



# Repairs Policy

Approved by: Executive Committee

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# Repairs

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## INTRODUCTION

RHP is committed to meeting our repair and maintenance responsibilities. We will take a proactive approach to repair and maintenance to keep homes safe, in good repair and maintained to the decent homes standard, planning routine maintenance in advance where required.

We will ensure that our homes are protected by investing in them meeting our repair and maintenance responsibilities; delivering responsive repair and planned maintenance services which are timely, efficient, and effective and provide value for money.

This policy covers all directly owned and managed homes (general needs, retirement housing, leasehold and shared ownership) including individual properties and the structure and communal areas of those buildings.

We will ensure this policy complies with all relevant statutory and regulatory health and safety requirements.

We will ensure that all repair and maintenance operatives, contractors and sub-contractors working on our behalf are suitably skilled and qualified for the work.

The effective maintenance of our homes is crucial to the overall management of our housing stock, being able to complete repairs where possible at the first visit and doing this in an efficient and cost effective way.

This policy is supported by the following documents:

- 1. Asset Management Strategy**
- 2. Gas Safety Policy**
- 3. Asbestos Policy**
- 4. Complaints Policy**
- 5. Compensation Policy**

## OUR APPROACH

Repair responsibilities are primarily set out in legislation, regulation and the tenancy agreements. We are responsible for certain repairs, and customers for others. Repair responsibilities, including customers' responsibilities, are explained on our website.

Repairs are defined as the remedy or renewal of broken or defective elements of the exterior, interior and structure of the building and property including all communal areas and grounds, its utility connections, services, plumbing, sanitary facilities and electrical, lighting and heating systems as described in our tenancy agreements.

Planned Maintenance is the proactive upkeep and servicing of structure, systems and services to keep them in proper working order and avoid breakdowns and defects, and the need for reactive repairs. We aim to undertake stock condition surveys of all of our properties at least once every 5-years and customers are encouraged to assist in allowing access for all such surveys.

Improvements are the provision of additional, superior or enhanced features and facilities in buildings and properties.

Alterations are elective changes to the structure or fixtures and are often improvements.

We aim to strike a balance between undertaking reactive repairs and planned maintenance which reflects value for money while continuing to maintain our homes and estates to a high standard.

# Repairs

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## Reporting Repairs

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We will offer customers a variety of methods to report defects and request repairs; customers may contact us by phone, online, e-mail, text message, post, or in person. We are available to advise on and raise repairs. We will accept repair requests from customers, members of their household, and other individuals supporting them and authorised to act on their behalf. Some work may require a pre-inspection to assess the work required before it can be arranged, and an appointment agreed. In such circumstances, we will attempt to arrange both the pre-inspection and repair appointments within the timescale but may be unable to do so where the work required is extensive or timely to arrange. We will prioritise all responsive repair requests according to a formal set of repair priorities, each of which is attached to a timescale, within which we aim to offer an appointment. Responsive repair requests are pre-assigned priorities based upon severity, risk and impact.

## Priority Timescales

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Our priority timescales for responsive repairs and heating related repairs are aligned.

- P1 Emergency Repairs, attend to make safe within 4 hours with an objective of completing the job within 24 hours
- P2 Urgent Repairs, attend within 5 working days, complete in 28 working days
- P3 Routine Repairs, attend and complete within 28 working days
- Emergency out of Hours Repairs (aim to attend within 3 hours with an objective of completing the job within the next working day).

There are some jobs that our customers may contact us to repair that are not part of our repairs and maintenance service. These will be larger jobs that may require a survey to enable the ordering of materials and the works to be planned in. For instance, window replacement; door replacement; kitchen unit replacement, replacement of floor covering, rewiring, major structural work, work requiring scaffolding and the installation of disabled adaptations.

There may be instances where these priority timescales will be adjusted to take into account

customers' views and diverse needs. This may include increasing the priority for repairs for some older customers or where a household member is disabled.

## Appointments

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We will make every effort to offer customers a suitable appointment for the repair within timescale. Repairs are bookable online 24/7 and by phone during opening hours. Where customers are unable to attend standard appointment slots due to work or school commitments, and cannot make other arrangements, we will attempt to offer a 'first call' appointment or to avoid school run times. All-day appointments will be used where the work is extensive and cannot be accommodated by a morning or afternoon appointment slot. Emergency repairs are undertaken every day of the year, 24 hours a day.

## Missed appointments

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Missed appointments occur when we fail to attend an agreed appointment, or a customer fails to allow access. Avoiding missed appointments is essential to providing an effective and efficient repairs service. We recognise the disruption and inconvenience caused when appointments are missed and we will be proactive in minimising and avoiding missed appointments. Where we hold a mobile number for the customer, we will confirm appointments by SMS when we book the appointment and send an SMS reminder 24 hours before the appointment. We will also send an SMS notification when the operative departs for the appointment.

We will phone customers where we attend an appointment but are unable to gain access, allowing an opportunity to avoid unnecessary missed appointments.

Where all efforts fail, we will leave a 'missed appointment' calling card advising the customer of the missed appointment and requesting they contact us to rearrange the repair. We will proactively rearrange appointments for customers who are vulnerable, repairs which relate to health and safety, and repairs which would lead to further damage if not resolved. In all other cases the customer is expected to contact us to re-arrange.

Appointments are only necessary for communal repairs where access is required from customers or where the repair will be unduly disruptive. We will strive to undertake the communal repair within our Priority Timescale but may not arrange a fixed appointment slot in such circumstance.

## Undertaking repairs

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# Repairs

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We will strive to complete repairs promptly, to a good standard and right first time. We will keep the property or building safe and compliant with relevant health and safety obligations. We will avoid unnecessary appointments and will advise customers of any delays, such as ordering parts, or follow-up appointments. We will aim to keep customers informed on progress throughout. Our operatives will produce their RHP ID card. Where decorating is required because of a repair we will patch-paint in a similar colour; we will not ordinarily redecorate the entire room or compensate for this. Remedial decorating therefore remains the customer's responsibility.

We are not responsible for repairs that need to be carried out as a result of damage or neglect caused by a resident, member of their household (including a pet) or a visitor.

## Emergency repairs

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We will ensure that customers are able to report emergency repairs by phone 24 hours a day, including weekends, bank holidays and other non-working days. Emergency repairs must only be reported by phone or in person; emergency repairs must not be reported by e-mail or website due to the urgent response required. The emergency repair will be assessed and prioritised in accordance with our repair priorities and we will arrange an appropriate appointment to make safe, however, it will not always be appropriate to make an appointment for an emergency by its very nature: we will address the underlying emergency to eliminate any high risk and make the home habitable but may not necessarily resolve the repair. We will arrange a routine appointment if required to complete the repair.

## Chargeable repairs

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We may charge to undertake certain repairs which are the resident's responsibility; these may be pre-charged or recharged. Recharges will represent our reasonable costs in undertaking the repair: parts, labour, administration and overheads. We will charge where we agree to undertake a repair to assist a customer and will advise of the charge in advance. We will charge where a repair is required because of negligence or damage by a resident, a member of their household including pets or a visitor or where a resident fails to meet their obligation to undertake a required repair after suitable warning. We will give appropriate notice of our intention to carry out a repair and recharge in default.

## DIY repairs

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Customers may not undertake communal repairs themselves; these must be reported to RHP. Customers must seek our written permission before undertaking repairs to their property themselves unless it is a repair which they are responsible for. Customers must never undertake repairs themselves which involve gas or electricity supplies or affect the structure of the building. Several self-help repairs videos are available on our website.

## Improvements and alterations

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We are not required to make improvements to our properties, beyond compliance with the Decent Homes Standard and other similar home and energy standards. Improvements made will usually be delivered as a part of our planned works programmes.

Customers must not make structural or other physical alterations to their homes without our written permission. We will consider all requests for permission on their individual merit, including health and safety, planning requirements, structural safety and impact on neighbours. Some customers' tenancy agreements do not allow them to make improvements.

Improvements or alterations will be made at the customers' own expense, except where delivered as part of our planned works programs or similar initiatives. We will facilitate adaptations where appropriate to support and assist residents to maintain their independence and remain in their home, including assistance with the respective local authorities. We will inform customers about the process where requested.

Customers should request permission for the installation of hard flooring, whether that be laminate, tiles or solid wood, particularly in homes above ground floor level.

## Asbestos

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We will maintain a register of known asbestos containing materials (ACMs) present in our properties and buildings and check this register before commencing work in areas where ACMs may be present. We will take all appropriate measures when working with ACMs to ensure safety of customers, operatives and contractors.

Refer to the Asbestos Policy for further information on asbestos management and safety.

# Repairs

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## Gas safety

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All repair and maintenance work involving a gas supply will be undertaken by a qualified and registered gas engineer. Our gas engineers will produce their Gas Safe Register ID card when requested. All repairs will be undertaken in line with our repairs priorities. Repairs to communal heating schemes will be treated as emergencies during periods of cold weather. We will ensure that our properties receive a gas safety check annually and expect our customers to fully cooperate in enabling this to be undertaken before the certificate expires.

Refer to the Gas Safety Policy for further information on the safety and servicing of gas supplies and appliances.

## Electrical safety

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All repair and maintenance work involving an electric supply will be undertaken by a qualified and registered electrician.

We are committed to ensuring that our properties receive a regular electrical safety check supported by a periodic inspection certificate.

## Emergency access

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We may require access to customers' homes in an emergency. We will make all reasonable efforts to contact the customer or their representative to arrange access. We will provide not less than 24 hours' written notice to the resident before attempting entry unless there is a serious and immediate risk to safety. We will seek and obtain a legal injunction granting access to the property wherever necessary to ensure the health and safety of customers and others.

We will only enter a residence without permission in extenuating circumstances, for instance; significant flooding causing damage to another property; a serious risk to health and safety such as a dangerous structure.

We will in all cases of access ensure that the property is secured and the customer is able to regain access without delay.

## Estates and Communal Areas

Where there are arrangements in place for a managing agent to manage communal areas on behalf of RHP or the building owner, we will ensure that the communal area is well-maintained and hold the managing agent or building owner to account if it is not.

## Health and safety

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We will implement this policy in compliance with all relevant statutory and regulatory health and safety requirements.

## Equality & diversity

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We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities and will take positive action where appropriate.

We will make appropriate arrangements where necessary to ensure that customers with distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats or providing interpretative or transcriptive assistance where appropriate.

## Training

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We will provide all staff responsible for implementing this policy with comprehensive training as required.

## Monitoring

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We will monitor our repair performance, including appointments made, attended and missed, repairs conducted on time, repairs made right first time and customer satisfaction. We will report on our performance to our Executive Team and Board on a regular basis. We will post-inspect a sample of repairs to ensure that the standard of work is appropriate. We will conduct regular repair satisfaction surveys with residents to seek feedback.