

Housing and Safer Communities Policy



Division – Repairs and Investment

Policy Title – Repairs Policy

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1.0 Policy Objective

- 1.1 The Royal Borough of Greenwich (the council) are committed to ensuring that residents homes, offices within domestic premises and communal areas are safe and secure places to live and work. The Housing and Safer Communities Directorate (HSC) within the council is responsible for residential properties that fall within the Housing Revenue Account and temporary residential accommodation within the General Fund, as well as estate play areas within the curtilage of the estate.
- 1.2 The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2021-2026 sets out the overarching principles and key aims and objectives for Housing and Safer Communities (HSC) housing services for the provision of safe, secure, and affordable homes. This is divided into five key strands of which this policy sits within: -
- Strand 1 - Ensuring the supply of high-quality homes and
 - Strand 4 – Safe and sustainable homes for all.
- 1.3 This policy sets out how HCS intend to meet its legislative and other obligations as a landlord, employee and client and provide assurance that properties owned and managed by HSC are safely managed. HSC aims and objectives is to ensure that our residents have a safe, secure, and well-maintained home and employees, contractors and the public are not exposed to any risk that may impact their health, safety, and wellbeing.
- 1.4 This policy does not cover the responsibility of repairs to leasehold properties; this will be outlined in residents lease agreement and the Leaseholders Handbook.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 places an obligation on the landlord to maintain the structure and exterior of the property, including installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, heating and hot water systems, drainage, and sanitary appliances. It means that HSC has an obligation to carry out basic repairs.
- 2.2 This policy will cover residential properties managed or owned by HSC which will include: -
- General needs
 - Older peoples or sheltered properties
 - Temporary Accommodation (where appropriate)
 - Supported Housing
 - Hostels (repairs responsibilities dependant on leasing arrangements)
 - Voids (properties due for demolition and under a lease arrangement refer to relevant lease for repair responsibilities).
 - Communal areas in blocks and estate
 - New Homes (outside of defects period and depending on leasing arrangement)
- 2.3 The type of repairs covered are: -

- **Responsive Repairs,**
This is a day-to-day reactive repair carried out in response to a request from a resident, or representative e.g. councillor, employees, or contractor. These include broken, damaged, or defective parts of the fabric of the building or the external area, including plumbing, carpentry, drainage systems, roofing/rainwater goods, wet trades such as plastering, floor/wall tiling, external brickwork/paving, UPV windows and glazing and boundary fencing electrical systems, heating (individual gas, electric or communal), damp and mould, ventilation and lighting.
- **Planned Works**
Reactive external estate improvements and structural repairs, usually originating from Estate Inspections with residents and Councillors this may include some painting of blocks, e.g. badly peeling paintwork or smoke damaged areas following a fire. This type of work should not be confused with Capital Works which is a programmed scheduled of works based on the stock condition surveys.

Out of Hours Repairs

HSC will ensure residents are able to report an emergency repair outside of normal working hours. The primary objective is to 'make safe' this may require a follow up visit to complete the repair during office hours and in line with HSC repairs timescales.

- **Communal Area**
HSC have a repair and maintenance responsibility for communal area, which are shared area in a block of flats, converted street properties, maisonettes, sheltered and supported blocks, and temporary accommodation that is shared by residents, its visitors, contractors, and staff. These can be defined as landings, walkways, corridors, stairs/stairwells, lift areas and lobbies, communal heating, and mechanical and electrical door entry systems including shared kitchens, lounges, and garden areas.
- **Estate Play Areas**
Some neighbourhoods will have estate play areas within the curtilage of the estate, HSC has a responsibility to ensure they are safe and well maintained for residents, their children, and visitors ensuring they are not exposed to any risk that may impact on their health, safety, and wellbeing. Responsibility for estate play areas will include the equipment, pathways, fences and seats.
- **Voids**
HSC will have processes in place to arrange any required repairs once the tenancy has been termination or while the property is empty, ensuring the property is ready for occupation as soon as possible.
- **Adaptations**
HSC will facilitate independent living by carrying out alterations when required to meet the needs of residents who may be disabled or infirmed. Where recommended by an Occupational Therapist traditional bathroom may be changed to wet room, the installation of ramps, structural changes to accommodate a wheelchair or the provision of assistive fixtures and fittings, including any repair obligation thereafter.

- 2.4 HSC consider the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and residents seriously. It is our policy to meet at least the minimum health and safety requirements of the law.
- 2.5 Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1999 the Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the health and safety obligations as well as ensuring residents homes are safe and secure. These duties are further delegated to the senior administrative officers, the Director of Housing & Safer Communities, and the Senior Assistant Director for Repairs & Investment.
- 2.6 The Director of Housing and Safer Communities is supported by a Senior Assistant Director for Repairs and Investment directorate to assist in the delivery and implementation of this policy.
- 2.7 The Director of Housing and Safer Communities is responsible to the councils Chief Executive and the council's cabinet members for ensuring the effective delivery, implementation, and compliance of this policy.
- 2.8 The Senior Assistant for Repairs and Investment will be responsible for the appointment of the Head of Responsive Repairs and Voids for the effective management of the Responsive Repairs and Voids Service and where appropriate to liaise with relevant services where there are breaches in tenancy or lease conditions or concerns relating to health and safety.
- 2.9 HSC's Assurance Framework maps out the governance regime for both officers and cabinet members to ensures Housing and Safer Communities meets its regulatory obligations by being visible and accountable for resident safety and the delivery of improvements. The Audit and Risk Management Panel within the framework is responsible for ensuring that RBG Cabinet receives the assurances it requires.
- 2.10 HSC will have relevant procedures in place for the repairs of domestic properties, communal areas, as well as estate play areas which will provide guidance and a consistent approach for the management of its repairs and maintenance service.
- 2.11 The Head of Responsive Repairs and Voids will appoint appropriately skilled and trained employees to assist in the delivery of the Responsive Repairs and Voids Service. Key competencies for each post will be identified in relevant person specifications.

3.0 Key Policy Points

- 3.1 HSC will comply with all relevant legislation to meet our repairs and maintenance obligations to maintain its properties so that they are structurally sound, safe, warm, and habitable for our residents
- 3.2 HSC will protect our resident, employees, contractors, and visitors from any risk to health and safety due to poor maintenance or failure to remedy a potential hazard.

3.3 Management of Duties

HSC has a duty to manage its repairs and maintenance service by: -

- providing an effective Responsive Repairs and Voids Service that aims to complete repairs first time within set response guideline.

- providing residents with up-to-date information on the status of their repairs.
- providing value for money while supporting investment in HSCs housing estates and properties.
- ensuring the repairs service is easily accessible and can be easily understood by all residents, especially disabled/vulnerable resident, and where appropriate to supply reading material in other languages and brail.
- providing effective processes that prioritises repairs likely to impact the health and safety of residents, employees, and contractors.
- having appropriate processes in place to reduce the impact of damp, mould and condensation in residential properties.
- providing opportunities for residents to be involved in the development of the repairs and maintenance service.
- ensuring customer satisfaction is measured, feedback of the service is gathered, and continuous improvement is achieved through learning from the information collected.
- considering the impact of operational practices on residents, employees, contractors, the environment, and community.
- safeguarding the future of HSC properties by planning for planned and capital works.
- arrange suitable insurance to cover the structure of buildings and communal areas (excluding fixtures and fittings) it owns or manages.
- considering temporary or permanent alternative accommodation where major or remedial works are required and where remaining in the property could pose a health and safety risk to the resident.

3.4 The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 provides residents with the right to have certain repair that may affect their health, safety and security to be completed within designated timescales. If they are not completed within time, the resident can ask for another contractor to complete the repair, or HSC may pay compensation if the repair is still not completed. More information on the Right to Repair, “qualifying repairs” and time scales is available in the Repairs Handbook.

3.5 When a repair is reported HSC will priorities the repair into one of the following categories (see the Repairs Handbook for more information): -

- **Emergency and Out of Hours** – repairs that could have a serious effect on residents or damage to the property. HSC will aim to deal with such calls within 2 hours from the request during this time HSC “make safe”; a full repair may be completed at a later date.
- **Urgent Repairs**– repairs that are an inconvenient and will affect the comfort of the resident, if not remedied may cause damage to the property. Depending on the urgency of the repair HSC aim to fix urgent problems within 1 to 5 working days.
- **Routine or Non-Urgent Repairs**– repairs that are not likely to cause any serious inconvenience, nuisance but do not pose an immediate risk to the resident health and safety or damage to the property. HSC will complete these repairs within 20 working days.

3.6 Resident Responsibilities

Residents are to proactively work in partnership with HSC to help keep them safe and secure in their home and to assist in the repair of their home by: -

- treating any council representative with respect and courtesy while they are conducting their duties.
- allowing HSC employees and contractors into your home to carry out inspections and where necessary repairs or improvements, including essential gas and electrical checks.
- keeping the property in a habitable condition allowing employees and contractors ease of movement in the property to enable them to carry out their duties.
- taking good care of the interior of your home, including fixtures and fittings.
- report repairs, especially if the problem is likely to cause injury or damage to people or the property.
- not damaging any fixtures or fittings (including signs) to the communal areas and report damaged or defective items you may notice such as broken doors, glazing, defective light fittings or bulbs, lifts, etc.
- obtaining written permission from HSC before carrying out any improvements or alterations to their home.
- not to carry out any unauthorised alterations and where identified during an inspection to remove and make good any resultant damage.
- ensuring the property is in good repair and reasonable condition at the end of their tenancy, ensuring the property is left empty, free from rubbish and unwanted furniture; the resident may be recharged for any damage or removal of rubbish or furniture.
- not keeping paraffin, gas cylinders or any other flammable substance that could significantly increase the risk of fire or explosion in the property.
- ensuring that any household waste products including discarded furniture and fittings are disposed of considerately and do not obstruct communal areas, such as corridors, balconies, etc.
- arrange their own content insurance.
- accepting the condition of the property as seen where a mutual exchange is taking place, any repairs will be reported and completed in-line with the repairs policy and procedures.

3.7 Damp, Mould and Condensation

HSC will have appropriate measures in place to reduce the impact of damp and mould in residential properties, such as: -

- removing the hazard within 7 working days by carrying out a fungal mould wash in affected properties.
- investigate potential property defects that may have caused damp, mould and condensation.
- where the cause of damp and mould is not attributed to defects, HSC will investigate for potential thermal or other improvements by damp, mould and condensation responsive works or future capital programmes.
- where necessary, provide dehumidifiers to deal with condensation and excess water due to leaks,
- ensuring employees are provided with Personal Protective Equipment while dealing with damp and mould,

- providing resident with information to help prevent damp, mould and condensation.
- if the hazard cannot be removed and the property is deemed unfit for habitation, where appropriate HSC may consider a temporary decant while remedial works are carried out. In some circumstances a permanent move may require consideration. Each case will be reviewed and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

3.8 Right to Buy and Leasehold Management

Residents exercising their Right to Buy (RTB) will purchase their property as seen unless there are any outstanding repairs already reported for completion at the time of submitting their RTB application.

- 3.9 HSC will carry out any repairs likely to impact resident's health and safety and well-being while a resident's RTB application is being processed.
- 3.10 On completion of the RTB, leaseholders will be responsible for all repairs relating to their property.
- 3.11 In blocks with shared facilities HSC will carry out repairs in communal areas and planned maintenance works affecting the structure of the block, leaseholder will be responsible for a proportion of these costs. Cost will be split between the number of properties in the block.
- 3.12 Leasehold resident will allow HSC access to their property to investigate the likelihood of emergency remedial works such as leaks that is affecting other residents in the building.
- 3.13 Any cost of remedial works or works carried out to remedy resultant damage to neighbouring properties or communal areas the leaseholder will be recharged as outlined in their lease.

3.14 Contract Management

In line with the council's procurement protocol where appropriate HSC will: -

- appoint suitably qualified contractors to carry out necessary repairs and maintenance duties.
- ensure accreditation certificates are verified with the appropriate bodies prior to any appointment.
- conduct regular meetings with contractors to review contract goals and monitor performance.
- carry out appropriate post inspections to monitor the quality of work.
- effectively control works through appropriate processes.
- take all required action to mitigate health and safety risks while work activities are carried out on residential properties and in communal areas.

3.15 Chargeable Repairs

HSC may recharge for a repair that has been identified as being the resident's responsibility, also indicated in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants Handbook, providing they have prior knowledge of the potential recharge before work is undertaken. The expense of a recharge can take place when: -

- there has been damage to HSC properties, and it has been determined that it is not the result of normal wear and tear.
- work undertaken by the resident has resulted in damage to the property and work is needed to bring the property back to its original condition.
- there has been an improvement or alteration carried out by the resident without HSC permission, or where the work carried out does not meet the conditions of consent and work is required to restore the property to its original condition.
- damage is caused by a third party who is a resident, member of the resident's household or a visitor.
- a report of a repair or attendance by a trade staff or contractor has been misrepresented, e.g. an emergency repair which was later found not to be the case.
- items have been left in a vacated property which will need to be removed.
- damage caused by others must be reported to the police and a crime number obtained, otherwise the cost will be the residents' responsibility.

3.16 In cases where there has been deliberate or wilful damage to HSC properties, depending on the circumstances HSC, with warning, may decide to take appropriate legal action to stop any further damage.

3.17 The decision to recharge a resident will rest with the Contact Centre Manager which will be made on a case-by-case basis depending on representation made by the resident, circumstances surrounding the repair and cost.

3.18 HSC will only carry out a repair which is not its responsibility where it is necessary to avoid further damage to the property or to safeguard the health and safety of its residents, visitors, employees, and contractors.

3.19 For more information on recharging see the Recharge Policy and Procedure

3.20 Complaints

Any complaints or reports of dissatisfaction regarding a repair will be dealt with in accordance with HSC Complaints Procedure.

3.21 If all steps have been followed in the Complaints Procedure and the resident considers the matter has not been resolved to their satisfaction the resident can approach the Housing Ombudsman for further assistance.

3.22 Compensation

Any repairs undertaken within or in the vicinity of a resident's home all reasonable precaution will be taken to complete the work without causing damage to the resident's belongings or fittings.

3.23 Where damage is proven to be caused by HSC or someone acting on our behalf and the damage can be attributed to accidental damage or poor working practices; compensation may be paid in line with HSC Disrepair policy and procedure.

3.24 Awareness and Communication

HSC will protect resident, employees, and contractors to ensure: -

- employees and contractors are aware of this policy and the implications of their related responsibilities.

- residents are kept informed of any delay to their repair request.
- residents are aware of the content of their Tenancy Agreement and the Repairs Handbook which outlines HSC and the residents' repairs responsibilities.
- residents are informed of any potential recharge prior to any works being undertaken.
- where appropriate, residents are advised of any health and safety concerns in their home or communal areas where they live.
- employees and contractors receive appropriate health and safety training appropriate to their role and it is personally signed-off.
- safe working practices are in place, which will include the wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment.
- arrangements are in place with contractors to ensure that all relevant employees, residents, and visitors are aware of any work being undertaken that may affect their health and safety, so that their safety is not at risk.
- residents and employees are aware of their responsibility in relation to health and safety
- residents who have a disability/vulnerability are appropriately advised of any health and safety measures while works are underway.

3.25 Record Keeping

HSC will keep and maintain accurate and robust records in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that can withstand scrutiny, auditing and regulatory inspection, to include: -

- an accurate Asset Register of all buildings that are owned or managed by HSC, outlining plumbing, electrical systems, heating, and lighting appliances installed in buildings.
- a record of all relevant findings whilst carrying out its repair obligations.
- a record of all completed repairs, along with details of the work carried out, the date and by whom e.g., in-house service, or contractor.
- records of any pre and post inspections
- where required, appropriate information on the structure, construction type and make-up of each property.

4.0 Legislation

4.1 The principal legislation for this policy is: -

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Sections 2, 3 and 4
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004
- Home Fit for Human Habitation Act 2018
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Common Hold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002

- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Equalities Act 2010
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Leasehold Reform Act 2024

- 4.2 This list is not exhaustive but contains the main legal duties regarding the management of repairs and maintenance to residential properties.
- 4.3 HSC will comply with all relevant codes of practice, guidance, and British Standards that underpin legislation.
- 4.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation and in line with current established procedure.

5.0 Implementation and Performance

- 5.1 The implementation of this policy will be carried out through employee training and briefings. A copy of this policy will be made available on the intranet and internet for review.
- 5.2 Performance will be monitored and challenged through agreed performance indicators and will be reviewed at the following scheduled meetings: -
- Cabinet Reports
 - Housing and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel
 - Housing Delivery Board
 - Directorates Leaders Team (DLT)
 - Housing Performance and Improvement Panel
 - Repairs Transformation Programme Board
 - Responsive Repairs and Voids Management Group
- 5.3 HSC will seek independent assurances through internal and external audit processes and publish results.
- 5.4 This policy will be reviewed annually at the Responsive Repairs and Voids Management Group meeting or following a serious health and safety incident or any change in legislation before the scheduled review.
- 5.5 If during the review no amendments are required to the policy, it will be reported to the Repairs Transformation Programme Board and minuted for audit purposes.

6.0 Related Policies

- 6.1 This policy should be read in conjunction to the following key policies: -
- [Fire Safety Policy](#)
 - [Electrical Safety Policy](#)

- [Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy](#)
- [Asbestos Safety Policy](#)
- [Water Safety Policy](#)
- [Lift Operation and Lifting Equipment Policy](#)
- [Estate Play Area Policy](#)
- [Disrepair Policy](#)
- [Rechargeable Repairs Policy](#)
- [Corporate Complaints Policy](#)