

Introduction

This policy supports the delivery of commitments in the Great Homes section of our Corporate Plan and ensures that our customers are clear on the repair obligations of their tenancy. It recognises that customers need to feel safe, listened to and live in good quality homes.

The policy sets out our responsibilities to keep our properties in good repair and our commitments to managing our assets proactively therefore acting in the best interests of the organisation and its customers.

It compliments all company policy with regards to the continued maintenance and upkeep of our properties and clarifies respective Landlords and Tenant repair obligations under the tenancy agreement as well as defining our service standards, performance measures and regulatory obligations.

Context

Great Places has classified repairs and maintenance as a business critical service and this Policy plays an important part in ensuring we deliver this effectively and we fulfil our ambition for great homes, great communities and great people.

The policy also adheres to all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to delivering a good repairs service so that we provide homes that are comfortable and fit for habitation but will also protect the condition of stock and its value in the long term.

We will repair and maintain homes in line with best practice and legislation. This includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Tenancy Agreement
- Housing Acts 1988,1996,1998 and 2004
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Right to Repair Regulations 1994 (for secure tenants of Local Housing Authorities)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Defective Premises Act 1972
- Building Regulations
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014

Aims

The aims of the repairs policy are as follows:

- To achieve high standards of customer care and consistently high levels of customer satisfaction.
- To ensure vulnerable customers receive a service which is appropriately tailored to their needs.
- To ensure that all Great Places homes are maintained to a high standard and that our customers live in safety, comfort and warmth.
- To provide transparency in the repairs procedure and provide a link between Great Places and its customers, through customer feedback and involvement.
- To meet Great Places own commitments to its customers as detailed within tenancy agreements.
- To provide value for money in the repairs service.

Scope

In this Policy we are referring to responsive repairs and maintenance activity within all Great Places owned or managed homes and properties. The service is delivered using a combination of direct labour operatives and contractors to the following business areas:

- General Needs
- Supported Housing
- Care/Extra Care
- Shared Ownership (where applicable)
- Emergency accommodation

Some of our shared ownership homes and commercial operation sites have specific leases and/or management contracts. This means the specific requirements and response times of responsive repairs may vary but the overall scope of our approach still applies.

Similarly, new homes less than 12 months old (i.e. during the Defects Liability Period) may have slightly different contractual arrangements affecting repair response times.

It will ensure that ongoing repairs and maintenance to our homes is directly linked to ongoing asset management strategy, compliance and long term planned investment.

It will focus on meeting the following elements of regulatory standards as set out by the Regulator for Social Housing.

- Providing a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of and offers choices to tenants.
- Completing repairs and improvements right first time and meeting all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.
- To let our homes to tenants in a safe, fair, transparent and efficient way.

- To ensure a prudent, planned approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas.
- To provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of our customers and a clear approach to complaints.
- To provide a wide range of opportunities for customers to have influence and be involved.
- The publication of an annual report which will include information on repairs and maintenance performance.

Repairs definition

A responsive repair is day-to-day maintenance work carried out in response to a request from a customer. It is sometimes called a reactive repair and can include internal works, external works or communal repairs to public areas.

A responsive repair addresses works to maintain our homes or a component in it, until the next cycle of planned works. So, for example, it would be a repair to a kitchen drawer (responsive) rather than the replacement of a whole kitchen (planned).

We aim to maintain all our homes until they are scheduled for upgrade within the component replacement cycle.

Repairs process

We have a working side-by-side approach which means there are clear responsibilities for both us and customer to follow. Customers will be encouraged and supported to report repairs and these repairs will be carried out promptly and effectively by us.

The tenancy agreement sets out the rights and responsibilities for the repair of our homes detailing who is responsible. In accordance with our customer offer and dependent on the tenure there is also an enhanced service offer to certain customers, and this will be detailed at the time of tenancy commencement.

Appendix One lists both the standard and enhanced service offers to our customers.

Reporting a repair

To ensure that this is achieved the service will include facilities for reporting repairs by a variety of methods convenient to tenants including:

- Online using the website Live Chat services (monitored during working hours Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).
- Online logging into Tenant Portal
- Email
- Facebook Messenger (monitored during working hours Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm).
- Phone
- Letter
- Telling us when we visit your home or estate

Repair standards

As part of our Responsive Repairs service, we will:

- Confirm an appointment with customers for as soon as possible, and at a time that suits them.
- Aim to complete the repair in one visit.
- Prioritise the urgency of the repair and advise the customer.
- If it's an emergency, we will visit to make things safe within 24 hours
- Text all customers and let them know when we are on our way to the repair.
- Let customers know once we have completed your repair to confirm that it is completed to their satisfaction.

Repair categories

Responsive or day to day repairs are split into three categories. This is to ensure that our service is quick and efficient through optimum use of resources, whilst enabling us to prioritise effectively and provide high levels of customer service. It also enables us to monitor our performance for each category.

Category 1 : Emergency repairs

An Emergency Repair is anything causing immediate risk to the health, safety and security of any occupants and/or visitors to our properties. Or causing immediate damage to a property's structure, fixtures and/or fittings

Typical emergency repairs include:

- Total loss of water or electricity.
- Unsafe electrical fittings (excluding customers own fittings).
- Main sewer drain is blocked and backing up into property.
- Unusable toilet facilities and only one facility in property.
- Insecure doors and windows to the home.
- Heating and/or hot water loss for elderly or vulnerable tenants or for all tenants during the period 31st October – 1st May.
- Out of service lifts.
- Failure of warden alarm or call system.
- Total loss of gas supply (gas leaks will be addressed via redirection of customers to gas emergency line and gas emergency process will be identified).
- Failure of door entry system for elderly or vulnerable tenants requiring daily assistance.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

We will aim to carry out works to make it safe within twenty four hours of the repair being reported to us.

Sometimes other repairs may be needed to complete the job. If this is the case we will arrange more appointments with the customer as soon as possible and where possible, at a time to suit them. In exceptional circumstances, such as during a period of sustained adverse weather, we may need to lengthen the timescales for emergency repairs. We will notify customers if this is the case.

Category 2 : Routine repairs

Any repairs that can be completed without serious discomfort, inconvenience or nuisance to the tenant or others or are not causing long term deterioration of the building are classed as routine repairs.

We aim to complete all routine repairs in one visit and aim take as little time as possible. For this reason, we measure the amount of time it takes from the day customers report a repair through to its completion date, even if it involves more than one trade. We call this measure 'End to End times'.

Typical routine repairs include:

- General joinery repairs internally and externally.
- Minor plumbing repairs e.g. dripping taps, leaks to sinks and baths and faulty pipework.
- Repairs to kitchen fittings e.g. cupboard doors, drawers, worktops and handles.
- Repair to leaking gutters and downspouts.
- Easing of external doors and windows, replacement handles and faulty mechanisms.
- Partial loss of electrical power where the fault is inside the property.
- Partial loss of water supply where the fault is inside the property or boundary.
- Heating and or/hot water faults or breakdowns.
- Blocked sink, bath or basin that a customer has been unable to unblock themselves.
- Damage to stair treads or handrails or banisters.
- Insecure doors and windows in communal areas.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

Category 3 : Enhanced repairs offer

As society and personal circumstances change, we will work with our customers to ensure that our homes meet their needs. We therefore support independent living through an enhanced repair offer to certain customers.

The range of services we offer we class as "Handyman" and the timescales for these repairs are supported where possible with routine repair visits. This service is offered for both customers and in communal areas,

This includes the following services:

- Flat pack furniture assembly.
- Light bulb changes.
- TV, radio and internet installation
- Unblock sinks, shower, or drains (customer caused blockage).
- Dismantling and moving furniture.
- Fitting lamp shades.
- Adjusting, repairing or replacing toilet seats.
- Heating adjustments or resetting
- Installing or repairing doorbells.
- Fitting blinds or curtains.
- Fitting shower heads.
- Fitting clothes or wardrobe rails.

Major works or planned repairs

In some circumstances it may be more economical for the works to be replaced, and this means a responsive repair becomes 'major' or planned works. Depending on the nature of the works we sometimes carry out these repairs straight away. Because we also maintain some major works annually the works may be repaired at a later date, that year or next as part of a programmed repairs approach.

If this is the case this will be communicated to the customers with timescales for expected completions made clear at the time of the works being arranged.

Inspection by Us

There are certain repairs that do not pose an immediate risk but cause a major inconvenience to customers or are likely to lead to further deterioration of the building.

If we are unable to repair the issue and the problem persists the customer will have an appointment made and will be visited by a repair's specialist employed by Great Places.

This could include

- Structural issues to home or land.
- Fires or flood
- Reports of damp
- Anything reported as a risk to health and safety that is not classed as an immediate risk to life or property.
- Works that are referred follow routine appointments that require major repairs

Note: This is not an exhaustive list.

Pre-Inspections

Some repairs may require a pre-inspection before the repair appointment can be arranged. This will occur where the scope of the job is not known or if the diagnosis given by the resident is not detailed enough. Following a pre-inspection and diagnosis of a repair, an appointment will be made with the customer to complete the work within the relevant timeframes outlined in the repairs service standard above.

Post Inspections

These will be undertaken with the aim of providing quality assurance and ensure value for money checks. The system of post inspection will have flexibility to enable inspections to be either randomly selected or specifically targeted and will include all comments and complaints received from post work satisfaction questionnaires.

Cyclical Works

These include service contracts important to the health and well being of tenants and the safety of the property. These are undertaken on a programmed basis depending on the lifecycle and legal requirements of the particular item. Such works will be timetabled annually and communicated to the customer when they will be undertaken.

Aids and Adaptations

We will co-operate with relevant organisations to provide an adaptations service that meets customer's needs and supply a service supporting both major and minor adaptation works in accordance with the Great Places aids and adaptations policy.

Appointments

If the repair is not an emergency, we will arrange an appointment for as soon as possible and at a time that suits the customer, offering AM or PM time slots.

We will phone in advance of attending to confirm customers are available and if they not at home when we attend the appointment, we will try to reach them by phone and text. This includes our in house team or any Sub-Contractors we might be using.

We will try alternative numbers on our records and will only contact a third party if we have permission to speak to someone other than the customer named on the tenancy. If we are still unable to reach the customer, we will leave a card asking them to contact us or the contractor. If we do not hear from them, we will cancel the repair, but continue with the works when we are contacted.

In an emergency, where there is a Health and Safety issue or there's likely to be considerable damage to the property we may gain access in line with our Access Policy.

Conduct

Anyone working in customers' homes on our behalf are expected to meet our Great Places behaviors Framework.

Our operatives will be appropriately skilled and trained to deliver work of an excellent quality.

Performance measures

Our target is to achieve complete repairs at minimum within the timescales set by the regulator or any subsequent stretching targets that may be set by the Boards or the Great Places executive management team.

The success of the policy will be visible through the impact it has on company performance, specifically the performance of the responsive repairs service.

The effects of the policy will be monitored via the performance frameworks and performance reporting mechanisms, including reports to Great Places executive management team, customer services business challenge and regular reports to Boards.

We also measure:

- Right first time.
- Emergency repair performance.
- Average time for non-emergency maintenance.
- Routine maintenance jobs completed on time.
- Responsive maintenance appointments kept.
- Overall customer satisfaction with the service.

Customer Voice

We monitor levels of customer's satisfaction with the repairs service and this is monitored via the complaints and compliments procedure, customer review groups, scrutiny panel, customer satisfaction surveys and with all customers who have had a repair completed receiving a text. This feedback is used to further improve service levels.

Customer responsibilities

Whilst Great Places has responsibility for the majority of repairs we do in our homes, our customers also have responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of our properties. In our shared ownership and leaseholder housing schemes some responsibilities for internal repairs might differ and customer will be made aware of this.

Rechargeable Repairs

We may recover costs from customers to pay for repairs they are responsible for, or arising from:

- Deliberate, negligent or careless acts by them, a member of the household, or any visitors to the home.
- Failure to report a repair as soon as possible which then goes on to cause further damage.
- Failure to uphold the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement
- Any improvements made to the home without our permission or which are poor quality or non-compliant.

We will assess each case individually depending on the circumstances. Our Chargeable Repairs Policy describes the types of work we would recharge for.

Damp and condensation

We have a damp and condensation process to ensure we are able to diagnose and support customers to resolve this type of repair. This process may include carrying out works, detailed guidance, advice or support or further specialist investigations. We may refer to other organisations for support if we feel this would benefit customers.

Decoration of the home

Customers are responsible for decorating inside the property and keeping it in good decorative order.

Some repairs may affect the decoration of the home. If this happens the area will be made good following the repair. We are not able to make good access panels, hatches, ducts or ducting covered with wallpaper, tiles, carpet, wood, laminate or other finishes. In these circumstances customers will be advised before work is started.

Customers Alterations

Customers have the right to make additions, alterations or improvements to the property but they must get our written permission first. We will only refuse permission to make these additions, alterations, or improvements if we have good reason to do so. If we refuse permission, we will write to advise why. If we grant permission, we may ask that the work is undertaken in a certain way or to a specified standard or impose other reasonable conditions. All works must be carried out to our satisfaction.

Insurance

Great Places will ensure that it has sufficient property and public liability insurance. In the event of a major incident i.e. fire or flood. The policy will cover damage to the structure of the building and associated repairs however not where there is damage to contents which is the responsibility of the customer. It is strongly recommended that tenants take out suitable cover to protect their personal belongings.

Health and safety

Great Places will ensure our customers feel safe living in their homes knowing that we value safety and compliance ahead of all other aspects of our service, adopting a zero tolerance approach.

We will invest in the training and development of our colleagues to ensure they possess the knowledge to ensure both they and our customers are safe at all times.

We will keep up to date on developments within our service from a safety and compliance perspective. We will implement improvements and amendments that ensure we keep our colleagues and customers safe at all times.

Achieving Value for Money

Operating as an efficient and effective business and demonstrating value for money to our customers are key strategic objectives.

There are a range of mechanisms in place to demonstrate and improve this, including:

- Benchmarking cost and performance data such as average costs per property.
- Market testing of the repairs service against other social housing providers.
- Undertaking reviews on processes, services and systems.
- Analysing reported repairs to identify trends in component failures to inform future major and planned works programmes.
- Robust tendering processes.

Quality of Repairs

Through this policy we aim to ensure our corporate plan aims are met and that repairs are not only completed within timescales in the most efficient and cost effective ways but are completed to a high standard and to the satisfaction of the customer.

Customer Feedback

Great Places aims to be a continuously improving organisation and therefore welcomes complaints, compliments and comments as a way to continue to shape services to meet customers' needs.

Responsibility of this policy

The responsibility for delivering this policy is with the Head of Repairs. The delivery of the repairs service will be undertaken by a combination of tendered framework and the in house repairs service. We will also use external contractors when specialist repairs are required that fall outside of the skills of the service i.e. damp proof works, major structural defects and drainage work.

Great Places will compile, maintain, and keep under constant review, an approved list of contractors and consultants eligible to carry out work for Great Places. Work carried out by contractors and consultants will be subject to Great Places procurement procedures, financial regulations and standing orders policy.

Equality & Diversity

We are committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to everyone. We will seek alternative methods of delivery of our services where barriers, perceived or real, may exist that may make it difficult for people to use our services.

Related Policies, Procedures & Plans

- Responsive Repairs Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Home Improvements Policy
- Resident Involvement Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy

Appendix 1 – General Needs repair obligations

Repair Issue	Great Places responsibility	Customers responsibility
EXTERNAL STRUCTURE		
Drains, gutters and external pipes (except where the drains are the responsibility of the water authority, when we will report the defects to that authority)	x	
The roof, covering, tiles, fascias, soffits and gutters.	x	
Outside walls, outside doors, windowsills, window catches, sash and window frames (including painting and decorating outside).	x	
Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues but not including sweeping them except (if necessary) for the annual service by us.	x	
Balconies, walkways, hallways, steps or other means of access, including disabled access which we have provided or for which we have accepted responsibility.	x	
External and internal plaster work where full skim coats are required.	x	
Garages, carports, outbuildings and stores that form part of the home.	x	
Boundary walls, gates and fences, if they exist at the start of the tenancy or are later erected by us.	x	
Pathways, steps and other means of access owned by us.	x	
Maintenance of all soft landscaped areas e.g. grass, shrubs, borders and trees within the gardens provided as part of a communal scheme.	x	
Maintenance of gardens and landscaped areas where they are provided for exclusive use by one household.		x
Garden timber sheds (Unless noted specifically on the tenancy).		x
Decorative paving, patios and hard landscaping that was fitted at previous tenancy.		x
Storage and placement for collection by the local Authority of all domestic refuse.		x
The erection/removal and making good after the installation of satellite dishes.		x
The repair or replacement of clothes lines, including posts, where they are provided for exclusive use by one household		x
Repair or replacement of refuse bins or bin holders.		x
Taking and recording of utility meter readings e.g. gas, electric, water.		x
Repairs to equipment in common parts.	x	

INTERNAL STRUCTURE		
Repairing and maintaining any equipment we have provided for heating, hot water and sanitation including basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes. (excluding blockages cause by customers)	x	
Electric wiring including sockets, light fittings and switches; but excluding plugs, bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters.	x	
Water heaters, fireplaces, fitted fires and central-heating systems (if they are fitted by us) and gas pipes.	x	
Internal door handles.		x
Plug and chains to sink, bath, wash hand basin		x
Curtain battens, hat and coat hooks and rails.		x
Internal cupboards door catches, handles and hinges.		x
Electrical faults arising from the use of faulty appliances.		x
Minor plaster cracks and internal decorations.		x
Any appliance (other than gas flued appliances), structure or installation which was not supplied by us.		x
Electrical plugs (not socket outlets), fuses, flexible gas tubes, light bulbs and external lights you have fitted.		x
Internal decorations and all soft furnishings provided by you including all flooring e.g. carpets, laminated flooring etc. This includes the removal to a recognised tip of all unwanted items. - All white goods e.g. cookers, fridges, washing machines provided by you.		x
Replacement of door keys (both interior and exterior doors).		x
Replacement of broken or cracked glass if caused by tenant damage (e.g. in an accident).		x
Renewal of fluorescent strip light tubes and starters.		x
Toilet seats.		x
Minimising the cause of airborne condensation.		x
T.V. or radio aerials installed by you and the repair to damage caused in their erection or removal.		x
Cleansing of sink, baths, wash hand basin and lavatory, basin wash pipes Flexible pipe / hose connections for washing machines;		x
Battery powered door bells and Door security chains installed by customers.		x

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Is this a key strategic document, major policy or procedure or service change? Examples may include: Homeless Strategy/ Customer Involvement Strategy	YES		NO	
	✓			
2. What impact will your document or service delivery change have on the public or staff, giving particular regard to potential impacts on minority groups? Issues to consider include race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, carers and other socio-economic factors	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	DON'T KNOW
		✓		
3. Please explain your answer: Provide a narrative explaining why you gave the impact rating above.	Great Places will adhere to the regulatory standards and wider legislative framework. The policy does not represent a significant change from existing approaches. However the policy is an aligned representation of adjoining associations and has the potential to impact on a large number of customers. In some cases, we may receive requests to make “reasonable adjustments” to our policy or procedure in accordance with Section 20 and Schedule 4 to the Equality Act 2010, to avoid or reduce disadvantage to disabled people. Such requests will be considered on a case by case basis and balanced against the purposes of this policy and the interests of Great Places, other residents and applicants for social housing, and other organisations.			

Policy control

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