Housing Services

Central Heating

Advice about your central heating
This leaflet provides information on how to operate your central heating, how it works most efficiently and what do if it breaks down.

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Your central heating

Central heating will keep you and your family warm. It will help prevent condensation, dampness and mould.

You can keep warm and save yourself money if you spend some time finding out how your heating works. If you want someone to come to your home and explain how your central heating works please contact the Repairs Service Centre on 273 5555 or call in at any local office or First Point.

How central heating works

Your central heating system has a boiler. This burns gas to heat the water that goes through your radiators. The radiators heat the air in your home.

Aim to keep your home warm. If your home gets cold, the boiler has to work hard – and use up more gas – to warm it up again. Once your home is warm, your boiler only needs to come on every now and then to keep it that way.

The system has controls so that it runs as energy efficiently as possible.

There are two types of control:

- **The programmer or timer.** This switches the system on and off at set times of the day
- **The thermostat.** This sets the room temperature required and cuts off when the required temperature is reached.
The programmer or timer

Your system will either have a time clock or a digital programmer. They both tell the system to turn on or off at set times of the day, which you choose. Details of how they work are given below and overleaf.

Time clock

A manual time clock has a dial with coloured markers around the edge. These markers need to be matched up with the hours on the central dial for the central heating to be switched on automatically.

Setting the time clock

• Check the timer is set for the correct time and adjust as necessary
• Decide when you want the heating and hot water to come on and go off
• Push the pins in for the times you want the heating on
• Pull the pins out for the times you want the heating off
• Set the switch to ‘timer’ or ‘auto’, depending on which system you have

Digital programmer

A digital programmer has an electronic display, but does the same job as the time clock. It has separate controls for the heating and hot water.
Setting the timer

• Check the clock is showing the right time. If not, push the switch to ‘time setting’ and adjust as necessary
• Reset the switch to ‘auto’

You can set the heating to come on and off twice a day. To do this:

• Push the switch to ‘set programme’

You will then be able to set:

• The first ‘on’ time
• The first ‘off’ time
• The second ‘on’ time
• The second ‘off’ time
• Reset the switch to ‘auto’

Now you will be able to set the ‘heating’ and ‘hot water’ switches to come on:

• Once a day (when it will use the first ‘on’ and the last ‘off’ time)
• Twice a day (when it will use all four timings)
• Or ‘stay on’ (when the system will run all the time)

Combination boiler

The controls pictured above are usually found on a Combination Central Boiler.

The main switch should always be on in the ‘1’ position.

The pressure gauge indicator on the right should ideally be positioned in the green area.

Central heating radiator temperature can be adjusted by using the + or – on the heating dial.
Hot water thermostat

This will be fitted to the side of your hot water tank. It controls the highest temperature of your hot water. Check that this is set between 55 and 60 degrees C (140 degree F), as this will be hot enough for your needs. If it is set too high, you waste your money and run the risk of scalding.

Room thermostat

This will usually be on the wall in either the living room or the hall. It senses when the house is warm enough and turns the boiler off automatically. If it is set too high, you will waste gas and money. It should be set at between 18-21 degrees C (65-70 degrees F), slightly higher if you are an older person or if you have young children.

Don’t be tempted to turn the room thermostat up to heat up the room faster – it will not do so. It only works as a switch to turn the boiler on and off to reach the set temperature.
Thermostatic radiator valves

These may be fitted to your radiators and allow you to set different temperatures in different rooms. The radiators will not be hot all the time. They will come on when needed to keep your room warm. Often people use these to reduce the temperature in rooms that aren’t used. If you do this remember to keep these doors shut to reduce the risk of condensation, as it will be colder than the rest of the house.

If you have a gas fire in your living room, make sure that it is kept free of dust and isn’t covered up.

It is recommended not to use the fire as well as the central heating. It is also recommended that the fire is not adjusted as this can cause problems and will increase your gas bill.

If you have a ventilator in the window, don’t block it up. It will have been fitted to provide air for the gas fire to burn properly. If you cover the ventilator up, harmful fumes could build up. These fumes can kill you.

How to use the system

Maintaining an even temperature throughout your home will help reduce condensation. Once your home is warm, your boiler will also need to work less hard to keep it that way. However don’t keep heating or hot water on too long, or at times when you don’t need the heat, for example when you’re at work or in bed. This wastes gas and money.

Check what time your controller comes on. Set the controller to bring the heating and/or
water on about half an hour before you get up to take the chill off the house and to go off half an hour before you go to bed.

**Sensible steps to take**

- Set the heat to come on just before you get up or get home from work
- Set it to go off before you go to bed
- In winter, close curtains at dusk to help retain heat in the room and do not block radiators

**Keep to a comfortable temperature:**

- Turn down radiator thermostats
- Keep heat low but constant
- Control hot water temperature

**In spring keep adjusting settings:**

- To come on for shorter periods
- Turn heating off on warmer days
- Turn down radiator thermostats
- Turn off radiators when they don’t need to be on
Help with fuel costs

If fear of high bills is stopping you heating your home sufficiently here are some tips to help.

• Compare fuel costs between different suppliers to get a better deal. You can get advice on switching suppliers by visiting [www.energyhelpline.com](http://www.energyhelpline.com) or call 0800 074 0745

• It is often cheaper to get both gas and electricity from the same supplier and there is usually a discount for paying by Direct Debit. Pre-payment meters are the most expensive option

• Many suppliers offer discounted schemes for older people or people claiming benefits and they can also offer advice on fuel debts and energy efficiency. The British Gas Energy Trust helps customers in need by providing financial grants. Call 01733 421060 or visit [www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)

EDF energy has a similar scheme, call 01733 421060 or visit [www.edfenergytrust.org.uk](http://www.edfenergytrust.org.uk)

• Pensioners or individuals with sight or hearing impairments, disability or chronic illness should contact their energy supplier and ask to be put on their ‘Priority Services Register’. People on this register cannot be disconnected between the months of 1st October and 31st March and can also access a variety of other useful services.

• Winter Fuel is a helpline available for anyone aged over 60, who needs help keeping warm. Call 08459 151 515.
Faults

If you have a fault with your central heating please check this list before reporting a fault.

• Is the heating system turned on? There will normally be a switch near the boiler

• Is the timer set correctly? If you are unsure how to set your timer, contact the Repairs Service Centre on 273 5555

• Is your room thermostat set to the required temperature?

• If you have thermostatic radiator valves are they turned on?

• Is your gas turned on? If you have a pre-payment or token meter, does it have credit?

If you have checked all of these things and still cannot get the system to work, please contact the Repairs Service Centre on 273 5555 or call in person at any office First Point. After normal working hours (8.00am – 5.30pm), at a weekend or during a bank holiday please call the emergency repairs number on 273 5555.
Contact Housing Services

Phone:  
Call Centres  0114 293 0000  
0114 205 3333  
Repairs  0114 273 5555

Online:  
Enquiries:  www.sheffield.gov.uk/contacthousing  
Website:  www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing  
Follow us:  

Write:  
Council Housing Service  
PO Box 483  
M33 0DH

Visit Us:  
To find your local office please telephone us or alternatively you can visit our website and search for your local office using our interactive map.

Some calls may be monitored by Sheffield City Council and its partners for quality and training purposes.
Need help accessing our services?

A translation of this leaflet is automatically available in the languages below. It can also be made available in other languages on request.

- Arabic
- Farsi
- Somali

This document can be supplied in alternative formats, please contact 0114 293 0000

Sheffield City Council
www.sheffield.gov.uk/councilhousing