

Policy: Response Repairs

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Deliver a repairs and maintenance service that keeps our properties in repair
- Deliver a repairs and maintenance service that achieves high levels of customer satisfaction
- Ensure we deliver a repairs service that is fair and meets your individual needs
- Comply with all relevant legislation relating to the repair and maintenance of our properties, fixtures, fittings and any equipment or appliances that we supply for your use
- Achieve value for money by:
 - Aiming to complete repairs right first time
 - Making the best use of our resources
 - Continually improving our responsive repairs service to make it more efficient and effective
 - Carrying out regular planned and cyclical maintenance
- Ensure you and any other relevant people, such as care providers, can be involved in the way we deliver and improve our repairs service

2. Scope

2.1 This policy sets out how we will keep your home and our assets in repair and provide a service that offers value for money. It also explains your repair responsibilities and our repair responsibilities.

3. Definitions

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| You | The tenant(s) of the property. If two or more people are joint tenants, 'you' means each individual tenant and/or all tenants together. |
| We, us | Hilldale Housing Association |
| Property | The home and any private yard, garden, garage or attached outhouse. |
| Communal area | A part of a building or estate that may be used by any tenant, occupant or visitor, usually relating to a block of flats or a scheme. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Responsive repairs | We carry out responsive repairs that are covered under our policy following a request by you, or someone acting on behalf of you, to repair or replace something already in the property that is not working. |
| Emergency repairs | These are responsive repairs that could result in an immediate risk to the property or health and safety of people, for example uncontrollable leak or exposed wiring. |
| Urgent repairs | These are responsive repairs that need to be dealt with quickly but don't present an immediate risk to property or people. |
| Routine repairs | These are responsive repairs that don't need to be dealt with quickly but cannot be left until we start a planned programme. |
| Planned maintenance | We may carry out planned maintenance when something needs replacing, for example, brickwork, fire doors and external doors. We identify these either when we carry out a responsive repair or as part of checks to ensure we are meeting our legal obligations. |
| Planned capital investment improvements | We carry out planned works when our properties or estates need major improvement, for example improvements to the exterior of properties, replacement of heating systems and electrical rewiring. We have a limited budget for these improvements, so we prioritise them according to our Asset Management Strategy. |
| Cyclical (repeated) repairs | We carry out cyclical repairs when repeated maintenance is required either for health and safety purposes or to keep properties in repair. For example, lift servicing, gas servicing, periodic electrical testing and gutter cleaning. |

4. Reporting Your Repair

4.1 You can report your repairs by:

| Type of Contact | Hilldale |
|-----------------|--|
| Website | www.hilldale.org.uk |
| Telephone: | 01257 367374 |
| Email | repairs@hilldale.org.uk |

You must report all emergency repairs by telephone. Please do not report emergency repairs in any other way. Emergency repairs can be reported any time of day throughout the whole year.

IF YOU SUSPECT A GAS LEAK, YOU MUST CALL THE NATIONAL GAS EMERGENCY NUMBER IMMEDIATELY ON 0800 111 999.

5. Completing Your Repair

5.1 When you report your repair, we will give it a priority according to how urgent it is.

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5.2 The timescales we work to are shown in the following table:

| Type of Repair | Timescale | Description |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Emergency Repairs – 4 hour | 4 hours | We will respond within 4 hours for emergencies that pose an immediate threat, such as an uncontrollable leak or exposed wiring. |
| Emergency Repairs - 24 Hour | 24 hours | We will respond within 24 hours for risk to property or welfare issues, for example no electricity or water or no working toilet in the property. If your heating stops working and we can't complete the repair straight away, we will supply you with temporary heating. |
| Urgent Repairs | 7 days | Repairs to defects that can cause disruption in a home – they might affect your health, safety or security, such as cracked glazing or a running overflow |
| Routine Repairs | 28 days | Repairs that do not cause disruption and do not pose a health and safety risk. These repairs will be carried out when possible. This may mean that we will wait until other repairs are needed at the Property so that we can obtain the best price for the job. For example, dripping taps, replacing door handles. |

- 5.3 We will usually give you an appointment when you report the repair. If we can't give you an appointment straight away, we will contact you as soon as we have an available appointment. For some external works we won't give you an appointment, but we will give you a timescale for completion.
- 5.4 We will always try to complete your repair on the first visit, however sometimes this may not be possible. In these cases, we will ensure the property is safe and secure and arrange another appointment to complete the repair at your convenience.
- 5.5 Sometimes, we may need longer than usual to complete your repair, for example we may need to order parts or we may have an unusually large number of repair requests. If this happens, we will let you know the reason for the delay and when you can expect us to contact you to arrange to complete the repair.
- 5.6 We, and our contractors, will always have identification badges to confirm our identity when we visit your property.
- 5.7 We may refuse to carry out a repair if you are abusive or aggressive to our staff. If the property is unhygienic, the area is too cluttered or the operative feels it is unsafe for them to carry out your repair, we may not be able to complete the work until you have resolved the issue.
- 5.8 If we need to carry out major repairs, you may need to move into temporary accommodation whilst we

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complete the work. We will arrange this with you and give you reasonable notice, except in an emergency.

6. Repairing Responsibilities

6.1 We have a joint responsibility with you to maintain our properties but you must keep to the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement/occupational licence relating to repairs and maintenance and carry out the responsibilities set out in Appendix 1.

7. Special Circumstances

7.1 We recognise that you have individual needs and may need repairs completing more quickly than normal due to special circumstances. If you tell us about something that makes the repair more urgent, we will consider your request and may increase the priority of your repair and respond faster than normal. If the repair is your responsibility, but you can't complete it because of special circumstances and you don't have a family member or friend to help, we may complete the repair.

8. Damp and Mould

- 8.1 Damp and Condensation can lead to mould growth, damage to your property and impacts on your health.
- 8.2 We have a Damp and Mould Policy to proactively manage any report of damp, condensation, or mould. This may be through the completion of reactive repairs, or in some cases by providing information and guidance to customers, where there is evidence that condensation is due to the use and lifestyle of the household residing in the property.
- 8.3 It is important to understand the cause of damp and condensation and the way in which the different causes will be actioned. This includes proactive addressing of reports and providing information and signposting to customers where appropriate.

9. Disrepair

9.1 If you make a disrepair claim, we will deal with this in line with the Housing Disrepair Protocol as part of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

10. Gas and Electric Servicing and Maintenance

- 10.1 We carry out an annual gas and electric safety check of appliances and pipes that we have installed in our occupied properties. You **MUST** give us access to your home to carry out this check because it is essential for your health and safety and we have to do this by law. If you don't we may take legal action against you and charge you for any associated costs.
- 10.2 We do not give permission to install gas fires or wood burners. If you install a gas fire or wood burner, we will remove it, for safety reasons.

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11. Empty Properties

11.1 When you move into one of our properties, we will ensure that it meets our New Letting / Void Standard and will be clean safe and secure.

12. Rechargeable Repairs

12.1 We may charge you for a repair in accordance with our Rechargeable Repairs Policy. Examples of rechargeable repairs include:

- A repair which has been caused by accidental or deliberate damage by the tenant, any member of the tenant's household or a visitor to the house.
- A repair that we carry out but is not our responsibility (for example repairs to tenants' alterations).
- Damage caused by the tenant, a member of their household or a visitor, identified at the End of Tenancy Inspection resulting in repairs required before the house can be re-let.
- Willful damage or acts of vandalism caused by a tenant, a member of their household or a visitor that has not been reported to the police.
- Repairs carried out by us at the tenant's request (for example replacing lost or broken keys)
- Making good the house following improvement/alterations carried out by the tenant without our approval or not to an acceptable standard.
- Where the rechargeable repair is subject to a building insurance claim, the person being recharged will only be liable for the insurance excess.

12.2 Permissions and Improvements

12.3 You do not have the right to carry out improvements or alterations to your property. We will not give permission for the installation of any gas fire, solid fuel or wood burner for safety reasons.

12.4 We will consider for approval any application for alterations made under a disabled facility grant and approved by an Occupational Therapist to make accommodation meet the needs of our tenants.

13. Customer Experience

13.1 Our aim is to improve customer experience and satisfaction with our services and to ensure that our residents enjoy living in their homes. Before we undertake planned maintenance or property improvement works, we will share definitive programmes and consult with residents. We will provide transparent and clear information on these programmes and for major planned improvement works, we will also ensure there is a named liaison officer whose role is to ensure effective customer engagement and delivery of the works.

13.2 All responsive and void repairs should meet our published timescales for completion and should be of good quality.

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- 13.3 All contractors will sign up to our customer service standards and will deliver the same level of service to our residents as we expect from our own staff.
- 13.4 We will always ensure that residents are provided with clear instructions on how to use equipment in their homes, particularly for new technologies and this is coupled with providing them with any relevant warranties.
- 13.5 Where residents are unsatisfied with the delivery of our services and want to submit a complaint, this will be handled in line with our published Complaints Policy. However, we will always aim to ensure that issues raised by residents are addressed before they become a formal complaint.
- 13.6 Feedback from our residents and Care Providers, together with insight generated from complaints, will be used to develop our services as part of our on-going commitment to improving customer experience for our residents.
- 13.7 We recognise that many of our customers have vulnerabilities and when carrying out works/repairs in their homes we will aim to meet their diverse personal needs as much as we can.

14. Complaints, Compensation and Redress

- 14.1 If we have done something wrong, you may want to make a complaint. You also may ask us for compensation or something else to put things right.
- 14.2 We have a Complaints and Compliments Policy that explains how we deal with these. This can be found on our website.
- 14.3 We also have a Compensation and Redress Policy, which covers your legal rights and our discretionary awards scheme.

15. Insurance

- 15.1 We have buildings insurance in place for our properties. However, this does not cover your belongings, so we recommend that you to take out your own building contents insurance.

16. Equality and Diversity

- 16.1 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or other grounds set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 16.2 When applying this policy, we will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities.
- 16.3 On request, we may provide translations of its documents, policies and procedures in various languages and other formats.

17. Responsibility

- 17.1 The Head of Asset Management is responsible for successful delivery of this policy.

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17.2 All colleagues have an individual and collective responsibility to carry out this policy correctly.

18. Consultation

18.1 We have involved all relevant services in the review of this policy. We have consulted with some of our customers on our policy using face-to-face discussion groups.

18.2 We also considered feedback from customers from complaints and surveys as part of our review of this policy and this has influenced some of the changes we have made.

19. Risk Management

19.1 The main risks associated with this policy are:

- We fail to meet Consumer Standards and Regulatory Requirements
- We fail to maintain properties to a good standard, impacting on our customers
- We fail to maintain properties to a good standard, impacting on the overall value of our housing stock and financial viability of the organisation
- We fail to adhere to this policy resulting in reputational harm
- We fail to maintain expenditure within agreed budget levels

20. Data Protection, Record Storage and Retention

20.1 All data related to repairs and maintenance activities is stored and used in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

20.2 All systems used to manage repairs activities are also GDPR compliant.

21. Performance Management

21.1 We are committed to continually improving our repair service to make it more efficient and effective and to increase customer satisfaction.

21.2 We will measure repair performance using a suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be benchmarked against our peer group.

21.3 KPI's will be reviewed annually to ensure year on year continuous improvement.

21.4 Performance against KPIs will be monitored and reported regularly to the Senior Management Team (SMT), Asset Management Group (AMG) and the Board.

21.5 Complaints and customer feedback received as part of our tenant satisfaction surveys will also be used as an additional means of monitoring and improving the quality of the service.

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- 21.6 We will carry out regular surveys to obtain your views on the repairs service. We will use your survey feedback and your complaints to monitor and improve the quality of the service. You can also make comments and suggestions about our repairs service.
- 21.7 We will publish repairs performance information at least annually to our customers and include regular updates on performance.
- 21.8 We will publish our performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures annually.

22. Policy Review

- 22.1 This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by statutory, regulatory, best practice, emerging developments, or circumstances arising from reviews of other policies.
- 22.2 The Head of Asset Management is responsible for future reviews

23. Related Documents

- Asset Management Strategy
- Damp and Mould Policy
- Gas Policy
- New Letting Standard
- Fire Safety Policy
- Customer Engagement Strategy
- Complaints and Compliments Policy
- Compensation and Redress Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy

24. Document Change History

| Version | Date | Change | Owner |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 | 27/2/2023 | New document | Alastair Cooper |
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Appendix 1 - Repair responsibilities (Hilldale only)

Appendix 2 – Financial Authorisation (internal only)

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Appendix 1 - Repair responsibilities

General

In addition to the obligations stated in your tenancy agreement and/or occupational licence, you are expected to:

- Give us, or our contractors, access to inspect the condition of the property and complete repairs, maintenance and other works. We will usually give you at least 24 hours' notice unless there is an emergency. If we need to access your property immediately due to an emergency, we will try to contact you. If we can't, we may need to force entry. We will ensure your property is secure afterwards and complete any necessary repairs
- Report any repairs immediately, including repairs in communal areas.
- Treat us, and our contractors, with respect and allowing us to carry out the repair in a safe environment. This includes not smoking whilst we are in the property and where possible refrain from smoking 20 minutes before your appointment
- Ensure pets and other people are removed from the work area
- Keep the interior of the property, gardens, pathways and communal areas in good, clean condition. You are responsible for any repairs that are needed because of your damage or neglect
- Take reasonable precautions to protect the property from damage from fire, frost or water
- Ensure that you don't cause blockages to pipes, drains or gullies (eg by disposing of cooking oils down sinks and sanitary products, nappies and baby wipes down toilets)
- Turn the water supply off if you can't turn a tap off
- Move your belongings where we need access to complete your repair, for example furniture, appliances and floor coverings
- Repairs and maintenance to any alteration or improvement that you have carried out yourself with or without our permission

Bathrooms

We are responsible for toilets, baths, basins and showers we have fitted. You are responsible for fittings such as plugs and chains, toilet seats, shower rails, shower curtains, toilet roll holders and towel rails. You are also responsible for unblocking toilets, sinks, basins, baths and shower trays.

Communal areas

We are responsible for communal repairs such as stairs, aerials, lifts, bin storage, drying areas, fencing and gates.

Decorating

We are responsible for communal decoration. You are responsible for internal decoration.

Disabled adaptations

We are responsible for disabled adaptations fitted by us.

Doors

We are responsible for fire doors and external doors, locks, frames and furniture. You are responsible for door numbers and knockers. You must not carry out any repairs to fire doors. We are also responsible for internal doorframes and internal doors to kitchens and bathrooms. You are responsible for lost keys and fobs. We may charge you if we must force entry because you are locked out.

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Drains, water services, external pipes, gutters, gullies and rainwater goods

We are responsible for repairs to water and drainage services, external pipes, gutters, gullies and rainwater goods. We carry out gutter cleaning on a cyclical (repeated) programme. We are only responsible for water services within the boundary of the property. You are responsible for keeping drains and gullies free from blockages.

Electrics

We are responsible for electrics. We will replace bulbs in kitchens and bathrooms. The electric supplier is responsible for the electric meter. You are responsible for appliances and fittings you have installed yourself, including checking and replacing fuses. You are also responsible for replacing bulbs and resetting trip switches.

Fixtures and fittings

You are responsible for any fixtures and fittings such as coat hooks and curtain rails.

Fences, walls and gates

We will generally only replace fencing, walls and gates as part of a planned programme. We will also keep in repair communal fencing, walls and gates. You must not remove, replace, build or renew any fencing, walls or gates without our permission.

Foundations and floors

We are responsible for foundations and floors.

Gas

We are responsible for gas services (pipework after the gas meter). The gas supplier is responsible for the gas meter. You are responsible for appliances you have installed yourself. For gas fires please see heating hot water and fires.

Heating and hot water, fires

We are responsible for central heating and hot water systems. We are also responsible for any fires that we have installed. If you have fitted your own fire, you are responsible for any repairs. However, we will carry out a regular safety check. You will need to provide us with your manufacturer's instructions, as we will need to remove the fire to inspect your chimney, carry out a visual safety check of the appliance and refit it when we have finished the check. If we don't have the manufacturer's instructions, we will disconnect the fire. Where a gas fire is beyond repair. We will brick up the fireplace and supply wiring so you can fit your own electric fire. We do not give permission to install wood burners. If you install a wood burner, we will remove it, for safety reasons and we may charge you for this.

Kitchens

We are responsible for kitchen units, sinks, worktops and associated pipe work. We are responsible for any domestic appliances, such as washing machines, fridges and cookers, supplied by us as part of your tenancy agreement. You are responsible for unblocking sinks.

Paths, steps and hardstandings

If we have installed a hardstanding, we will keep it in repair or replace it as required. We are responsible for paths and steps in communal areas. We are also responsible for paths and steps that we have installed within the boundary of the property.

Roofs and chimneys

We are responsible for roofs and chimneys.

Sheds, garages and outhouses

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We are responsible for sheds and garages installed by us. We are responsible for outhouses. If you have installed any sheds or garages, you are responsible for them. If these become unsafe and you are unable to repair or remove them yourself, we will either repair or remove them and we may charge you for this.

Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms

We are responsible for repairing or replacing smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms we have fitted. We will check these alarms and replace them or change the batteries part of the annual gas and electric safety check. You are responsible for testing the batteries. If the battery needs changing before the annual safety check, you must replace it. You must not change the backup battery in a hard-wired smoke or carbon monoxide alarm.

TV aerials

We are responsible for communal aerials. You are responsible for any TV aerials that are only used by you and your household.

Walls, skirting boards, ceilings and plastering

We are responsible for internal and external walls, skirting boards, ceilings and plastering.

Windows

We are responsible for external windows, including fittings.

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Appendix 2 – Financial Authorisation (Internal only)

1.1 The following table shows the role and level of those who are authorised to commit to expenditure and to authorise payment.

| Role | Expenditure authorisation (inc VAT) | Budget overspend and unbudgeted expenditure authorisation |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Board | No limit | No limit |
| Change Finance Director plus Managing Director or Managing Director plus another SMT member | £50,000 | £50,000 |
| Change Finance Director or Managing Director | £10,000 | £10,000 |
| Budget holder | £5,000 | £5,000 |
| Roles authorised by the Budget Holder | £1,200 | None |
| Asset Administrators | £600 | None |

1.2 The following table shows the budget holders and those roles authorised by the budget holders to commit to expenditure and authorise payment for 'building works, repairs and maintenance'.

| Organisation | Budget Holder | Roles Authorised by Budget Holder |
|----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Change Housing | Head of Asset Management | Contracts Manager Surveyor Asset Administrator |
| Hilldale | Managing Director | Head of Asset Management (Change) Project Manager Contracts Manager (Change) Asset Administrator (Change) |