

Cheshire West and Chester Council **Housing Management**

Responsive Repairs Policy (Inc Right to Repair)

1 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Approval Date	30 th July 2024
Next Review Date	29 th July 2027
Responsible Service Area	Strategic Housing and Commissioning
Responsible Director	CW&C Director of Economy and Housing

Aim of Policy

This policy applies to all housing management services delivered on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) Council.

This Policy sets out our approach to responsive repairs. The implementation of this Policy will ensure we deliver an effective and efficient repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas whilst maintaining value for money. It also responds to the needs of tenants, with the objective of completing repairs right the first time.

Policy

This policy applies to all Cheshire West and Chester housing properties and communal areas managed by ForHousing and any other subsequent services commissioned to ForHousing by Cheshire West and Chester council via contract variations/change notes.

We repair and/or replace small to medium components on failure due to wear and tear or tenant misuse. To ensure components are not prematurely replaced, regular cycles for the servicing of equipment, inspection and testing required by regulations will be carried out to the decent homes standard.

Reporting a Repairs

We want ForHousing's repairs reporting process to be easily accessible and simple to follow. Customers and their representatives can report a repair in several ways.

- Via our website – www.forhousing.co.uk and the report repair locator or through our [webchat feature](#)
- My account + app
- By emailing hello@forhousing.co.uk
- Contacting our Customer Connect Hub 0300 123 5522

Operating Hours

We are open Monday – Friday between the hours of 8.00am – 6.30pm (except bank holidays). Outside of office hours always call 0300 123 55 22 to be connected to the out of hours service.

Appointments

To accommodate tenants needs a choice of time slots are offered, which includes:

- Morning or afternoon
- All-day
- Appointments that avoid the school run
- Emergency repairs are not appointed, and we aim to attend in 24 hours of the reported emergency

If these times are not convenient, we can arrange a time that works best for the tenant.

Repair Priorities

- **Emergency repairs**: within 24 hours or one working day
- **Urgent repairs**: within 7 working days
- **Routine repairs**: within 20 working days
- **Batched repairs**: as part of our capital investment programme or within 100 working days

We will endeavour to ensure that responsive repairs are completed in one visit, 'right first time' and arrange appointments at the first point of reporting, for all non- emergency internal and external repairs.

Responsive repairs will be responded to according to their level of priority, such as whether they are an emergency, urgent or routine. Where circumstances are appropriate or necessary, such as a tenant with support needs, a repair may be escalated to a higher priority.

Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs can be reported 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Outside of normal working hours the service will as a minimum make the property safe and secure. We will make safe any emergency repairs within 24 hours or on working day.

Emergency repairs include:

- Total loss of electric power
- Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting
- Total loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of gas supply
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
- Heating or hot water not working between 31st October and 1st May
- Blocked/leaking foul drain or soil stack
- Toilet not flushing (if there is only one toilet in the property)
- Leak from water pipe, tank or cistern
- Insecure external window, door or lock
- Tap cannot be turned

Urgent Repairs

Urgent repairs will be undertaken within 7 working days and can be reported via online methods 24 hours per day, and non-digital methods between operating hours.

Urgent repairs include:

- Partial loss of electrical power
- Partial loss of water supply
- Heating or hot water not working between 1st May and 31st October
- Blocked sink, bath or basin
- Leaking roof
- Rotten timber flooring or stair tread
- Door entry phone not working
- Extractor fan not working

Routine Repairs

These are repairs that are not unsafe, but if left for a long period of time may get worse and become a hazard. This may include loose taps, faulty guttering, or minor plumbing repairs.

Batched Repairs

This type of repair is usually the replacement of items that need pre-inspection, ordering, and manufacture so they take a little longer such as replacement doors and windows.

Follow-on works

Follow-on works will need to be arranged where a repair cannot be completed because the job evolves into more work than initially anticipated and requires more time to complete or if the materials are difficult to source and need to be ordered.

Contractors

All the contractors we use in our services have been audited to ensure that they have the relevant competencies for the work approved to undertake and where a contractor is undertaking responsive repairs, they will be held to the services standards described in this policy.

Access

As a standard, three attempts will be made to arrange an appointment for a non-emergency repair. ForHousing operates a no access procedure for the responsive repairs service which stipulates that a calling card will be left where access is not gained at an appointed time and date. If access is not gained at the agreed appointment slot the card notifies the tenant that the repair job is cancelled and details of how to rearrange is provided. ForHousing will monitor properties where no access for day-to-day repairs occurs to ensure a property does not fall into disrepair.

Communication

Tenants will receive an acknowledgement by text or letter, sharing the reference number and appointment details. We also send a reminder notification prior to the appointment.

If a repair cannot be completed within the stated timescale, for example, if materials have to be specially ordered, large-scale works or to be progressed as investment work outside of this policy, the contractor will inform the tenant.

Pre-Inspections

ForHousing will carry out pre-inspections for repair requests for large and high cost repairs, where the scope of works needs to be clarified such as plastering and roofing.

Post Inspections

ForHousing will carry out inspections to support the quality delivery of the responsive repairs service. We will carry out post inspections on completed work through home visits, telephone calls and the review of photographs at desktop level. We will also post inspect any repair subject to negative feedback.

Right to Repair

Right to Repair under Section 96 of the Housing Act 1985 gives tenants the right to have certain urgent minor repairs carried out where the repair may affect health, safety, or security.

If ForHousing does not finish a repair within the target time, nor complete the repair after a second request, tenants may be entitled to compensation.

Reasonable Adjustment

ForHousing is committed to providing excellent customer services and ensuring that we better understand and meet the needs and requirements of our customers.

We aim to do this by providing fair, equitable and inclusive services. Where necessary or appropriate, we will make reasonable adjustments if it helps our customers to access and receive an appropriate standard of service to meet their need. Refer to Reasonable Adjustment Statement.

Tenants Responsibility

We will publicise repairs and maintenance which are the tenant's responsibility. Where it is identified that tenants have caused damage to the property or undertaken unauthorised alterations, we will proactively seek to recover the costs incurred from tenants to rectify the damage and/or issues identified. We understand that tenants are unable to carry out works and we are flexible, where we are advised a tenant is unable to carry out these repairs, this will be reviewed on an individual basis. Works that are tenant responsibility are updated on our website but include:

- Toilet seats
- Batons to fix curtain rails
- Curtain rails
- Repairs to domestic appliances such as washing machines
- Bath panels
- Sink, basin or bath plugs
- Chips to baths or wash hand basins
- Unblocking of external gullies (except communal)
- Work due to lost keys such as lock changes
- Repairs to internal doors and doorframes
- Skirting boards/tiles
- External meter cupboards
- Floor and wall tiles
- Replacement of electrical fuses
- Current tenants home improvements
- Gates or fences unless communal areas or H&S risk to the occupants
- Paths except those to main entrances or required to access bin areas
- Fixtures and fittings installed by the current tenant

- Decoration, including hairline cracks. We also do not carry out redecoration internally following internal repairs

Where a non-emergency repair has been requested and it is evident that this is due to tenant damage, work will not be carried out unless the tenant pays for the full cost of the works in advance of the works being carried out in line with our rechargeable repairs policy. Affordable payment plans are available to assist tenants in financial hardship.

Where it is established that materials or parts have been ordered for works which is of a specialist nature and the tenant fails to allow access to undertake the work, we will proactively seek to recover the costs incurred from the tenant.

Rechargeable Repairs – The Rechargeable Repairs Policy sets out the circumstances in which tenants will be recharged for repairs and explains the arrangements for payment and conditions that must be met before works are carried out.

Health and Safety – ForHousing operate comprehensive and robust policies, procedures, and assurance systems to ensure that all building works it commissions are carried out in accordance with regulatory requirements and best practice. These policies, procedures and assurance systems will be continuously monitored and updated to reflect changes to standards. Information on how we are meeting these will be published separately to this policy.

How the Policy will be delivered

The delivery of this policy and associated procedures will be the responsibility of ForHousing. This Policy will be available to all employees through the intranet and regular training will be provided to relevant employees on all policies and procedures.

If staff become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the policy or the associated procedures, they should report this to the policy owner. This feedback will be incorporated into the policy / procedural review process.

Related Documents

- ForHousing Responsive Repairs & Maintenance Procedure (HMC)
- Asbestos Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Fire Policy
- Gas Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Reasonable Adjustment Statement
- Legionella Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Complaints Policy
- CW&C Tenancy Agreements
- CW&C Leases

Inclusive Decision Making Framework (IDMF) Analysis

Date of approved IDMF analysis	28/03/2024
Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impact	N/A

Equality Analysis (Tenants)

Results of EA / Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impacts	Policy document to be provided in alternative formats. ForHousing staff to undertake equality and diversity training on an ongoing basis to support the delivery of this policy.
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Data Protection Impact Assessment

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

Under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, you are required to carry out a DPIA when developing a new Policy or Procedure that will have a widespread or serious impact on data held on individuals. Careful consideration should be given as to whether the policy or process will have an impact on any processing of personal information that is large scale, involves profiling or monitoring, decides on access to services or opportunities, or involves sensitive data or vulnerable individuals. Information and support regarding this can be obtained from the Data Protection Officer (DPO).

Has a DPIA been completed?	Yes
If a DPIA has been completed, was the DPO consulted?	Yes
If a DPIA has been completed, were any risks identified?	No
If risks were identified as part of the DPIA process, have mitigation actions been identified?	N/A

Consultation and business intelligence

The Policy was created in consultation with CW&C tenants and representatives of CW&C and ForHousing.

Monitoring Arrangements

Delivery of responsive repair services will be measured using existing methods including continued monitoring of:

- Satisfaction with services
- Redress levels and satisfaction with resolution
- Performance and Service Standard levels
- Post inspections

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Control Data & Approval History

Policy owner:	CW&C: Lucy Heath, Head of Housing
Next review date:	29 th July 2027

Issue	Approved by	Date
V1	Cabinet Member for Housing	29 th July 2023
V2.1	CW&C, Cabinet Member of Homes, Planning and Safer Communities	30 th July 2024

Document Revision History

Date amended	Version number	Key changes
	1	Original version
	1.2	Revision following tenant feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added in cycling for servicing would be to the decent homes standard. Expanded the ways tenants can contact us. Added where circumstances are appropriate or necessary, such as a tenant with support needs, a repair may be escalated to a higher priority. Added relevant documents in the 'Related documents Section' to be clearer on tenants responsibilities and regulatory compliance.
June 2024	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deleted clause stating we do not clean mould to reflect change of approach. Clarification to statement about internal decorations, confirming that redecoration is not carried out following internal repairs. Added timescales for damp inspection and follow on works
June 2024	2.1	Revision following tenant feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaken good practice research for developing policy Improved layout and inclusion of various sections
July 2024	2.2	Revision following tenant feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform on exception of bank holidays within opening hours information