surface – particularly in the early days.
- Ladders, Bike Stands, Chair Legs, Trailers, Caravans, Motorbikes concentrate a large load over a small area and can give rise to indentation of the driveway surface. You are advised to use items such as a block of wood, a plank, a sheet of plywood, or a paving slab to spread the load to prevent damage. Warm south-facing and newly laid driveways are prone to this kind of damage.



Wildlife features

Your home or garden may include one or more features to help the local environment and create better habitat for wildlife and pollinators.

Hedgehog highways

Your fence may include a small hedgehog hole. This has been created deliberately to enable hedgehogs to move around the development to find food. If possible, please keep this opening clear. No maintenance is required.

Bee bricks and bug hotels

These provide places for solitary bees and other pollinating insects to nest. There is no requirement to clean out a bee brick or bug hotel but doing so once a year may create a better home for the bees and insects. If you do clean them, then do so after the nesting season has finished in October.

Bat boxes or tiles

These provide a roosting place for bats. Once bats have moved in, a bat box can only be opened, moved or disturbed by someone with the right licence. This is the case all year round, even if the bats are only in residence for part of the year.

Bird boxes

These provide nesting places for birds and are likely to be used in the spring and early summer. The RSPB recommend that old nests be removed in the autumn, from September onwards once the birds have stopped using the box.

Use boiling water to kill any parasites, and let the box dry out thoroughly before replacing the lid. Insecticides and flea powders must not be used.



FAQs

In this section you will find some frequently asked questions which arise when moving into a new home. The NHBC website also provides further advice for 'running in' your new home.



Windows and doors

Imperfections in the glass?

This is normal and is due to the glass manufacturing process. Glass will, from time to time, contain seeds, bubbles or even fine scratches that can be seen at close quarters.

White powder on the lead pattern of the glass units?

This is lead oxidising and is a natural process. The best advice is to let the lead oxidise naturally and the white powder deposit will stop once the process is complete.

External seal to my windows Is dirty and won't clean?

Some discolouration of the mastic seal is a natural occurrence and cannot be avoided.

Condensation forms on The glass?

This is water vapour condensing on the coldest surface, which is usually the glass in a window. This will happen more in bathrooms and kitchens and is perfectly normal. To reduce this effect it is advisable to increase the ventilation in a room when cooking or when taking a shower or bath.

Garage doors opening slow Or too rapid?

This indicates a need to adjust spring tension. This must be done in accordance with the instruction supplied with your door.



Water and plumbing

Before carrying out any plumbing work always seek professional advice and get a qualified plumber to carry out any works.



Water and plumbing

What precautions should be taken before working on the plumbing system?

Always ensure that the main stopcock has been closed before beginning work.

If the water system has been drained?

Do not light the boiler or switch on the immersion heater until the system has refilled as you may risk 'burn out'.

Laying carpet?

Before you lay your carpets, make sure you know where the pipework is situated as even carpet nails can cause damage to it.

Frozen pipes?

Make sure the stopcock on outside taps is shut off during the winter and that the pipe is drained to prevent it freezing. If you think the pipes are frozen, do not turn the hot water taps on as this will empty the hot water tank.

No water?

Check with your Water Board to see whether there is a local stoppage and report your own lack of water. Don't run off water from your boiler in case of 'burn out' in your water heater.

Main plumbing leak?

Turn off the main water valve, usually situated under the sink before seeking assistance.

Leak from bath or shower?

First check the sealant for damage. If not, turn off the water at the fixture. Don't use the shower or bath until the problem has been inspected. Cleaning your bath and shower sealant regularly will help maintain a waterproof seal and prevent leaks.

Water spots or damp patches on your ceiling?

You may have a water leak. Try to find the source of the leak and turn off the water supply to the appliance that is causing it. If the leak can't be found, turn off the water service for the house and call for assistance.

Dishwasher has a funny smell and not cleaning dishes as it should?

This can be a sign that there is a build up of dirt and grease within the dishwasher. Ensure you clear out all the filters regularly and it can be a good idea to run the hottest cycle through the dishwasher when it is empty.

Damp patches on the walls?

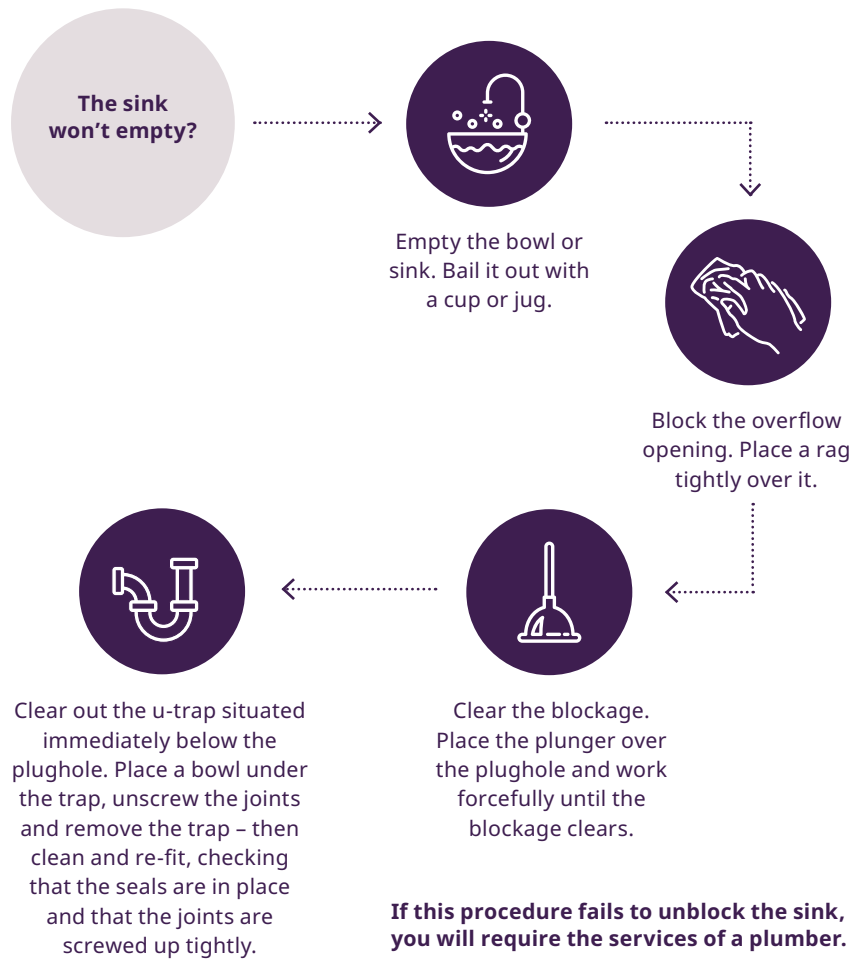
If damp patches appear in the kitchen, bathroom or wardrobes, it can be a sign that you haven't been ventilating sufficiently during use. Open the windows or doors, allowing each room to dry out. Wipe away any mould that has appeared with bleach or water solution. You may need to retouch paintwork.

Basin, shower or bath drains away more slowly than before?

This is usually due to a build up of hair and soap. A variety of hints and tips can be found online for safely clearing blocked pipes.



Sink blockages are caused by a build up of fat, tea leaves, hair etc. in the waste pipe. Try safely pouring hot water down the plughole, or flush through with a proprietary cleaner or water containing caustic soda crystals. If this fails then try the following procedure:



Radiator is cool at the top?

This usually means an air lock in the system. This reduces heating efficiency and, if the air is not removed, it can also lead to rusting inside the radiator.

To release the air:

Turn off the heating

Attach the radiator key to bleed valve and turn anticlockwise

Open the valve with care – it can come out completely. Carefully open it enough to hear the hiss of air escaping. Hold a cloth under the bleed valve to catch the water when the last of the air is released

When water comes out, close the bleed valve. Radiator keys are available from any DIY or hardware store.

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