

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING BUSINESS CENTRE

**RESPONSIVE
REPAIRS POLICY**

Approved: November 2014

Review due: November 2016

1. Introduction

This Policy has been developed by the Housing Policy team in consultation with residents. It sets out how the Housing Business Centre aims to deliver the Housing Maintenance Responsive Repairs service. It has been introduced as part of a review of our policies and procedures.

2. Aim

The Council is committed to providing an effective repairs and maintenance service in order to ensure high levels of resident satisfaction and to protect the value of its housing stock. This policy details the arrangements for the responsive maintenance of the Council housing stock.

3. Scope

The Council will maintain its housing stock in good condition by providing an effective repairs and maintenance service to residents. The Council will ensure that its repairs and maintenance service reflects the following overall principles:

- to provide a flexible, convenient and customer oriented repairs service that gives priority to the safety of residents
- to repair and maintain the housing stock to the Decent Homes Standard
- to meet the Council's legal and contractual obligations
- to ensure the repairs service meets the performance and quality standards set by the Council
- to ensure the services provided are cost effective and obtain the best value for residents from available financial resources
- to ensure the principles of health and safety and equal opportunities are central to working procedures and practices
- to maximise economic benefits where possible by creating employment and training opportunities in maintenance related work and by purchasing goods and services locally
- to maximise opportunities for resident involvement in determining the quality of the services delivered
- to measure and monitor customer satisfaction and make use of the information to continuously improve services.

Responsibilities of the Resident

The tenant is responsible for reporting repairs to the Council and must allow access to their home in order for the work to be carried out.

The resident is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of certain minor items within the home, as set out in their lease, the Tenancy Agreement and the Tenants' Handbook.

Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the structure and common parts of its properties, as set out in the Lease, Tenancy Agreement and Tenants' Handbook, or as defined within either a statutory document or its supporting code of practice.

The Council fulfils its repairing responsibilities through a combination of policies associated to the nature of repair, Responsive, Planned or Cyclical, Void or empty homes, or Adaptations to tenants homes for the purpose of a disability.

4. Policy statement

The Council will provide an effective responsive (also known as reactive) repairs service to its tenants and leaseholders to meet its contractual obligations and to ensure that their rights to the enjoyment of their homes are compliant in line with the tenancy or lease that is offered and that the value of the Council's assets are maintained.

5. Context and legislation

The Council will ensure that properties are repaired and maintained in accordance with best practice and relevant policy and legislation, including the following:

- Decent Homes Standard
- Tenancy agreement and Tenants' Handbook
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988, 1996, 1998 and 2004
- The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) regulations SI. 1994 No 133
- The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for improvements) regulations 1994, SI 1994 No 613
- The Leasehold Reform, Housing and Development Act 1993
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 – Section 11
- Defective Premises Act 1972 - Section 4
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Part III
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

- Regulation 4, Control of Asbestos Regulations, 2006
- Building Regulations
- Electrical standards and approved codes of practice
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Equalities Act 2010
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005

6. Policy Details

6.1 Reporting a Repair

Tenants can report repairs to the Council in any of the following ways:

- in person at the main Council Offices
- by telephone (including an out-of-hours number for reporting emergency repairs)
- by email (housing.repairs@Runnymede.gov.uk)
- by letter
- by fax
- via any member of Housing Management staff
- via tenants' and residents associations or representatives

When repairs are ordered a confirmation letter will be posted to the tenant within 2 working days. The confirmation letter includes the following details:

- a brief summary of the repair ordered
- details of the contractor who will undertake the repair
- the contractors telephone number
- the timescale for completing the repair

6.2 Prioritising and definitions of Repairs

The priority associated to any repair will depend on its nature. The following priorities have been agreed with the residents' association, the RCRA:

Emergency	- within a 4 hour Response (for out of hours only)
Urgent	- between 8-24 hrs. (Same day or next day fix)
Essential	- 3 Day
Routine	- within 7 Day
Non Urgent	- within 15 Days
Non-Essential	- within 65 Days

Emergency repair

Loss of service or damage which could result in serious property damage or risk to your health and safety. This covers out of hours work only and used to make the property safe.

Emergency housing repairs include:

- Severe flooding
- Total power failure

Urgent repair

Housing repairs like the failure of gas, electricity, or water installations, or anything that immediately affects daily living, health and safety. These repairs would be attended to within the same working day if reported by 11am or within 24 hrs. (next day) if reported later. The difference with the above service would be the aim to make a repair within the time frame.

Essential repair

Repairs that are not an immediate risk to occupants or the property but if left, damage will occur, for example:

- Partial loss of the heating or power
- Blockages to sink units or wash hand basins
- Toilet not flushing (If there is only one in the property)

Routine repair

A routine housing repair can be anything to do with the fabric of the building that does not immediately affect daily living or health and safety. These repairs are normally attended to within 7 working days.

Non Urgent repair

Housing repairs which have no immediate detrimental effect on occupants or the property such as the replacement of front doors and fence repairs.

Non-Essential repair

Housing repairs that have no real effect on living conditions within the property and require some form of planning to be fixed e.g. assisted decorations.

The Council will consider the benefits associated to the collation of Routine, Non Urgent or Non-essential type repairs to be procured through alternative means where financial benefit from the economies of scale may be available.

7. Consultation, communication and training

Staff and the RCRA were consulted on the preparation of this policy. It was copied to all staff for information. Staff will be provided with further training in accordance with the requirement of their role.

8. Monitoring and performance management

- 8.1 The Council believes that the quality of its maintenance service is extremely important, not only to ensure the health, safety, comfort and satisfaction of its residents, but also to protect the fabric and value of its property.
- 8.2 The Council will establish a Code of Conduct for all staff and contractors working in residents' homes to comply with.
- 8.3 The Council will monitor the standard of work carried out. All residents who receive maintenance works will be encouraged to complete a resident satisfaction slip after the works have been completed. A sample of telephone surveys will also be carried out to help assess the performance of the works. The Council will ensure that a proportion of responsive repairs are inspected once they have been completed. Any performance issues arising from these post-inspections will be referred to the contractor for investigation.
- 8.4 Where a resident has recorded dissatisfaction with any service work carried out to their home, this will be investigated by the Repairs Officer, who will ensure that any necessary remedial works are carried out. The Council's complaints policy is also available to any resident who is dissatisfied with the maintenance works provided.

9. Equalities Implications

- 9.1 The Council's staff and contractors will operate in such a way to ensure that their procedures and practices are sensitive to the needs of individual residents and to ensure that they do not discriminate on any of the nine grounds specified as protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2012 including race and ethnicity, age, disability, gender etc.
- 9.2 Repair work and Maintenance programmes may from time to time need to be tailored to meet the needs of individuals, for example the priority of a repair may be increased for vulnerable residents. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.
- 9.3 The Council will in all reasonable circumstances make information available in a variety of information formats, including for example:
- large print
 - SMS text messaging
 - Electronic data transference
 - community languages

10. Financial/Resources Implications

The Council is mindful of the need to ensure that its staffing levels are sufficient to implement this policy effectively. An annual responsive repairs budget will be implemented to support this policy.

11. Review

This policy has been produced by the Policy team in conjunction with the Maintenance team. It was approved by the Head of Housing on 11 November 2014 for immediate use and copied to all staff. Through inspections, satisfaction surveys and monitoring of feedback, we aim to provide a high quality housing service. We will also benchmark our performance with other comparable landlords and share best practice to achieve continuous improvement. This policy will be reviewed by November 2016.