

Proposed improvements to Aster's heating and hot water repairs service

Your questions answered

- **I've got a temporary condition which means I need access to constant hot water, but don't consider it to be a disability; would you class me as top priority?**

We would need to understand the extent of your condition and how long this could be managed if hot water is not available. Our contact centre advisers will review your request and ask if you have any alternative access to hot water such as a nearby relative or use of kettle to provide hot water. If none of these are available to you then we will look to attend as soon as possible.

- **Will I need to provide personal information about my health to call centre staff and who will have access to this information?**

We take your privacy seriously and use your information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

All customer facing staff have access to relevant personal information but very sensitive information can remain 'locked' to the majority of staff if appropriate.

We would encourage you to give us as much relevant information as possible so that we can manage your repair effectively.

- **If I report a breakdown out of normal office hours, will staff answering the emergency number be aware of my disability or health condition?**

If you have provided us with this information it will be available to our out of hours call centre. Along with this information they may ask you some additional questions to support your call and to allow us to make an informed decision about managing your repair.

- **What do you class as a vulnerable person?**

Vulnerability comes in many forms and the decision to what priority we give to your repair will be based upon the impact the loss of heating and/or hot water has on your vulnerability.

For example, someone who is partially sighted or hard of hearing may not be adversely affected by the loss of heating. However someone with a medical condition such as a heart problem might need constant heat. We may ask for details of your condition to be supported by a doctor's letter and held on file.

- **Is there an appeal process if I consider myself vulnerable and you don't?**

Yes, but we would require information/evidence to support your appeal, such as a GP's letter.

- **Can you provide me with loan heaters until my boiler is fixed and will you pay for the extra electric that I'll have to use?**

We can provide temporary heating and our engineers will offer this if they are unable to repair your boiler at their first visit. We will endeavour to repair your boiler as quickly as possible and should this fall outside of our service standards then we may offer assistance towards any additional electric cost over those you would normally pay. This would need to be raised as a complaint.

- **I don't have any health issues – how long am I likely to have to wait for a repair?**

You will be offered the next available appointment.

- **How do I get in touch to update you on information about my health?**

You can provide this information to any colleague you have contact with or directly to the [contact centre](#), and your details will be updated.

- **Members of my household have health issues/vulnerabilities – does this make us a priority?**

Yes, if they are registered household members and as a result of the loss of heating and/or hot water there is an adverse effect on their health or vulnerability then your repair will be raised as a priority.

- **Are there things I can do to check my heating is working OK before winter?**

We would encourage you to run your heating for short periods during the summer so that any moving parts e.g. pumps, valves, fans, etc., do not seize up. If your boiler does not work during these times then you should raise a job with our call centre and, because during this time the volume of breakdowns we receive is lower, we will be able to attend more quickly.

- **How often do Aster come to service my heating and hot water system?**

If your system is gas, oil or solid fuel we will service this at least annually. If you have a gas boiler we service it every 46 weeks.

- **I've got no hot water – what advice can you give me?**

We will ask if you have access to any other form of hot water such as an electric shower, immersion heater, a kettle, a relative nearby or perhaps a neighbour who wouldn't mind you using their shower or bath.

- **How can I cope until my heating system is fixed?**

If we can't repair your heating at our first visit we will provide you with temporary heating until we have been able to get the parts required. You may need to put on additional clothing or stay with a relative. If late at night then we would encourage you to go to the warmth of your bed.

- **If I am vulnerable, will you come out 24 hours a day to fix heating and hot water systems?**

If your vulnerability is adversely affected by the loss of these services we can arrange a repair as an emergency.

If your vulnerability is not adversely affected then we will arrange for an engineer to attend at the next available appointment (in normal office hours).

- **What's the best way to report a fault with my heating and hot water system?**

You can report faults via our website or you can call our contact centre. Visit www.aster.co.uk/contact-us/repairs for more information.

- **I have a toddler – does that put me at the top of the priority list for heating and hot water system repairs?**

Young children are considered vulnerable and this will be considered when we schedule your repair

- **What if my heating system breaks down and you have no record of my disability or health condition?**

If you explain that you have a disability or condition which is adversely affected by the loss of heating and hot water then we will use this information to prioritise your

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repair. If our engineer attends and identifies that you have provided inaccurate information to expedite your repair then you may be charged for this call. To help our call centre prioritise your call you should make sure that we have all relevant information and you keep us updated of any changes.

- **You said these changes will enable Aster to invest in replacing customers' heating systems, when will you be replacing mine?**

We aim to replace our gas heating systems every 15 years and electric night storage heaters every 20 years unless your system is working effectively, in which case we may extend its replacement date.

- **As a vulnerable person, if you can't attend to me within 24 hours, will you pay for my accommodation if I have to stay in a hotel or B&B until my boiler is fixed?**

If your vulnerability is adversely affected by not having access to heating and/or hot water and we can't get to you within 24 hours we would discuss all alternative measures with you.