

Homes & Neighbourhoods

Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Summary: This policy describes how Homes and Neighbourhoods (H&N) will deliver a responsive, efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service that meets the needs of our tenants. The policy describes the types of repairs H&N will carry out and those that are the responsibility of our tenants.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out in detail Homes and Neighbourhood's policy for its Responsive Repairs & Maintenance Service. It covers all areas of organisational policy with regards to the repair & maintenance of the council homes under the management of Homes & Neighbourhoods. It excludes gas servicing which is covered in a separate policy.
- 1.2 It clarifies respective Landlords and Tenant obligations under the Tenancy Agreement.
- 1.3 The policy details the service standards customers, both tenants and leaseholders, can expect from H&N.
- 1.4 The policy describes how H&N will deliver an effective and efficient repairs and maintenance service that responds to the needs of tenants and achieves the highest levels of customer satisfaction.
- 1.5 A responsive repair is an item of minor or routine maintenance undertaken in response to minor defect resulting from a request from a tenant. A planned or cyclical repair is scheduled/periodic maintenance such as painting or planned replacement of building components.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The aims and objectives of the Policy are as follows:
 - To ensure the Council and our tenants meet their statutory and contractual obligations
 - To ensure Council Housing is maintained to statutory/compliant standards
 - To recognise the urgency of repair and prioritise accordingly
 - To correctly diagnose repairs and achieve the highest rates of 1st time repair
 - To provide a responsive, effective and cost efficient responsive repairs service that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days per year
 - To achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction
 - To carry out repairs effectively while minimising disruption to tenants
 - To ensure our repairs service is tailored to meet the needs of our customer
 - To ensure that all our properties are maintained to a high standard protecting the value of the asset and offering good thermal comfort, adequate layout and modern facilities

- To help maximise the life expectancy of all council housing.
- To provide transparency in the repairs procedure and provide a link between H&N and its customers, through customer feedback and involvement
- To identify less urgent repairs that can be batched and delivered as part of a larger planned programme
- To avoid large scale property defect or component failure and or related disrepair

3 RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

- 3.1 The repair service is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- 3.2 Customers will be encouraged to report repairs as soon as they arise to prevent further damage and to ensure that the housing stock remains in good condition.
- 3.3 H&N's preference is for customers to report repairs through the online repairs reporting tool and will encourage and promote this facility. Customers can also report a repair by telephone (office hours - 01484 414800 & out of hours - 01484 414850) and by email (housing.direct@kirklees.gov.uk). H&N will provide technical support via the Repairs Hub to front line staff and tenants requesting repairs and with repair related queries.
- 3.4 Wherever possible repairs will be diagnosed at point of order and the correct priority for response awarded. In the majority of cases customers will be able to choose an appointment when reporting a repair.
- 3.5 Information will be available to our customers detailing what they can expect from the repairs service and what is expected from them as tenants and leaseholders.
- 3.6 Priority for repair will be defined as follows:
- Instant response (up to 4 hours)
 - Emergency (up to 2 working days)
 - Responsive – Based on an appointment that meets the needs of the customer (within 25 days)
- 3.7 Instant response; repairs where there is an immediate danger to the occupants or there is a risk of further damage to the property or adjoining property. The type of situation resulting in an instant response would be flooding, gale damage, gas explosion, house fire or severe vandalism.

- 3.8 Emergency repairs; repairs that put the health, safety or security of our customers at risk but there is no immediate danger to the occupants or further serious damage to the property. Situations resulting in an emergency response are: total loss of water supply, lift not working, loss of gas supply, total or partial loss of space or water heating between 1st November and 30th April Annually.
- 3.9 Responsive priority encompasses all other repairs which we will aim to complete within 25 working days. Where access to the house or flat is required, a suitable appointment slot will be arranged with the tenant. If it is identified that work can be carried out as part of a planned programme, it will be cancelled and added to a programme of work to be completed in the future.
- 3.10 Tenants can choose from four appointment slots:
- Morning (8am – 1pm)
 - Afternoon (12 noon – 4pm)
 - School run (10am – 2.30pm)
 - All day (8am – 4pm)
- 3.11 Where a tenant is unable to provide access at the time of an arranged appointment, the job will be cancelled from the repairs system until a further instruction is given by the tenant.
- 3.12 Pre inspections will be undertaken when a routine repair request is unclear or measurements are required. Plastering work will generally always require pre inspection unless it is a small patch repair. Where possible customers will be informed of this at point of order. The Repairs Hub will assume responsibility for any such inspections.
- 3.13 If the operative is unable to complete the repair at the first appointment (due to materials or specialist being required), the operative will liaise with their Planner to arrange a further appointment whilst in the customer's home; this may result in a further repair being appointed and the original repair being logged as complete.
- 3.14 As part of our ongoing programme to improve the repairs service; H&N's are introducing a dedicated team of technical experts to improve repair diagnosis and improve decision making for follow on works for more complicate repairs.
- 3.15 The Repairs Hub will provide a single point of contact and support for customers and staff involved in the repairs service or repairs ordering process.
- 3.16 A dedicated, customer focused team will maintain a consistent on approach to fault diagnosis, repair allocation and referrals for further investigation to more involved repairs.

- 3.17 Non-responsive repairs may still will be ordered but allocated to planned programmes of works.
- 3.18 The overall aim of the Hub is to improve the customers experience while managing expectations and timescales for a repair.
- 3.19 The repairs hub will further improve our understanding of [vulnerability](#) amongst tenants and help to us to interact to deliver a tailored service where appropriate. The Hub will develop a suite of 'self-help' instructional videos to guide tenants in completing minor DIY and basic home maintenance as well all the methods of identifying faults to enable accurate repair reporting.

4 VOID REPAIRS

- 4.1 H&N operates a Void Standard with an agreed Lettable Standard, our dedicated voids team will schedule void repairs to ensure all properties meet the lettable standard prior to letting.
- 4.2 Void Repairs will be undertaken by our in-house team and will follow the same prescribed standards for responsive repairs.
- 4.3 Timescales for the completion of void repairs will be communicated to all internal stakeholders and targets issued to minimise void loss and unavailability of properties for future let.
- 4.4 The Lettable Standard will take into the overall condition of the property, adequate provision of modern facilities, safe and certified gas, electrical and water installations, overall cleanliness and provision for immediate occupation.
- 4.5 The full Lettable Standard Policy is attached at: **Appendix 2**.

5 PLANNED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES

- 5.1 In order to provide an effective and efficient repairs service we may in some cases defer certain types of commonly occurring repairs in favour of delivering as part of a longer term planned improvement programme, e.g., repairs to kitchen units; maybe be deferred to a kitchen replacement programme. These programmes will be informed by stock condition data and wider discussion in order to establish a long term programme.
- 5.2 We have established a 5 year capital replacement programme (Your Home/Your Place) which forms the initial priorities for the yet to be agreed 30 year investment plan.
- 5.3 Tenants, leaseholders and residents will be informed in advance of planned improvement programmes in the area they live.

- 5.4 Tenants will be informed when their repair has been referred to a repair programme e.g., a batched fencing scheme/kitchen replacement/heating upgrade etc.
- 5.5 On rare occasions there maybe the requirement to move a customer out of their home to carry out a repair (decant). This could be due to the nature of the repair or because of a customer's vulnerability. This is covered in more detail in H&N's Decant Policy. Decanting is our last resort and we will try to carry with the household in occupation.
- 5.6 Recently launched 'Your Home Your Place' establishes the Councils intention to improve council homes and introduce a local 'Kirklees Standard'. The standard will improve council housing and related environments, improve the quality of components installed, focus on place making, thermal comfort, future proofing homes for customer need and digital inclusion.

6 ADAPTATIONS

- 6.1 Where necessary H&N will work with Kirklees Council's Accessible Homes Team (AHT) to provide adaptations to meet the needs of our tenants.
- 6.2 Major adaptations (wet rooms, Stair lifts, ramps) can take significantly longer to complete due to the related occupational assessments. Further information can be found on the Kirklees Council website.
- 6.3 Minor adaptations such as hand/grab rails will be done in a shorter period of time. Tenants requiring this type of adaptation should contact H&N.

7 HOMES & NEIGHBOURHOODS KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 In accordance with our Tenancy Agreements and the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, H&N will keep in good repair the structure, substructure and exterior/fabric of the property. Where the property is a flat, H&N will also keep in good repair any internal external shared/communal areas.
- 7.2 The structure and exterior includes:
- Drains, gutters, gulleys and external pipes
 - The roof structure and roof covering
 - Soffits, fascia, barge boards
 - External walls, doors, window frames, sills, ironmongery, where timber; external painting and decorating

- Internal walls, floors and ceilings, doors and door frames, ironmongery and skirting boards but not including internal painting and decoration
- Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues
- Pathways, walkways, hallways, balconies or steps or other means of access/egress
- Communal areas – hard standings e.g., drying areas and amenity space
- Plasterwork with the exception of minor defects/hairline cracks
- Integral garages, outbuildings or stores – structure and roof and services
- Boundary walls, if they exist at the start of the tenancy or are later erected by H&N, adjoining footpaths, rights of way, garage access-ways or any roads managed by H&N that are not maintained by the council.
- Fences and gates to the front, side and rear elevations; H&N will install a fence if not present and thereafter will keep in maintained. However, the tenant is obliged to keep the fence well maintained (decoration, cleaning, minor repairs) and to report any damage in a timely manner. Any damage as result of impact damage due to road traffic accident/vandalism must be reported to the Police and crime reference obtained and passed to H&N
- H&N will comply with the party wall act 1996 when executing any boundary repairs that affect adjoining properties.
- Repairs to adopted footpaths and roads will be reported to Kirklees Council Highways department who will notify customer of the related timescale for repair

7.3 H&N will keep in good repair and proper working order any installation provided for space heating, water heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity including:

- Basins, sinks, taps, baths, toilets, flushing systems and water pipes
- Electric wiring including sockets, switches, consumer units
- Gas pipes and water pipes
- Wastewater and foul systems
- Water heaters, fireplaces, fitted fires and central heating installations
- Renewable technologies e.g., solar PV panels. Note: associated metering will be the responsibility of the tenant in occupation

**In the event you smell gas call 0800 111 999 immediately.
A textphone is available for deaf and hard of hearing people - 0800 371787**

7.4 H&N will take reasonable care to keep the common entrance halls, stairways, lifts, passageways and any other common parts in good repair and fit for use by the Tenant(s) and other occupiers of, and visitors to the Premises. Common parts include:

- Passenger Lifts, communal stair lifts
- Communal lighting
- Emergency lighting and related signage
- Shared fire alarm systems
- Fire-fighting equipment/dry risers
- Shared door entry systems
- Shared TV/aerial systems
- Hard-wired smoke detectors (where applicable)
- CCTV and security alarms
- Refuse chutes and collection systems
- Internet network/distribution systems*

***will be repaired maintained by the Internet Network provider through agreed wayleave by the grantor**

7.5 External decorations: H&N will maintain in good state of decoration: related exterior components of the property and any common parts through a 5 year cyclical maintenance programme.

8 TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Tenants and leaseholders are responsible for taking care of their homes, gardens and communal areas. Tenants and leaseholders are obliged to report repairs as soon as they arise to prevent any further damage.

A guide which sets out who is responsible for each building element is attached at **Appendix 1**.

8.2 Tenants are responsible for the following:

- Reporting repairs in a timely manner and providing adequate information in order we can diagnose what is required and complete the repair on the first visit
- Any deliberate or accidental damage that could have been prevented with reasonable care; H&N will charge tenants for the repair of deliberate or accidental damage should the tenant not suitably rectify the damage themselves
- Replacement glass to windows unless the units are found to be faulty
- H&N expect tenants to vacate the property leaving it in the same condition it was let in. On inspection it is found that the tenant has left deliberate damage, they will be charged for repairs
- Lost keys and resulting lock changes
- Fittings installed by the tenant (except gas appliances that have been signed over to H&N)
- The supply and replacement of light bulbs and curtain rails
- Replacing toilet seats, chains and plugs to basins and sinks
- Replacing shower heads and shower hoses
- Bleeding radiators
- Decorating and keeping the property in good decorative order
- Keeping any shared areas, such as stairways and landings, clean, tidy and clear of rubbish
- Keep shared areas clear of all personal items
- Keeping the garden clean, tidy and clear of rubbish and keep boundary hedging pruned and well maintained as not to cause nuisance. Keep boundary hedges maintained as not to cause nuisance
- Hairline cracks to plaster work
- Ensuring that any electrical goods owned by the tenant are safe and not liable to cause trip switches in the consumer unit to cut off electric power
- Ensuring that drains, sinks and basins are not blocked due to inappropriate items being flushed down the toilet or emptied into gullies
- Adjusting doors for the fitting of carpets and other floor coverings

- General maintenance of **all** boundary fencing including removal of shrubs and weeds obstructing fencing and decorating fencing every 5 years using suitable protective coatings, preservatives or stains
 - Floor coverings other than fixed vinyl tiles
 - Removing and refitting carpet/laminate flooring that needs to be removed to allow a repair to be undertaken
 - General cleanliness and overall upkeep of the property
- 8.3 If tenants have any concerns about their ability to fulfil any of the above responsibilities they should contact H&N for advice.
- 8.4 Tenants have the right to make improvements/alterations to their home. However must seek written permission from H&N first. Further information is available in the leaflet 'Your right to improve and alter your home' this is published on the Council's website. Any unauthorised alterations will be reinstated to the original designation and the cost of repair issued as a recharge to the tenant
- 8.5 Leaseholders are responsible for:
- The internal fittings and fixtures in their homes
 - Ensuring all gas appliances are serviced by a qualified registered gas engineer annually. **H&N offer a certified gas servicing plan for Leaseholder. This can be arranged through the Supporting Information Team by calling 01484 414886.**
 - Paying a proportion of the total cost of any repairs/replacements required to communal facilities such as shared roofs, communal lighting, Lifts, heating, drains and other items related to the repair of the structure and or related to fire safety repairs & improvements to ensure the overall block is compliant to current fire safety standards. H&N are obliged to inform of any plan to undertake replacement and issue and estimate for the works in accordance to the Leasehold service change notification. Confirmed costs and programmes will be communicated through the Section 20 Consultation process
 - Paying for their buildings insurance cover through the service charge. Leaseholders can claim against this if they suffer damage to their property by storm, fire or certain accidents

9 RIGHT TO REPAIR

9.1 The right to repair scheme was introduced for council tenants to make sure that certain small, urgent repairs that could affect health, safety or security are done quickly. If the repair qualifies, then you may be entitled to a compensation payment of £10 followed by a payment of £2 per day (£50 maximum) if the repair is not completed within target times. Some examples of qualifying repairs are:

- unsafe power or lighting sockets or electrical fittings
- blocked flue to an open fire or boiler
- a leaking roof
- leaks from water or heating pipes, tanks or cisterns
- loose or broken banister handrails

10 INSURANCE

10.1 The Council will ensure that it has sufficient Property and Public Liability Insurance. In the event of an insured peril e.g. fire or flood. The policy will cover damage to the structure of the building and associated repairs. However, where there is damage to contents within the property the adequate insurance cover will remain the responsibility of the tenant.

10.2 H&N has an arrangement with an insurance provider to offer low cost home contents insurance to tenants, and we strongly recommend that our tenants take out insurance through this scheme or another provider.

11 MONITORING

11.1 H&N will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by setting competitive targets against the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set by H&N Senior Management Team:

- Percentage of routine repairs completed within target
- Average time taken to complete routine repairs
- Percentage of appointments made and kept
- Percentage of repairs completed at first visit
- Overall satisfaction with the repairs service

11.2 Tenant feedback will be gathered through both perception (STAR) and transactional surveys. H&N will listen to tenants and use feedback to improve services.

11.3 Performance information will be shared with tenants in the annual report and on the H&N website.

12 RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS POLICY

12.1 The responsibility for delivering this policy lies with Service Director of H&N. The majority of repairs will be carried out by H&N's in-house repairs service (H&N Property Services).

12.2 3rd Party contractors may be employed to carry out specialist work. Contractors will be required to operate in accordance with H&N's policies and procedures. Relevant information will be included in contract documentation.

13 CUSTOMER STANDARDS

13.1 Customer standards, in accordance with Consumer Standards, will be published on our website. H&N will monitor and publish performance against these standards.

13.2 Performance targets against standards will be reviewed annually and agreed by the SMT

13.3 The H&N Service Standards for the repairs service is listed below:

- We will be polite, helpful and maintain respect for you and your home at all times
- We will endeavour to diagnose the repair during your initial call
- Our operatives/engineers will:
 - ✓ Wear a uniform
 - ✓ Drive fully liveried vehicles
 - ✓ Introduce themselves and show photo identification
 - ✓ Fully explain why they are visiting
- Where possible complete the repair at the first visit
- Give clear timescales for any follow up work
- We will install the highest quality most suitable materials
- Protect tenants homes during the work
- Demonstrate new installations fully
- Clean up after the work

- 13.4 These standards are measured via the repairs customer satisfaction surveys and through our other performance management mechanisms.
- 13.5 Customers should use H&N's complaints policy if they feel there has been a failure in the delivery of services to the standards set out in this policy.

14 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS AND FURTHER READING (MANDATORY)

- 14.1 Appendix 1: Repairs and Maintenance Responsibility Guide
- 14.2 Appendix 2: The Lettable Standard Policy
- 14.3 Regulator for Social Housing – Home Standard
- 14.4 Regulator for Social Housing – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- 14.5 Department for Communities and Local Government – A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation
- 14.6 H&N Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- 14.7 H&N Decant Policy
- 14.8 HHSRS Health Hygiene Safety Rating System – DCLG
- 14.9 Equality Act 2010
- 14.10 Asset Management Strategy