

LiveWest
A home for everyone



Welcome

a guide
to your home

Welcome

Thank you for choosing a home with LiveWest. We are very pleased to welcome you and hope you enjoy living here for many years.

This guide has important information about your new home. If you still have questions after reading it, please contact your home ownership officer.

You can find all of our contact details in the property summary document.

Please keep this home user guide safe so you can refer back to it as necessary. Please also keep all warranties, keys and instructions safe.



Your home user guide

This manual is part of the support LiveWest offers now that you've moved into your new home.

Inside, you'll find:

- A guide on how to allow your home to settle in during the first few years.
- A summary of who is responsible for repairs and maintenance.
- Guidance on how to take care of your home.
- Information on reporting defects to LiveWest.
- Advice on how to stay safe in your home on a developing site.

If your home comes under a new model lease agreement for shared ownership, please refer to **A customers guide to the new shared ownership model lease** on the LiveWest website for more information.

Useful contacts

Emergencies

In the event of a water leak inside the home, turn off your stop tap and contact LiveWest. For all other leaks outside the home, for example if it's a burst pipe, contact your local water board.

In the event of a gas leak, make sure all appliances are turned off, and contact Gas Emergency on **0800 111 999**.

TV Licence

Your property needs to have a TV licence to watch or record live TV programmes. You can contact TV Licensing on **0300 790 0368** or visit **www.tvlicensing.co.uk**.

Warranty provider

All newly built LiveWest homes come with a warranty that covers structural problems. You can find the details of your warranty provider in your property summary document.

This warranty usually lasts for 10 years, but the exact length and cover will depend on your policy.

If you are a shared owner and have questions about your warranty or want to make a claim, please contact your warranty provider directly.

Local authority

Your local authority will be detailed in your property summary document.

To find out when your waste will be collected and what bins can be provided to you, please contact your local authority.

Utility providers

Your meter readings and details of your utility service providers are listed in your property summary document.

You will need to contact each provider to register the utilities in your name. Once this is done, you can change your supplier or tariff if you wish.*

The property summary document also includes the details of your phone line provider. You will need to contact them to activate your phone and internet services.

LiveWest has connected only the main telephone and TV master sockets. If you would like extra sockets connected, you will need to arrange this yourself.

Please note, your telecoms provider may charge a fee for activating services.

As your home is newly built, your address may not yet appear on some utility provider systems, so you may need to explain this when contacting them.

In most homes, a TV aerial is not installed. You will need to arrange for a qualified person to install one using the cabling provided in the loft.

If you live in a block of flats, a communal aerial will be provided, but you will still need to arrange for a qualified person to connect the sockets inside your apartment**.

*homes on a district heating scheme will be unable to change supplier.

**a communal aerial will be installed in blocks of flats however customers will need to arrange for a qualified person to connect the sockets within your apartment.





Moving day

a guide to checking
your home

Each home is carefully checked before it is handed over to you. We also carry out our own checks before taking the property from the developer. If there are any outstanding snagging items, your sales consultant will inform you before or on the day you complete. These items will then be managed by our Aftercare team.

Please take time to check your property on the day of completion.

Make sure to take meter readings from all meters and provide them to the Sales team.

Make yourself familiar with how the smoke and carbon monoxide alarms work (if fitted), and test them by pressing the button to check they are working. We recommend you test your alarms weekly.

You should also check that:

- All keys have been handed over including all keys for windows.
- All windows and doors open, close and lock properly.

Please ensure that you have been given the operating instructions and warranty information for all systems and appliances.



Settling in

a guide
to your property

This section covers what to do in order to help your property settle. A home needs to be taken care of, especially in the first year after construction.

It is important that your home is allowed to settle and dry out gradually. During this period you may notice minor shrinkage cracks in the walls, gaps in joinery and white deposits on brick walls; these are all completely normal in recently constructed properties.

The materials used to build your home contained a large amount of water. Once occupied your property will slowly dry out.

It will take between 6 and 18 months for your property to fully dry out.

During this time it is important that you follow the guidance in this section to avoid mould growth in your home.

As your home begins to dry out, you may notice some changes. These are completely normal and are not signs of structural problems:

- Small cracks may appear in walls and ceilings.
- The bath and/or shower tray may drop slightly (you may need to apply new sealant around your bath/shower to avoid water leaks and damage).
- Screw heads, blown tapes, or nail pops may start to show in plaster finishes.
- Wooden door frames and windows may move slightly, swell or become stiff to operate.
- Floors may settle, leaving a small gap between the skirting and floor.

As the shared owner of your property you will need to address these issues as part of your household maintenance and upkeep.

In order to keep these features to a minimum we recommend following the steps on the next page.

Heating

It is important that your property dries out naturally and slowly. This is best done by keeping your home at an even temperature throughout the whole property.

We recommend that heating thermostats should be set no higher than between 19-21 degrees celcius (66-69 degrees fahrenheit).

Airing

As your home dries out, moisture needs to escape through good ventilation. We recommend that you do the following:

- Leave windows open, when it is safe to do so.
- Keep trickle vents open at all times.
- Use your extractor fans provided (leave them running for at least 30 minutes after cooking and bathing. Some extractors are now installed to run continuously unless switched off at the mains).
- Keep internal doors in your property open to allow air circulation (except for fire doors).
- Leave wardrobe and cupboard doors open where possible and do not place furniture against walls.

If your home is not allowed time to adjust properly, it may cause damage to fittings and finishes. LiveWest will not be held responsible for this.

Decoration

We also ask that customers do not put up shelves or hang heavy pictures/mirrors in the first 12 months, as any damage caused as a direct result of this could invalidate the warranty. Sticky strips are fine and are what most of our customers use.

Condensation

You may notice condensation in your property which is caused by steam or water vapour coming into contact with cold surfaces, such as walls, ceilings and windows.

It is recommended to wipe down surfaces to reduce moisture. If condensation is not removed, it can lead to mould on walls, ceilings, inside cupboards, and behind furniture.

In order to minimise the amount of condensation in your property you can do a few things:

- Use your extractor fan during cooking or bathing activities, and open the window where possible.
- Keep internal doors shut when using the extractor fan during any cooking or bathing activities. This stops moist air spreading around your home.
- Leave your extractor fan running for at least 30 minutes after you have finished your cooking or bathing activities, and keep the window open where possible. This will help to remove the water vapour in the air.
- Avoid drying clothes indoors, especially on radiators. If this is not possible then dry your clothes in your bathroom with the door closed with the extractor fan on, and the window open where possible.
- If you have one, make sure your tumble dryer's venting duct leads outside.

To help maintain a healthy indoor environment, your home may include technology that manages humidity levels and an over-run timer. It's important that the fan stays on at all times, except when it is switched off for maintenance.





Getting to know your home and your responsibilities

Electricity

The locations of your electricity meter and consumer unit (fuse box) are detailed in your property summary document.

The consumer unit includes the main on/off switch and circuit breakers that protect different parts of your home's electrical system.

These breakers are sensitive and may switch off (or 'trip') for various reasons. This is a safety feature, so there is no need for concern if this happens.

If a circuit breaker trips, find the switch that has moved to the 'off' position and turn it back to 'on'.

If it trips again, please follow the steps below:

- Unplug all appliances and switch off all lights on the affected circuit.
- Re-set the switch on the board back to the 'on' position.
- Turn back on all the appliances and lights one by one.
- If the breaker trips out as you switch on an appliance or light, it will mean that this is the source of the fault.
- If the fault is with an appliance please contact the appliance manufacturer.
- If the fault is with a light, replace the bulb and try again.

If the breaker continues to trip please contact us to report the fault.

Gas

If you have gas provision, the location of your gas meter is detailed in your property summary document.

You will have been given a key that opens the cupboard so you can read your meter or close the control valve in an emergency.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out contents insurance for your home. If an incident occurs which causes damage to your belongings, we will not be able to cover your losses.

Registering warranties

It is your responsibility to register the warranties for your boiler, cooker and all other systems and appliances.

You should have been provided with all of your warranties at your new home demonstration. If any of these are missing, please contact your sales consultant.

If you do not register the warranties for these products, the guarantee will not be valid. Please fill out the forms and send them to the manufacturers as instructed on the forms.

Neither LiveWest nor the contractor has any liability for repair of these goods. If anything goes wrong with them during the warranty period, you should contact the manufacturer.

Heating and hot water

Details of your heating and hot water system can be found in your property summary document.

The heating and hot water in your home is most likely to be generated from either:

- A traditional gas boiler.
- An air source heat pump which takes warmth from the air outside and uses it to heat your home.
- A ground source heat pump which takes warmth from the ground and uses it to heat your home.

Guidance on how to use heat pumps in the most cost effective manner is found in the Energy Advice section of this user guide.

A typical heating system will consist of:

- A heat source (some properties may also have a water tank).
- A programmer for you to set when you would like your heating and hot water to start and stop.
- A room thermostat to control the temperature of your home.
- Thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) on your radiators to allow you to control the temperature within each room.

There are many different types of heating systems. We strongly advise that you read the manufacturer's user guide for your system as this will advise you how to operate your heating in the most cost-efficient manner.

Solar Photovoltaic Panels (PV)

If your home has solar (PV) panels, you may be able to receive payments through the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG). This allows you to earn money by sending unused solar energy back to the National Grid.

Most energy providers offer this scheme, but their rules and payment rates can vary. We recommend comparing providers to find the best option.

Electric vehicle charging point

Your property may have the benefit of an electric vehicle charging point, which will be classified as either:

Home charger

Where the charge point is connected to the properties electrical supply. These are typically fixed to the outside wall of the property (although these could be installed a short distance away from the property) and have its own circuit breaker on the properties consumer unit.

If you have a home charger you will pay for the electricity used to charge your vehicle through your own utility provider.

Communal charger

Electric vehicle chargers that are, typically, located in a communal parking area away from your property and are connected to a landlord, or third party, electricity supply.

If you have a communal charger you would pay for the electricity used to charge your vehicle to a billing agent. In order to use the communal charger, you will need to download an app and set up an account directly with the billing agent.

Please note that a charger located in a communal parking area may be connected to the individual properties electrical supply. Where this happens they are to be treated as a home charger.

Property restrictions

Most schemes have rules called restrictive covenants. These rules explain what you can and can't do with your home, such as where you can park or how you need to look after your garden.

You should ask your solicitor if there are any of these rules on your property.

Loft space

Your loft is insulated to keep your home warm. Please be aware that:

- Your loft was not designed for storage and using it for such could potentially cause damage to the property.
- Removing any insulation in the loft will cause cold spots which may lead to damp and mould growth.
- Obstructing the ventilation provided may also cause condensation.

We strongly advise our customers not to access the loft space for their own health and safety as it is not designed to be usable space.

Drains

Only flush toilet tissue down the toilets, do not flush any wipes or any other materials.

Maintenance requirements

You are responsible for any maintenance and repairs that are not covered by the developer during the defects period. The next section explains what is included in the developer's responsibilities during this time.

This also varies, if your new shared ownership home falls under the new model lease. If your home falls under the new model lease for shared ownership please see 'A customer's guide to the new shared ownership model lease' on the LiveWest website.

You must keep your boiler, air source heat pump, cooker, appliances and other systems (e.g. solar panels, mechanical or passive ventilation systems) regularly serviced (e.g. annually) and maintained using qualified professionals and in line with the manufacturer's requirements.

If you have an electric vehicle charging point, it will be your responsibility to keep this system regularly serviced and maintained. You will need to contact the manufacturer to understand the requirements for your system.

Failure to maintain or service equipment in accordance with the manufacturers guidelines can invalidate any warranties or guarantees.



Home repairs

what you need to know
about defects

What is a defect?

We pride ourselves on providing excellent customer care. Whilst we have done everything we can to make sure that your home is free from problems, issues can occur.

If any defects are the house builder's responsibility, we will help make sure the contractor fixes them during the defects period.

The defects period is an agreed period of time following the properties construction end date. The date your defects period ends, can be found on either your property summary sheet or your new home demo checklist.

Issues relating to normal wear and tear, misuse, damage or lack of maintenance will not be covered by the contractor.

When reporting any issues to LiveWest, please provide us with as much information as possible, including any photos that show the issue. These details will help us to get the contractor to send out the correct tradesperson to resolve the fault without any unnecessary delays.

Before you report defect items please check that the fault is not something simple, e.g. a failed lightbulb or the boiler is switched off. Also please check the instruction manuals for faults with appliances. Re-pressurising the boiler is not a defect and can also be chargeable. If you have condensation please check to see whether you are ventilating your property correctly.

Please note that we reserve the right to charge our customers for unnecessary call outs, so please read the information included in this home user guide before reporting issues to LiveWest.

We advise you to not paint or decorate your home within this defects period because the property will be drying out and some cracks may appear.



What is not considered a Defect?

There are some issues we are unable to fix, as they are caused by wear and tear, damage, or maintenance related matters.

The following are not considered to be repair items:

- Chips and damage to baths, sinks and all other sanitary wear, including bath panels.
- Changing light bulbs and batteries.
- Blockages to toilets due to wet wipes, nappies, and wobbly toilet seats.
- Hot water not being deemed hot enough (there is a temperature restrictor on baths).
- Radiators developing cold spots.
- Shower blockages due to hair, etc.
- Lost and broken keys.
- Broken and scratched glass.
- Damage to windows and door frames.
- Broken and damaged door hinges.
- Dead grass in gardens.
- Infestations, including Leatherjackets.

- Water logging to gardens.
- Damage to the meter cupboard.
- Damage to worktops and kitchen units.
- Minor cracks and nail pops due to property settlement and drying out.
- Loss of water, electricity or gas supply if caused by supplier.
- Damage to any sheds if applicable (as these are gifted to you as part of the development).
- Discolouration/staining on the outer building.
- Exterior wood bowing due to weathering.
- Storm damage.

Please note: shrinkage will not be considered to be a repair item, neither will any minor shrinkage cracks (i.e. anything less than the width of a £1 coin).

If you are in any doubt, please contact us.

Care needs to be taken when carrying out works around your home. Even if you're just hanging pictures or putting up shelves, there might be electrical devices, gas pipes and/or cladding in the way. So before you start drilling holes or hammering in nails, always take care to check the exact position of cables inside walls or under floors.

Reporting a defect

To log a repair you can contact us by email at aftercare@livewest.co.uk or by calling us on 0300 120 0800.

When reporting an issue, please provide us with as much information as you can, including photographs if possible. This will help us ensure the right people attend to resolve the problem.

If you are not sure about the problem, contact LiveWest and we will assist you.

Once the defect has been logged, the contractor will be asked to fix this within a set amount of time and you will be told the timescale for this repair.

The contractor should contact you to make suitable arrangements to carry out the work. You will need to provide access to the contractor to carry out these repairs at reasonable times between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Sometimes it may take longer than expected for the contractor to fix a defect, for example, if a part needs to be ordered. In these cases, we will support you in making sure the contractor completes the work.

There may also be some items which will not be solved until the end of the defects period.

Our Aftercare team should advise you of this when you contact us.

Please do not go directly to the site manager with new home repairs. They must be logged with LiveWest and we can then manage this with the contractor.

End of defects process

Near the end of the defects period, you will receive a letter notifying you of a date for inspection.

This is an opportunity for you to raise and report any issues you may have, face to face with one of our Aftercare team and the contractor.

It is important for you to report all defect issues, including any outstanding repair issues you may have previously reported.

Any issues not reported during this inspection may not be resolved by the contractor.

After your defects period

After your defects period you will be responsible for your home and any further issues that may arise.

Some items may be covered under your warranty provision. Please contact your warranty provider for further details.



Energy advice

Your home has been built to recent building regulations. This means that it is more energy efficient than the average property, so as long as you manage your property correctly you will be able to maximise the benefits of your home; this should make it more cost efficient to run.

Here is some energy advice to help you manage your home in a cost-effective way.

Understanding your energy usage

Understanding what you are using energy on will put you in control of your bills. To better understand your energy usage, you can request a smart meter from your utility company so you can monitor your energy usage over time.

Heating your home

The time control, room thermostat and boiler settings are there so that you can get the most of your heating system for the least cost.

- Where you have a gas boiler you may wish to set the controls to provide heating and hot water only when you want it and at the temperature you require.
- Where you have an air source heat pump heating system you will want to heat your home and hot water slowly to get maximum benefit of the system.
- In general, the lower the setting of thermostats (including the boiler thermostat), the lower your fuel bill will be*.

Please be careful to avoid placing furniture in front of radiators as this may restrict the radiator's ability to heat the room.

Drawing curtains early in the evening will save heat, but note curtains that hang over radiators may allow heat to escape out of the window.

*please note your home needs to be heated in order to maintain a healthy environment for you and your family to live in. We would recommend that heating thermostats are set between 18-21 degrees celcius (64-69 degrees fahrenheit).

Air Source and Ground Source Heat Pumps

Where you have either an air or ground source heat pump to provide the heat and hot water to your home, you will need to use these in a different manner than you would using a traditional boiler.

Rather than turning your heat pump on and off like you might do with a traditional boiler, heat pumps are cheaper and warmer to leave turned on for longer periods of time. If you have a heat pump and are finding your energy bills are higher than expected, this may be because you have been switching the heat pump off and on. Your heat pump will have been set correctly by the contractor.

Solar Photovoltaic Panels (PV)

Where photovoltaic (solar) panels are provided on your home, we encourage you to use the 'free' electricity generated by the panel during the day whilst it is being generated. This will enable you to get the most of the system and reduce your home energy costs.



Garden maintenance

This section provides further information on how to look after some of the areas of your home.

Gardens

If you have a garden, your lawns, garden and landscaping are your responsibility to maintain.

Lawn care

LiveWest cannot guarantee that your grass will not require maintenance, nor that it will be completely free draining; the garden may require work to improve its draining and to ensure the lawn remains healthy.

If there is a period of continuous rain, gardens may be boggy and need time to fully dry. If you use your garden when it is wet then this may cause the grass to die which we cannot be responsible for.

It is important to water a newly laid lawn frequently, especially during any long period of dry weather.

Grass itself needs a lot of water, particularly during the summer, and is likely to turn brown or even die without it, or the turf may shrink leaving unsightly gaps.

In the first three to four weeks you should not walk on your new lawn, let your pets on it or install any children's play equipment. You can start mowing your lawn three to four weeks after the turf has been laid.

Using a good quality balanced fertiliser in the Spring is recommended along with Autumn feeding to harden the turf ready for Winter.

General garden maintenance

Aerate your lawn, also known as 'forking'. This is the action of making holes in the lawn's surface with a garden fork.

We advise you to do this to encourage new root growth, improve drainage and reduce the build-up of thatch below the surface.

Leatherjackets

Leatherjackets (insects) can be damaging to lawns and sometimes kill small plants in flower beds and vegetable plots by eating roots and stem bases.

The main symptom of leatherjackets is that your lawn will develop a yellow/brown dead patch. If your lawn starts to show symptoms of leatherjacket damage you will need to treat them before they kill off your lawn.

Leatherjackets are a naturally occurring infestation and therefore are not a defect that LiveWest will attend to.

For more information on how to manage leatherjackets, contact your local garden centre, or visit our website.

Care and maintenance

How to take care of your home

This section provides further information on how to look after some of the areas of your home. When you are cleaning your property, please make sure that you do not use harmful cleaning products.

Through colour render

You can use warm water and a suitable detergent to clean general stains from your external render.

In addition, an annual coat of fungal wash should be applied to prevent algae from growing. This is particularly important if you live within 10 miles of the coast.

Windows and doors

Customers should ensure that windows are regularly cleaned and hinges lubricated.

This is particularly important if your property is within 10 miles of the coast as the saline air may cause the mechanisms to stiffen.

Internal doors may require planing after having flooring installed. If required, this will be your responsibility.

Gutters

Gutters should be checked every six months and leaves or other debris removed. Materials that build up in the gutters can slow water drainage causing overflows, clogging of downpipes and interference with guttering installation.

Please note: We strongly advise that unless you have suitable access equipment, you employ a service for this activity.

Air source heat pump

If you have an air source heat pump system (ASHP) you should make sure that you do not:

- Obstruct the air flow around the heat pump by placing anything in front, behind or on top of the unit.
- Damage the coolant fins on the rear and side of the unit.
- Push anything into the grill which may damage the fan.

Please make sure that you do:

- Clean the unit once a month with warm soapy water to get rid of any dirt or debris. This is particularly important if you live within 10 miles of the coast as the saline air will effect the unit.

You should arrange for an annual inspection and service by a suitably qualified professional approved by the ASHP manufacturer.

Air bricks and other ventilation

Please keep all external air bricks and other external vents clear from debris and blockage.

Heating and hot water

Where you have a loss of pressure, please refer to the heating system manual. This will advise you on the heating fault, if you remain unsure please refer to a plumber. Bleeding radiators or repressurising boilers do not constitute a repair.

Bleeding your radiator

Sometimes radiators might not heat up properly due to an air lock in the system.

The air can be released by turning the valve in the top corner of the radiator, using a radiator key, until the air flow is replaced by water.

Holding a cloth beneath the valve during this process will help to protect both the floor surface and your hands from any hot water that escapes.

Always make sure that the central heating system is turned off and the radiators are cold before bleeding them. Otherwise you could be at risk of burning yourself.

Repressurising your boiler

The boiler pressure may drop over time due to a number of reasons, including an air lock in the system.

If the display on your boiler falls below 1bar you will need to top up the pressure (to show between 1bar and 2bar depending on your boiler type).

It is your responsibility to repressurise your boiler system. You should consult with the boiler manufacturer's guidance on how to carry this out (you should bleed radiators prior to repressurising your boiler).

If your boiler pressure continues to drop please notify LiveWest as this could cause a leak..

Boilers need to be serviced on an annual basis, from the date they were commissioned, not the date you moved in. You can find the commissioned date on a sticker on the boiler, or in the welcome pack provided.





Health
and safety
stay safe in your home

Site safety

You are likely to be moving into your home while the contractor is still building properties on the development.

For your own safety please read this section carefully.

- You must not enter the construction or work areas, or allow children in your care to do so.
- Construction traffic may be moving about during the day, so please take extra care when walking or driving. Make sure the driver has seen you before crossing roads near construction vehicles.

- Please abide by any signs that redirect traffic around construction areas, as these will show safe routes for pedestrians and vehicles.
- If you have pets, be conscious of their whereabouts as they could become trapped in construction areas.

Fire and gas

Your home is fitted with smoke and heat detectors as well as a carbon monoxide alarm. These have battery back-up so that they will still work if there is a power cut.

The detector will beep if the battery is running low or if there is a fault.

- You should test the detectors every week.
- The battery should be changed once a year. Do not open the detectors or attempt to replace the batteries when the power is still connected.
- Never paint these detectors.
- Vacuum the detector at least twice a year, removing any dust and other debris.

If you live in a block of flats the fire evacuation procedures should be clearly shown in the communal areas. Please take time to familiarise yourself with this. If you have any further queries please contact LiveWest and we will be able to assist.

Gas safety

You should make sure that your flue terminal is not covered, blocked or modified in any way, and they should not be enclosed by extensions, such as porches or conservatories.

If you smell gas:

- Do not smoke or light matches.
- Do not turn electrical switches on or off.
- Open doors and windows.
- Turn off the meter at the control valve.

If your home was purchased by way of the new model lease and you discover a 'qualifying repair' that is needed in your new home, you'll need to arrange for it to be fixed. However, you can claim the cost, up to the value of £500 for each year of the first 10 years of ownership (while the property remains shared ownership), back from us. You must use a Trustmark-approved tradesperson.

To find a Trustmark-approved tradesperson www.trustmark.org.uk

To make a claim for the cost of non-structural repairs, you need to complete the pre-approval form on our website.

Further information can be found in 'A customers guide to the new shared ownership model lease' on the LiveWest website.

Call the free 24 hour national gas emergency number on 0800 111 999.





Restrictors

Please note that all newly built homes have temperature restrictors fitted to the bath tap, in line with building regulations and health and safety guidance. These must not be removed. If they are, it is at your own risk and LiveWest will not be held responsible.

New homes also have safety restrictors fitted on some windows, as required by building regulations.

Roads

The final surface of tarmac on roads and driveways is usually added last, to avoid surfaces being damaged by construction vehicles. Although the contractor will apply this as soon as possible, it may not be in place before legal completion. Take care when walking or driving on uneven surfaces and watch out for any raised drainage chambers and any temporary ramps on drop curbs.

Making alterations

Alterations are any changes made to your property. General redecoration is not classed as an alteration.

We recommend that you wait until the defects period has ended before making any alterations, as this could affect your repair cover.

If you are a shared ownership customer, you must contact LiveWest before making any alterations to your home.

Please get in touch with your Home Ownership Officer for further advice.



