

A boiler rarely fails without sending a few signals first. The trick is recognising which noises, smells, and behaviours point to inconvenience and which point to danger. I have walked into kitchens where a homeowner waited out a “funny noise” that turned into a ruptured heat exchanger, and I have also seen anxious families call for local emergency boiler repair because of a harmless ticking pipe. Understanding the difference helps you act quickly when it matters and avoid stress when it does not.

This guide brings together hard-earned experience from the field, the kind of detail you only learn on cold evenings when the heating will not come on and the pressure gauge keeps sinking. I will outline the symptoms that mean you should call a boiler engineer immediately, what you can safely check yourself before the visit, and how to speak the same language as the technician so your same day boiler repair is faster, safer, and more cost-effective. I will also highlight local nuances for those seeking boiler repair Leicester and the surrounding areas, where water hardness, property age, and weather patterns change the risk profile.

The thin line between nuisance and emergency

Every boiler has quirks. A light kettling hum on startup, a short cycling episode after a deep setback, a pressure needle that flickers by a tenth of a bar when radiators heat up. Those are generally not emergencies. On the other hand, a rotten-egg smell, visible scorching around the case seals, repeated lockouts with fault codes indicating flame loss, or any sign of carbon monoxide exposure are red flags. Urgent boiler repair is not about being dramatic, it is about keeping gas and combustion under control. If there is combustion instability, a stuck gas valve, or a blocked flue, minutes matter more than convenience.

Emergency means one of three things is at stake: life safety, water ingress that can damage property, or a failure mode that can destroy expensive components in hours rather than weeks. Gas leaks and carbon monoxide fall into the first category, active leaks into the second, dry-firing and pump seizures into the third. When you spot the early warning cues, you prevent the cascade.

The early warning cues you should never ignore

When people ring for same day boiler repair, they usually describe the symptom that annoys them the most. The engineer listens for patterns that reveal the underlying fault. These are the cues that I take seriously from the first mention.

A smell of gas around the boiler, meter, or pipework means you should shut off the gas at the emergency control valve if you can access it safely, avoid switching electrical devices on or off, ventilate the area, and step outside to call a qualified professional. That is a stop-now situation, not a watch-and-wait. The smell often appears when a union has loosened after work elsewhere in the home, when a flexible hose has perished on a cooker, or when a gas valve inside a boiler fails to close fully. No DIY fix belongs here.

Headaches, dizziness, nausea, or confusion coinciding with boiler operation point to possible carbon monoxide exposure. Sometimes the only visual hint is staining around the boiler case or flue terminal, or condensation where it should not be. Condensing boilers produce water, but they should not weep from the case or stain the wall above the appliance. A blocked flue, perished seals, or a cracked heat exchanger can push combustion products into your home. Turn the appliance off, ventilate, and call a gas boiler repair specialist. If a carbon monoxide alarm sounds, treat it as an emergency even if you feel fine.

<https://localplumberleicester.co.uk/boilers/boiler-repair/>

Persistent banging, clanging, or a sharp kettling noise that increases with heat is not just unpleasant. In older systems with limescale, a localised hot spot can cause water to flash-boil in the heat exchanger. That stressed metal fails early. Left unchecked, what starts as a noise leads to lockouts, higher fuel bills, and eventually replacement. With hard water in parts of Leicestershire, I have descaled 3-year-old combi heat exchangers that sounded like a kettle on a campfire. The earlier you treat trapped air, sludge, or scale, the better.

Pressure that falls steadily toward zero or climbs toward the red suggests a system integrity issue. A slow loss may be a weeping radiator valve or auto air vent. A rapid rise often points to an expansion vessel with no charge or a blocked pressure relief path. If your gauge rockets to 3 bar when heating starts, shut the boiler down. Expansion issues can trigger the safety valve, dump water, and in worst cases warp components under thermal stress.

Water under the boiler, especially if warm and fresh rather than dirty system water, deserves immediate attention. Condensate leaks from frozen or cracked traps are common in cold snaps, but any drip near the gas valve or fan assembly

raises the stakes because water and electricians do not mix. Do not pull the case to investigate if it requires removing sealed panels. That area is reserved for competent persons.

Frequent lockouts with repeated fault codes for ignition failure, flame detection errors, or flue sensor trips imply a combustion or flue gas handling problem. In a safe system, a single ionisation failure can happen during windy conditions or if there is a brief supply hiccup. Repeated faults, especially if accompanied by soot marks at the flue, require urgent boiler repair to prevent incomplete combustion and carbon monoxide risk.

A fan that ramps and ramps without ignition is a classic pattern when air pressure switches, fans, or flue paths misbehave. Modern controls are good at protecting you, but they cannot fix an obstruction, a stuck diaphragm, or a mis-sized flue. If the boiler tries for more than a minute repeatedly, stop and book local emergency boiler repair rather than forcing resets.

Electrical burning smells or visible scorching around the control panel, wiring loom, or PCB indicate overheating. Power down at the isolator and leave it off. I have replaced PCBs where a client kept pressing reset while a relay welded itself shut. That approach turns a £200 board into a wider wiring job or worse.

The anatomy of a fault: how symptoms map to causes

Symptom patterns help a good boiler engineer prioritise tests. It also helps you share clear, relevant details on the phone so the right parts arrive on the first visit. Here is how experience links common red flags to likely faults, across combi, system, and heat-only boilers.

Low pressure that returns quickly after topping up suggests an internal expansion vessel with a failed diaphragm. Pressure settles at 1.3 bar cold, then climbs to 3 bar hot, opens the safety valve, and drops back down as the system cools. The boiler then locks out for low pressure the next morning. The fix often involves recharging or replacing the vessel and inspecting the relief valve seat, which may no longer seal cleanly after repeated lifts.

Constant low pressure with no visible leaks in the home points to hidden pipework under floors, a weeping heat exchanger into the condensate line, or micro-leaks at towel rails that only show when hot. A thermal imaging camera or adding trace dye to the system helps here. In Leicester terraces with original floorboards, I have traced the culprit to an old copper run beneath the hallway where footfall and slight movement pinched the pipe over years.

Intermittent hot water from a combi with steady heating usually means a scaled plate heat exchanger, a sticky diverter valve, or a failed domestic hot water sensor. In hard water postcodes, plate scaling is the number-one suspect after 3 to 5 years without treatment. You get a burst of heat, then the boiler throttles back as the exchanger overheats locally. Flow temperature drops, then rises again, and the shower turns into a rollercoaster.

A roaring or booming sound at ignition often results from delayed ignition. Causes include weak spark, poor electrode positioning, incorrect gas pressure, or a partially blocked injector. Each ignition becomes a small bang. That is unsafe to ignore. Correct setup with a flue gas analyser and manometer, and cleaning or replacing the burner, resolves it.

Condensate backing up, gurgling, and lockouts during freezing weather point to a frozen or blocked condensate pipe. If the external run is long, thin, or uninsulated, a harsh night will stop it. Thawing the pipe with warm towels or a hairdryer

can get you going, but consider rerouting to a shorter, larger-diameter run with proper fall and insulation. I have seen more calls for urgent boiler repair from frozen condensate than any other single issue during cold snaps.

Radiators hot at the top, cold at the bottom are classic sludge symptoms, not an emergency by themselves, but the same sludge will seize a pump in time. If the boiler starts surging or cycling rapidly with noisy pipes, the pump is struggling to move water. The bearing assembly can overheat and fail. Early attention, powerflushing where appropriate, and fitting a decent magnetic filter can extend pump and boiler life.



Flue gas recirculation, which leaves soot or white staining around a flue terminal, happens when wind conditions, surrounding structures, or a poorly sited terminal cause exhaust gases to re-enter the intake path on room-sealed appliances. The result is poor combustion and frequent lockouts. Relocating or extending the terminal to meet the manufacturer's distances and local conditions solves it. This issue shows up around alleyways between semis and in courtyards where air is still and eddies form.

What you can safely check before calling for help

No one expects a homeowner to diagnose a modulating gas appliance, but a few safe checks can clarify the situation and sometimes restore heat without a visit. Only do what does not require removing sealed covers or touching gas-carrying components.

- Confirm system pressure between 1.0 and 1.5 bar when cold. If it sits at zero, top up via the filling loop to about 1.2 bar, then bleed a radiator if you hear trapped air, and recheck. If pressure plummets again within hours, stop topping up and call a boiler engineer, because constant fresh water accelerates corrosion.
- Check the condensate pipe outside. If it is white plastic, runs long on an outside wall, and temperatures have dipped below freezing, feel for brittleness or ice. Thaw gently and insulate afterward. Do not pour boiling water on it.
- Inspect the flue terminal. Make sure it is not blocked by debris, laundry, or bird nests. Keep safe clearances. Do not insert anything into the terminal.
- Reset once. A single reset can clear a spurious lockout caused by a brief gas supply blip or pressure dip. If the fault returns, do not keep pressing reset. Record the fault code for the engineer.
- Verify power and controls. Check the fused spur is on and the fuse intact, room thermostat demand is present, and programmer settings have not been altered. I have driven across Leicester to find a child had pressed holiday mode.

If you smell gas, feel unwell, suspect carbon monoxide, or see scorching or water inside the case, skip the checks and step straight to local emergency boiler repair.

The Leicester factor: water, housing stock, and winter habits

Boiler repairs Leicester way often follow a few patterns. The north and east of the city drift toward harder water, with limescale build-up arriving earlier in combi boilers that serve multiple bathrooms. Detached houses with longer pipe

runs, older semis with microbore pipework, and Victorian terraces with mixed upgrades each create their own failure modes.

I recall a 1930s semi near Evington where a new combi had replaced a vented cylinder. The radiators warmed unevenly and the boiler cycled every minute. The culprit was a mix of oversized and undersized rads and a pump on its last legs fighting sludge in 8 mm microbore. The owner had booked for “boiler repair Leicester” assuming the appliance was at fault. The permanent fix involved system cleaning, balancing, and a modest controls upgrade, not a new boiler.

Freezing weather in the Vale of Belvoir corridor exposes long external condensate runs on extensions. A same day boiler repair call frequently becomes a redesign: upsize the condensate pipe to 32 mm externally, add proper fall, wrap with weatherproof insulation, and where possible, route internally to a soil stack. Those changes turn panicked January calls into quiet winters.

Student lets in shared houses near the universities often run boilers hard with constant hot water demand and frequent cold starts. Diverter valves and plate heat exchangers work overtime. A magnetic filter, limescale reducer, and a service schedule that respects real usage rather than a calendar sticker reduce failures sharply.

Why urgent action can save the boiler, not just the day

Delaying attention to certain faults turns modest repairs into major spend. It is not scaremongering, it is mechanics and chemistry.

A boiler that runs with low system pressure can cavitate the pump and superheat local pockets in the heat exchanger. The metal scales, warps, or cracks sooner. An expansion vessel with no charge hammers the system with pressure swings, stretching seals and lifting the pressure relief valve until it weeps constantly. A plate heat exchanger packed with limescale forces the boiler to run hotter than necessary, burning more gas for less comfort. A fan that struggles against a partially blocked flue draws more current and fails early.

On the electrical side, repeated lockouts that you clear by hammering reset stress ignition components and relays. Electronics dislike heat and voltage spikes. A £15 flame sensor left sooted-up can turn into a £200 board fault when cycling becomes aggressive.

This is why local emergency boiler repair is not only about restoring heat tonight. It is about interrupting damage loops. The difference between a £90 sensor and a £900 heat exchanger replacement often comes down to whether someone listened to that kettling two weeks earlier.

How to talk to your boiler engineer so you get a faster fix

Good information compresses diagnosis time. When you ring for gas boiler repair, share concise, specific details without self-diagnosing the cause. Engineers appreciate patterns and context.

- State the make and model if known, and whether it is a combi, system, or heat-only boiler. A photo of the data plate helps.
- Describe what was happening when the fault occurred: hot water only, heating only, both, or during startup after hours off.
- Note the pressure reading cold and hot if you have it, any fault codes on screen, and whether a reset changed the behaviour.
- Share sounds and smells in plain language. “Rumbling like a kettle” or “a single bang at ignition” says more than “noisy.”
- Mention recent work on the system: radiator changes, builder renovations, new controls, or gas meter swaps. Many faults are introduced accidentally.

Providing access matters too. Clear the area around the boiler, know where the gas meter and electric isolator are, and, if safe, make the loft hatch accessible if the flue runs that way. These small courtesies can shave a half-hour of set-up and help achieve boiler repair same day.

Safety boundaries: what not to touch

Some homeowners are comfortable with tools and tempted to pull a case to peek inside. Do not. Removing a room-sealed case forms part of the combustion circuit. Once broken, it must be resealed and checked by a competent person with the

right instruments. Never try to adjust gas valves, clean burners without instruction, or bypass safety devices. A bridged pressure switch or taped-over flue sensor might get heat for a night and a tragedy the next day.

It is fine to bleed radiators, top up pressure cautiously, thaw external condensate lines, and reset once. It is not fine to dismantle flue joints, poke inside the burner space, or run the boiler with panels off. If a tradesperson suggests that as a “temporary fix,” find another tradesperson.

Real-world scenarios and what they teach

A landlord in Clarendon Park reported that the boiler ignited with a soft whoomp each time the heating came on. Tenants had lived with it for a week. Testing showed correct gas inlet pressure, but the ignition electrodes were out of position by a few millimetres after a previous clean. Combustion gas built up before sparking, hence the small thump. Adjusting the electrodes and verifying with a flue gas analyser ended the problem. Left longer, delayed ignition can crack the combustion box seals and fatigue the burner.

A family in Braunstone experienced repeating low pressure and had been topping up daily for two months. The boiler was three years old. The expansion vessel was flat, and the pressure relief valve had dripped intermittently into a poorly sited pipe, so no one saw it. They had introduced litres of fresh oxygenated water each day, which chewed through the steel radiators from inside. A £90 recharge at the start could have saved £600 in radiator replacements later.

A student house near Narborough Road had no heat after a cold night. The boiler displayed a condensate fault. The external pipe was 22 mm, eight metres long with no insulation, running along a north wall. Thawing got them heat for the evening, but the real fix was rerouting internally with a proper fall. That call began as urgent boiler repair and ended as simple design correction. The repeat calls stopped.

Preventive habits that reduce emergencies

You cannot prevent every failure, but certain habits slash the risk. Treat it as risk management rather than superstition.

Have the boiler serviced annually by a qualified engineer. A proper service is not just a quick vacuum. It includes combustion checks with a calibrated analyser, inspection of seals, cleaning condensate traps, verifying expansion vessel charge, testing safety devices, and logging readings. If your engineer hands you numbers, keep them. Trends matter.

Fit a magnetic filter on the return to the boiler if you have a wet central heating system. It will not catch every particle, but it dramatically reduces circulating sludge that wears pumps and blocks heat exchangers. Pair it with quality inhibitor and check levels during service.

Address water hardness with a limescale reducer or softener where appropriate, particularly for combi boilers feeding multiple bathrooms. The cost pales against repeated plate heat exchanger replacements and premature kettling. In Leicester’s harder areas, I treat scale prevention as essential, not optional.

Protect the condensate pipe. Ensure the external section, if any, is short, upsized to 32 mm, properly sloped, and insulated with weatherproof material. If redesign is possible, discharge internally to a soil stack with an air gap as per regulations.

Use controls sensibly. Avoid deep nightly setbacks that drive long recovery runs, which stress components, and do not turn the system off and on repeatedly in short intervals. Let modulating controls do their job. Balance radiators after any changes so the system flows well. A quiet system is a healthy system.

Costs, expectations, and the repair vs replace line

People often ask on the phone, “Roughly how much to fix this?” Without diagnosis it is guesswork, but patterns help set expectations. A sensor or electrode replacement might run into the low hundreds including callout. A diverter valve cartridge, fan, or pump takes you into mid-hundreds depending on brand and access. A cracked primary heat exchanger, failed PCB plus other age-related faults, or non-compliant flue run pushes you toward the replace conversation.

The replace line is not purely financial. If the boiler is out of support from the manufacturer, parts are scarce, or you need to alter the flue to meet current standards, replacement can be the pragmatic route. A 15-year-old unit that has had two major failures in 12 months with rising gas bills and frequent resets is not a reliable winter companion. Local boiler engineers worth their salt will present options transparently, with numbers and reasoning, not pressure.

Choosing the right help when the heat is off

When you search for boiler repairs Leicester or local emergency boiler repair, you will find a mix of sole traders and larger firms. Both can be excellent. The right choice depends on responsiveness, expertise with your boiler brand, and clarity on pricing.

Look for clear emergency callout protocols, genuine same day boiler repair availability during peak winter, and evidence of recent training on your appliance type. Ask whether the engineer carries common spares for your brand. A van stocked with ignition electrodes, fans, pumps, sensors, and a few popular PCBs can turn an urgent boiler repair into a first-visit fix rather than a multi-day wait.

Confirm that the company or individual is Gas Safe registered for gas boiler repair. For oil or LPG, look for the appropriate certifications. Read the pricing structure carefully. A transparent callout fee that includes the first hour often works well. Decline vague promises of “we will see” with no mention of rates. Professional outfits will not object to these questions.

When a small nuisance becomes a big emergency

Most serious boiler failures start small. A weep at a valve becomes a flow that soaks the PCB. A slightly noisy fan becomes a seized motor that trips the fuse. A minor CO alarm triggered once by a downdraft becomes persistent exposure because a flue joint has failed. The moment you notice a system behaving out of character, even if heat still arrives, observe it closely and act.

Take notes with times, temperatures, and behaviour patterns across a day. Photograph fault codes. Capture the pressure gauge at cold and hot. These details help an engineer move straight to the likely culprit. I have shaved hours off fault-finding because a homeowner had a simple log showing “pressure rises to 2.8 bar within 15 minutes of heating, then PRV discharges,” which led directly to testing the expansion vessel and relief valve, with no time wasted chasing invisible leaks.

The value of a steady hand in an emergency

When the house is cold and children need baths, it is easy to rush. A calm, methodical approach brings heat back quicker. Switch the boiler off at the control panel if it is short cycling or showing unsafe faults. If you know how to isolate gas safely, do it for gas smells. Ventilate and step outside to call. Gather the details and share them succinctly. If you need a temporary heat source, plug-in oil-filled radiators are safer than open coil fan heaters within reach of toddlers.

Once the engineer arrives, a good one will start with the basics: verify power, gas, water, and flue integrity, confirm fault codes, then test components against manufacturer tolerances. It is not uncommon for two faults to coexist, especially after DIY top-ups and resets. Trust the process and ask for a short explanation of what failed and why. A solid explanation is a sign of competence.

Key takeaways for homeowners and landlords

Emergencies are about patterns and priorities. Smells of gas, carbon monoxide alarms, scorching, heavy leaks, and persistent ignition or flue faults call for immediate shutdown and professional help. Pressure anomalies, kettling, and intermittent hot water are not life-threatening by themselves but worsen fast if ignored. Water hardness and system cleanliness are not side notes; they sit at the heart of many breakdowns.

If you need help quickly, local boiler engineers offering urgent boiler repair or boiler repair same day can often stabilise a fault and complete the repair with carried spares. The best outcomes come when you provide good information, give safe access, and respect the limits of safe homeowner intervention. If you are in or around Leicester, the particular mix of housing stock and water conditions makes a case for diligent maintenance, well-sited condensate runs, and scale prevention devices.

A boiler should be boring most days of the year. When it stops being boring, pay attention. A measured response today avoids night-time panic tomorrow and often saves the boiler you already own.

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? Q. How much should a boiler repair cost?

A. The cost of a boiler repair in the United Kingdom typically ranges from £100 to £400, depending on the complexity of the issue and the type of boiler. For minor repairs, such as a faulty thermostat or pressure issue, you might pay around £100 to £200, while more significant problems like a broken heat exchanger can cost upwards of £300. Always use a Gas Safe registered engineer for compliance and safety, and get multiple quotes to ensure fair pricing.

? Q. What are the signs of a faulty boiler?

A. Signs of a faulty boiler include unusual noises (banging or whistling), radiators not heating properly, low water pressure, or a sudden rise in energy bills. If the pilot light keeps going out or hot water supply is inconsistent, these are also red flags. Prompt attention can prevent bigger repairs—always contact a Gas Safe registered engineer for diagnosis and service.

? Q. Is it cheaper to repair or replace a boiler?

A. If your boiler is over 10 years old or repairs exceed £400, replacing it may be more cost-effective. New energy-efficient models can reduce heating bills by up to 30%. Boiler replacement typically costs between £1,500 and £3,000, including installation. A Gas Safe engineer can assess your boiler's condition and advise accordingly.

? Q. Should a 20 year old boiler be replaced?

A. Yes, most boilers last 10–15 years, so a 20-year-old system is likely inefficient and at higher risk of failure. Replacing it could save up to £300 annually on energy bills. Newer boilers must meet UK energy performance standards, and installation by a Gas Safe registered engineer ensures legal compliance and safety.

? Q. What qualifications should I look for in a boiler repair technician in Leicester?

A. A qualified boiler technician should be Gas Safe registered. Additional credentials include NVQ Level 2 or 3 in Heating and Ventilating, and manufacturer-approved training for brands like Worcester Bosch or Ideal. Always ask for reviews, proof of certification, and a written quote before proceeding with any repair.

? Q. How long does a typical boiler repair take in the UK?

A. Most boiler repairs take 1 to 3 hours. Simple fixes like replacing a thermostat or pump are usually quicker, while more complex faults may take longer. Expect to pay £100–£300 depending on labour and parts. Always hire a Gas Safe registered engineer for legal and safety reasons.

? Q. Are there any government grants available for boiler repairs in Leicester?

A. Yes, schemes like the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) may provide grants for boiler repairs or replacements for low-income households. Local councils in Leicester may also offer energy-efficiency programmes. Visit the Leicester City Council website for eligibility details and speak with a registered installer for guidance.

? Q. What are the most common causes of boiler breakdowns in the UK?

A. Common causes include sludge build-up, worn components like the thermocouple or diverter valve, leaks, or pressure issues. Annual servicing (£70–£100) helps prevent breakdowns and ensures the system remains safe and efficient. Always use a Gas Safe engineer for repairs and servicing.

? Q. How can I maintain my boiler to prevent the need for repairs?

A. Schedule annual servicing with a Gas Safe engineer, check boiler pressure regularly (should be between 1–1.5 bar), and bleed radiators as needed. Keep the area around the boiler clear and monitor for strange noises or water leaks. Regular checks extend lifespan and ensure efficient performance.

? Q. What safety regulations should be followed when repairing a boiler?

A. All gas work in the UK must comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Repairs should only be performed by Gas Safe registered engineers. Annual servicing is also recommended to maintain safety, costing around £80–£120. Always verify the engineer's registration before allowing any work.

Local Area Information for Leicester, Leicestershire

7-Day Weather Forecast - Leicester, UK

Detailed weather forecast including temperature, precipitation, humidity, wind, and UV index for Leicester, UK

 **Current: 5.8°C**

 Wind: 14.5 km/h |  Humidity: 87%

Tuesday 03 Feb

 4.7°C - 6.1°C |  8.9mm (98%) |  UV 0

Wednesday 04 Feb

 5.7°C - 10.3°C |  0.0mm (23%) |  UV 1

Thursday 05 Feb

 4.6°C - 6.2°C |  0.3mm (41%) |  UV 0

Air Quality Index - leicester, uk

Real-time air quality monitoring including PM2.5, PM10, NO₂, O₃, and CO levels for leicester, uk

AQI: 0 - Good

PM2.5: 0.0 µg/m³

PM10: 0.0 µg/m³

NO₂: 0.0 µg/m³

O₃: 0.0 µg/m³

CO: 0.0 µg/m³

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Crime Statistics - leicester, uk

Detailed crime breakdown by category with counts and percentages for leicester, uk area (latest month)



1435 Total reported crimes in leicester, uk area

Violent Crime	449 (31.3%)
Shoplifting	184 (12.8%)
Public Order	171 (11.9%)
Anti Social Behaviour	150 (10.5%)
Other Theft	133 (9.3%)

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