

RESPONSIVE MAINTENANCE POLICY

Aim of Policy

- Although we will plan maintenance works as far as possible, we recognise that there will always be an element of responsive maintenance work. The Group is committed to providing an effective, efficient and economic repair service to our customers and appreciates that this is one of the most important factors influencing tenant satisfaction.
- We will assess requests for repairs fairly, and will not discriminate against any customer requesting a repair on grounds of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender or age. We will monitor the service to ensure that no individual or group of individuals receives less favourable treatment, and will include clauses in our contracts in accordance with our **Equality and Diversity Policy**.
- We aim to achieve continuous improvement of the quality and value for money of our maintenance services.
- We will regularly consult with interested parties to seek their views on the effectiveness of the service that we provide and how we could improve it.

Objectives of Policy

- Definition of responsive maintenance
- Definition of service expectations and respective responsibilities

Statement

1. This policy relates to responsive repairs i.e. repairs that are not planned, and that are carried out in response to customers' requests.
2. Planned maintenance is covered in our **Planned Maintenance Policy**.
3. We will comply with all relevant legislation and regulatory guidance in relation to responsive repairs.

Policy

1. Repairs Responsibilities

- 1.1 The respective responsibilities of the Group and customers for repairs were agreed in January 2003. They are set out in Appendix 1 to this policy.

2. Target Timescales for Completion of Repairs

2.1 All responsive repairs are classified as either emergency, urgent or routine. The target timescale for completion of the repair depends on its priority category. Timescales are set out in Appendix 2 to this policy.

3. Right to Repairs

3.1 Our tenants have been granted rights to repair similar to those granted to Council tenants under the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, which gives tenants the right to get certain "qualifying" repairs done, and to compensation if they are not completed within target timescales.

3.2 A schedule of the repairs to which customers are entitled under this provision, together with the maximum timescale for their completion, is at Appendix 3 to this policy. If these repairs are not completed within the target timescales we will pay the customer £10 compensation plus £2 per day for each further day the repair is incomplete, up to £50 maximum (unless the tenant failed to provide access).

4. "Rechargeable" Repairs

4.1 We will charge the customer for the cost of any work that we carry out that is their responsibility under the agreed Repair Responsibilities framework at Appendix 1 to this policy. This includes:

- Any repair that is the customer's responsibility
- Repairs needed because the customer (or his/her family or friends or visitors) has acted irresponsibly, has deliberately damaged his/her home or has neglected it to the extent that repairs are needed

5. Criminal Damage

5.1 If damage requiring repair is caused to a property by a criminal act (for example, if a burglar breaks a window to effect entrance), the customer must report the damage to the police and obtain a crime number if they do not wish to be charged for the repair.

6. Procurement

6.1 We will select contractors from Constructionline if the contract value exceeds £50,000 and from the Group's Approved List if the contract value is less than £50,000. We will comply with the requirements of the EU Procurement regulations and advertise in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) when appropriate.

6.2 We will specify low maintenance materials in all repair contract specifications to reduce the future costs of maintenance. We will also incorporate relevant provisions of the Group's **Environmental Policy** in specifications of work.

7. Inspections before Repairs

- 7.1 We will carry out inspections before ordering repairs if it is not possible to determine what sort of repair is needed without visiting the property, or we need to determine whether the repair is the Group's or the customer's responsibility.
- 7.2 Pre- inspections fall into two categories, Urgent and Non urgent inspections. The Urgent inspections have a target time of 1 calendar day and non-urgent inspections have a target time of 7 calendar days.
- 7.3 We will also carry out random pre-inspections to a number of properties so that the total percentage of repairs pre-inspected (including those categories listed above) is 5%.

8. Inspections after Completion of Repairs

- 8.1 To ensure that the quality of repairs is satisfactory, we will inspect repairs after they have been completed by the contractor in the following cases:
- 20% of repairs costing less than £250.00
 - all repairs costing more than £250.00.

9. Out-of-hours Repairs

- 9.1 We will always make a contact number available for tenants to ring if there is a problem in their property that they believe requires repair outside of normal office hours.
- 9.2 Usually, we will instruct our contractors to carry out only emergency repairs outside hours. Repairs will normally be restricted to making the property safe, although we will take into account the particular needs of the household when deciding what is needed. Any other work required will then be carried out during normal working hours.

10. Appointments

- 10.1 We will make appointments to inspect properties and carry out repairs except in emergencies.
- 10.2 Appointments will be made by contractors to carry out repairs Monday to Friday between 8.00 a.m. and 7.00 p.m. and Saturday mornings in certain circumstances.
- We will make appointments to inspect properties Monday to Friday between 8.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.
- 10.3 If a Maintenance Surveyor or contractor makes an appointment with a customer to inspect or carry out a repair, and does not keep the appointment, we will pay compensation of £10.00 to the customer, by cheque if the customer's rent/service charge account is clear. If the customer's rent account/service charge is in arrears, we will credit the compensation sum to the customer's account.

11. Tenant Satisfaction

- 11.1 We will telephone 20% of customers for whom repairs have been ordered to check whether the repair has been completed to their satisfaction.
- 11.2 We will send out postal surveys to the remaining 80% of customers who have had a repair completed.

Performance

1. We will work to ensure:

We achieve customer satisfaction levels of at least 95%
Where agreed, variation orders are processed within 2 working days
There are no reportable accidents, through adoption of safe working practices

2. The contractors will be monitored to ensure they meet the following targets to carry out the specific repair categories within the required timescales as stated in Appendix 2 to this policy:

Emergency Repairs – 99%
Urgent Repairs – 99%
Routine Repairs – 95%

In addition, contractors will be monitored to ensure that where appointments are made at least 90% are kept.

3. In accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Housing Corporation we will aim to ensure the target percentage of repairs raised by priority is as follows:

Emergency Repairs – 10%
Urgent Repairs – 20%
Routine Repairs – 70%

4. We will aim to ensure that Maintenance Surveyors meet the targets set out below for carrying out pre-inspections within the specified timescales as stated in paragraph 7.2:

Urgent Inspections – 99%
Non-urgent Inspections – 95%

Policy Review

The Operations Director in conjunction with the Maintenance and Asset Manager and the Responsive Maintenance Manager will review the operation of the Responsive Maintenance Policy on an annual basis, in consultation with resident groups.

Approved by: Sentinel, Hart and Oakfern Boards. 13 January 2005 (SHG.15/05)

REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

As part of the project to harmonise services across the Group consideration has been given to where responsibilities lie for repairs between tenants and each Association.

A joint meeting of the Hart Tenants Federation and Oakfern Residents Forum was held at Gregory House on the 28th January 2003 and endorsed the proposed changes.

The table below gives a summary of the general responsibilities. However, the list cannot be exhaustive and discretion will always be required for particular problems and where certain repairs crop up regularly.

REPAIR	ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITY	COMMENTS
External elements such as gutters, roof, walls etc	Fully responsible	May be rechargeable if deliberate damage carried out Tenants are responsible for ensuring pipes in roof space do not freeze.
Chimney stacks (solid fuel)	Will sweep chimneys once a year	Tenants should sweep at least once more in the year.
External doors – faulty locks and keys lost, stolen or broken	Faulty locks replaced Reimbursement of cost of replacement locks for OAPs and vulnerable if keys lost, stolen or broken	Tenants other than OAP and vulnerable are responsible for lock changes where keys are lost/stolen or broken in lock. Reimbursement costs are subject to the maximum that the Associations would be charged by their contractor.
Glazing	Normal repair issues and cleaning of communal windows	The Associations are not responsible for boarding up windows under any circumstances or re-glazing if due to negligence/accidental damage except for OAP and vulnerable tenants if they cannot organise this themselves. If criminal damage occurs the tenant must obtain a crime number from the Police. Tenants and leaseholders are responsible for cleaning their own windows inside and out.
Internal decoration	Tenants over 70 years of age and disabled tenants of Oakfern may qualify for rooms to be decorated if they apply	Tenants are completely responsible for decoration and this includes making good of minor cracks and holes.
Internal doors	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for decoration and adapting for carpets as well as damage caused by tenants, family members and visitors.
Ceilings and plasterwork	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for decoration and damage caused by tenants, family members and visitors.
Paths, external steps etc	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for paths etc that they have laid.
Fencing	Associations are responsible for boundary fencing normally	Tenants are responsible for party fences. Owners of adjoining properties may be responsible for boundary fences.
Communal walls, access ways and hardstandings	Responsible for repairs	Local Authority may be responsible – need to check ownership.
Gardens (rubbish and grass cutting)	Responsible for void properties but may seek to recover costs from former tenant	Tenants are responsible. If over 70 years of age or vulnerable, tenants of Oakfern may receive a grass cutting and hedge trimming service if they apply.
Garages	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for lock changes if keys are lost or stolen and any damage caused by them.

REPAIR	ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITY	COMMENTS
Heating	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for their own installations Tenants are also responsible for bleeding radiators in non-pressurised systems.
Water pipes and stopcocks	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for washing machine etc connections.
Gas pipes	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for fitting gas cookers, etc.
Waste water pipes and water tanks Baths, sinks, toilets etc	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for keeping clear of frost Tenants are also responsible where blockages are found to be caused by abuse unless in sheltered accommodation. Recharges will be made if abuse is shown. Tenants are responsible for plugs, chains and renewing/re-fitting WC seats. Tenants are generally responsible for tap washers.
Electrical installations	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for any additions made and all tubes, bulbs, fuses, etc.
Communal areas of flats	Responsible for repairs	Tenants/owners are expected to keep clean unless otherwise in tenants agreement/lease.
Communal TV aerials	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are responsible for their own equipment.
Smoke detectors	Responsible for repairs	Tenants are expected to test from time to time.
Clothes line	Responsible for repairs to communal lines only	Tenants are responsible for their own line.
Adaptation for disabled people	Varied	Refer to the Customer Service Centre.
Trees	Responsible for trees owned by the Association	Tenants are responsible for pruning and maintaining trees/shrubs in own garden.
White goods and carpets	Association is responsible in market rent properties and student accommodation	Refer to the Customer Service Centre.
General		Associations are not responsible for anything damaged by tenants, visitors, etc., or anything belonging to third parties. Tenants are responsible for damage caused by inadequate frost protections. Tenants should always get permission to carry out works other than normal redecoration.

Target Timescales for Completion of Repairs

CATEGORY	TARGET TIMESCALE	TYPICAL REPAIRS
<p>EMERGENCY REPAIRS</p> <p><i>Any defect that puts the health and safety of the tenant, or a third party, at immediate risk; or that affects the structure of the building adversely.</i></p>	<p>24 hours</p>	<p>Total loss of water Burst water main Flooding Severe storm damage Total loss of electricity supply Major fault with electricity supply Unsafe electrical fittings Breaches of security to outside doors and windows Total loss of gas supply Gas leak Blocked flue Blocked main drains, soil pipe or sole toilet Heating loss for elderly or vulnerable tenants at any time or between 31 October – 1 May for others Hot water loss for elderly or vulnerable tenants at any time or between 31 October – 1 May for others Failure of lift Failure of warden alarm or call system Fire damage Offensive or racist graffiti</p>
<p>URGENT REPAIRS</p>	<p>7 calendar days</p>	<p>Minor plumbing leaks or defects Blocked drains, sinks, basins, bath, toilet Defective cistern or overflow Heating faults or breakdowns Hot water faults or breakdowns Minor electrical faults Roof leaks Blocked gutters</p>

CATEGORY	TARGET TIMESCALE	TYPICAL REPAIRS
		Severe dampness Breaches of security to internal doors and windows Failure of entry phone Repairs to void property Graffiti Faulty extractor fan Defective flooring Faulty communal TV aerial Damage to stair treads or hand rails or banisters Fencing adjacent to a public footpath Recall to attend to defective work previously carried out
ROUTINE REPAIRS <i>Defect that can be deferred without serious discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to the tenant or a third party, or long-term deterioration of the building, and can await the next convenient maintenance visit,</i>	28 calendar days	General joinery repairs Repairs to doors, windows and floors Repairs to external walls, fences and paths Repairs to walls, brickwork and slates or tiles Repairs or clearing of gutters and downpipes Repairs to kitchen fittings Repairs to plasterwork Dripping or leaking taps or shower units Other minor plumbing repairs Repairs to tiling Easing doors and windows Other minor day-to-day repairs or replacements

Source:
Housing Corporation RSR Guidance Notes (Long) Draft 5

Vulnerable tenants are defined as:

***An individual or household experiencing difficulties with everyday living on account of financial, educational, health, employment, learning, language, behavioural, family, social or other circumstances/issues or any combination of these.
Sentinel Housing Group also includes older people within its definition of vulnerable tenants.***

Sentinel may exercise its discretion on deciding the priority due to the vulnerability of the occupants.

Right to Repair - Qualifying Repairs and Timescales

Defect	Prescribed Period (in working days)	Group Time Limit
Total loss of electric power	1	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting	1	1
Total loss of water supply	1	1
Total or partial loss of gas supply	1	1
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1	1
Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack, or (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house) toilet pan	1	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 1 Nov and 30 April	1	1
Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house)	1	1
Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern	1	1
Insecure external window, door or lock	1	1
Partial loss of electric power	3	3
Partial loss of water supply	3	3
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 30 April and 1 Nov	3	3
Blocked sink, bath or basin	3	3
Tap which cannot be turned off or on	3	3
Loose or detached bannister or handrail	3	3
Leaking roof	7	5
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread	3	3
Door entryphone not working	7	10
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7	10