

Policy

Title:

Repairs Policy

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Homes

Approved by:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Halton Housing has recently undertaken a review of its repairs policy, the outcome of which has highlighted a need to ensure that the policy fully reflects the current legislative/regulatory standards and supports our Asset Management Strategy.
- 1.2 Halton Housing is committed to continuous improvement in performance of its repairs service and to ensuring that properties are repaired in accordance with our Asset Management Strategy.
- 1.3 This revised policy, together with the associated procedures will assist Halton Housing to ensure that we keep our properties in a condition that meets health and safety requirements, meet the customer expectations set out in our local standards and that we protect the value of our assets.
- 1.4 We will continue to ensure regular review and consultation of this policy in light of the current focus on repairs services, property condition, consumer standards and the recent report on Better Social Housing review.

2. Our Standards

- Consider the needs of our customers whilst conducting repairs and maintenance
- We are easy to deal with and keep customers informed
- We treat customers with respect and tailor our services to their needs
- We listen to what customers tell us and act on what they say
- We support customer to make a success of living in their home
- Our service offer is clear as are our expectations of our customers
- Provide a reliable, accessible service
- Consistently deliver high quality work
- Meet Health and Safety Standards
- Meet our legal and contractual obligations
- Deliver value for money
- Involve customers and learn from feedback

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 The repairs policy sets out both Halton Housing and customer responsibilities for conducting repairs and provides a framework within which repairs works will be undertaken including appointments, timescales, standards and dealing with any special requirements.

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- 3.2 The repairs policy is a key element of Halton Housing's overall approach and seeks to ensure that efficiency and value for money are achieved in the organisation's single largest element of revenue spend.
- 3.3 The aim of the policy is to ensure that we keep our properties in good repair and use resources efficiently to achieve the intended result of meeting demand from customers for repairs and realising positive customer outcomes

Responsibility for Repairs

- 3.4 **Halton Housing** is responsible for repairs relating to the following elements:
- Foundations
 - External walls to properties
 - External doors and door frames
 - Window frames
 - Roofs
 - Gutters and rainwater pipes
 - Drainage
 - Water services
 - Electrical fittings
 - Gas services
 - Smoke and CO2 alarms
 - Ventilation systems
 - Central heating and hot water systems
 - Internal doors (based on fair wear and tear)
 - Communal areas (e.g. lifts, stairs and decoration) in multi-occupied buildings
 - External decoration (as part of planned maintenance)
- 3.5 **Customers are responsible for repairs relating to the following elements:**
- The repair or replacement of anything that they have installed or fitted
 - The internal decoration of their homes
 - The upkeep of private garden areas repairs and maintenance
 - The replacement of light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
 - The replacement of lost keys or changing locks
 - Repairs to broken windows (unless a crime has been reported)
 - Re-setting of trip switches
 - Adjusting doors following new flooring being fitted
 - Replacement of toilet seats
 - Fitting of washing machines/tumble dryers or dishwashers
 - Fitting of cookers by a registered Gas Safe engineer
 - As a rule, for the maintenance and replacement of all front and rear party boundary fencing for existing and new homes

Repairs Charges

- 3.6 Any rectification of damage or repairs that are required as a result of customer accidents or neglect, are the responsibility of the customer. If Halton Housing carries out work that is the responsibility of the customer, then a charge will be levied, and payment required before works are undertaken. If the work is required as a result of a crime, then charges will be waived on production of a crime number.

Reporting Repairs

- 3.7 HH will provide several ways for customers to report repairs: Self-Serve, 'My Home' Portal, Web Chat, Customer App, by phone, email, letter or by reporting directly to any employee of Halton Housing.

Repairs Categories

- 3.8 Halton Housing will diagnose repairs and categorise them into "emergency" and "non-emergency" and will abide by Right to Repair requirements set out in Section 96 of The Housing Act 1985 (as amended).
- 3.9 Emergency repairs - where there is immediate danger to personal health and safety, serious damage to property or where the problem could create an unreasonable risk of suffering or difficulty, the repair will be undertaken or made safe within 4 hours.
- 3.10 Urgent repairs – these are repairs such as leaks which can be contained and electrical works which do not affect customer safety.
- 3.11 Non-emergency work will be appointed within 20 working days or beyond that by agreement with the customer.
- 3.12 Planned works will be offered at 54 working days. These will be typically external works which do not affect customers health and safety.
- 3.13 Halton Housing will offer 24 hour and 365 days a year access to emergency repairs.

Appointments

- 3.14 Halton Housing will offer AM, PM or all-day appointments and appointments avoiding the school-run times Monday to Friday, alongside evening appointments on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Saturday morning appointments until 12 noon.

3.15 Halton Housing will text customers to confirm the repair and the appointment and will confirm this again by text the day before the repair is due. If for any reason the appointment cannot be kept, Halton Housing will contact customers to offer an alternative arrangement.

3.16 If our customers fail to allow access on 2 occasions, we will cancel the job and make the customer aware that we have done this.

Damp, Mould and Condensation

3.17 Halton Housing will respond to reports of damp and mould in line with the current priorities. Anyone reporting a case of damp on mould which would be classed as a Category 1 within the HHSRS guidance and could cause immediate hazard or danger to customers or customers' homes, will be treated as an emergency repair and responded to within 4 hours. It should be noted that this approach is in lieu of further government guidance.

Right First Time

3.18 Halton Housing will aim to complete repairs right first time. In order to achieve this Halton Housing will use mobile working, imprest stock and maintenance technician empowerment to complete extra or different work and multi-skilled tradespeople.

Pre- and Post-Inspections

3.19 As a rule, Halton Housing will only pre-inspect repairs of a complex nature or where there is a dispute with a customer over the proposed repair. As a rule, we will post-inspect a minimum of 10% of repairs that have been conducted.

Sub-Contractors

3.20 There will be occasions where we appoint sub-contractors to conduct works on our behalf. All these contractors will be vetted to the appropriate levels pertinent to the works to ensure they have the correct training, insurances and conduct policies in place.

Standards for Repairs

3.21 The standards for repairs will be agreed with customers and will be set out in the tenancy sign up.

Repairs when Investment is Imminent

3.22 As a rule, our first principle will be to repair rather than replace. Generally, we will not replace components where investment work is imminent. If a surveyor

assesses that the component will not last until future investment work is due, then the replacement will be brought forward.

Disrepair Claims

- 3.23 Halton Housing is committed to continuous improvement in performance of our Decent Homes Standards and Habitations Standards, and that all claims are managed professionally, in line with all GDPR legislation and in accordance with the pre-action protocol for conditions claims.
- 3.24 Supplementary to this we have a duty to ensure that properties are repaired in accordance with our asset management strategy, and that any Housing Conditions Claims are dealt with professionally and in accordance with best practice and the protocol legally required under Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.

Planned Maintenance

- 3.25 Where there are common problems in relation to estates, blocks of flats or types of property, Halton Housing will seek to deal with them through planned and preventative programmes of work where feasible, rather than treat as one-off repairs.

Right to Buy/Right to Acquire

- 3.26 Where customers have applied to purchase their property under RTB/RTA, repairs will be restricted to emergency and Right to Repair defects as per RTB/RTA guidance.

Customer Satisfaction

- 3.27 Halton Housing approach to customer care emphasises the need to respect customers' homes and to take care when working within them. Feedback from customers will be sought through satisfaction text surveys to ensure that this commitment is being met. Customer complaints will be treated seriously with a focus on early resolution, as detailed with our Talk to Us Policy.

Permission for Customer Improvements

- 3.28 Halton Housing will allow customers to improve their homes as set out in the Tenancy Agreement if approval is obtained in advance. Halton Housing will where necessary, conduct pre-inspections in relation to the proposed improvements and offer advice to tenants.

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- 3.29 Customers who undertake improvements without approval will be liable for the full cost of reinstatement should the improvement need to be rectified either during or at the end of their tenancies.
- 3.30 Primary and day to day responsibility for implementation of the policy lies with the Director of Homes.

4. Regulatory and/or Legal Compliance

- 4.1 The Regulator of Social Housing sets Consumer Standards that HH must adhere to. This Policy primarily supports HH's compliance with the Safety and Quality Standard, and specifically the requirement for Registered Providers to, *"provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible"*.
- 4.2 Requirements of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard are also reflected in the Policy.

5. Diversity Considerations

- 5.1 We have completed an Equality Impact Screening Checklist which confirms that an EIA Stage 2 assessment is not required.

6. Links to Strategies, Policies and Associated Documents

- 6.1 This policy underpins two of the priorities in Our Future Focus:-

- Quality Homes
- Excellent Services
- Thriving Communities

- 6.2 And relates to the following policies:

- Void Repair Policy
- Talk to Us Policy
- Disrepair Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Premises Management Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Asset Management and Planned Investment Policy
- Damp and Mould Policy



Translations are available on request, by calling 0303 333 0101.

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