

Repair Policy

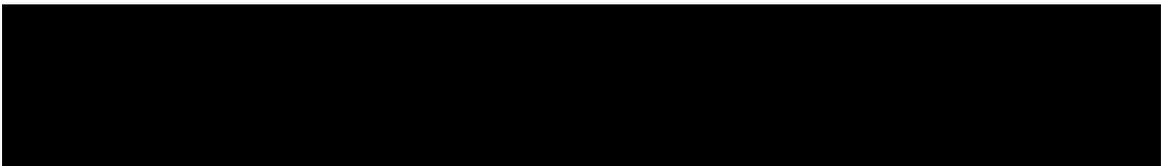


Table of Contents

Policy/Strategy Control Statement	2
Policy Applicable To.....	3
Amendment Sheet Record.....	3
Revision Date	3
Description of Changes	3
Approved By	3
Date Approved.....	3
Please summarise the current policy requirements and how this is changed in the new policy.	3
Please explain the reason for changes/improvements/new policy.	3
Please explain any new actions required to put the policy changes into practice.	3
1.0 Introduction	5
1.1 Aim.....	5
1.2 Strategic Overview.....	5
2.0 Repair and Maintenance	6
2.1 Aims of the Service.....	6
2.2 Maintenance Service Standards	7
2.3 Qualifying Repairs.....	10
2.4 In-House Delivery	10
2.5 Measuring Performance.....	11
3.0 Tenure Diversification	12
4.0 Void Management	12
5.0 Gas Management.....	13
6.0 Customer Consultation.....	13
7.0 Repair Handling	14
8.0 Equality Impact.....	15
9.0 Health and Safety.....	16
Appendix 1	18
Landlords Responsibilities	18
APPENDIX 2.....	0

QUALIFYING REPAIRS	0
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Repairs Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aim

Within our Business Plan we have set a number of strategic priorities that our repairs service would link in to creating places that work for everyone. The Repairs Policy aims to contribute to our wider vision by establishing the framework in which we manage our repair service and how this contributes to our property assets whilst meeting our customer expectations.

1.2 Strategic Overview

A key aim of the business plan is to continue to integrate our core services and make best use of the synergy of the growing group relationships. For maintenance the key relationships include procurement, investment, RMG, Touchstone, development and housing together with community investment activity in our neighbourhoods to maximise both the financial and social return on our investment.

The repairs policy is complimentary to the asset management strategy that captures investment in planned renewals, cyclical maintenance and enhancements. Our stock and customer base is diverse in nature and location. Our aim is to ensure that our stock is well maintained, warm and safe and contributes to sustainable communities. For our customers we need to be accessible, responsive, consistent, cost effective and reliable.

Maintaining our stock and investing in our assets enables future borrowing to be secured as well as maintaining demand for our homes and enhancing our reputation. Through a responsive repair programme we contribute to safe places, places where our customers feel that the estate is an environment where they have a sense of community. Maintenance is a key service requirement which is reported in the Annual Return on the Charter and it is where most of our customers form opinions on the wider services of our business. Our reputation within our communities is often judged by our response and action towards a repair request.

Through the development of the internal direct trade service we contribute to the social investment, creating employment and training opportunities as well as adding value to our management services in a cost effective manner.

2.0 Repair and Maintenance

2.1 Aims of the Service

Repair and Maintenance of our assets is essential for the proper management of our housing stock. The majority of our customers benefit from the interaction with our in house repairs team and we will continue to maximise the use of the direct trade's service and develop its capacity. Key benefits introduced include cost savings through zero VAT on labour and zero profit charged. Customers receive scheduled appointments when reporting repairs; this is enhanced through extended office and repair opening hours and a focus on successful outcomes at the first visit. A Lean review ensured that the process was mapped and staff had a clear plan and process map.

Places Management (our brand for the internal trade service) aim to ensure that we positively contribute to the strategic priorities of our business;

“Working to provide aspirational homes and inspirational places”

- Maintain our properties keeping them both attractive to live and visit,
- Share information with colleagues to highlight support and investment requirements that sustain tenancies.

“To provide effective customer services with excellence in delivery”

- Deliver excellent levels of customer satisfaction,
- Always meet our legal obligations to tenants,
- Communicate direct with our customers and maintain a consistency in service.

“To grow our business model and services”

- Achieve value for money through competitiveness in cost and quality,
- Ability to operate commercially and contribute to the surplus of our business,
- Offers a range of services for both internal and external customers at reasonable costs with a trusted trader element.

“ To be a leader in our sectors”

- Offer a flexible service that is responsive to our customer’s needs,
- Contributes to the reduction of carbon from our property and actions through effective scheduling and responsible procurement and disposal,
- Proactively embrace Health and Safety and adopt a new behavioral programme that protects our staff and customers.

“ To be a great place to work”

- Train and develop our staff to “think and see the customer” at the core of our business,
- Embrace diversity and operate a flexible service,
- Create training and development opportunities as a core function of growing the service,
- Offer competitive terms and conditions for our staff and partners,
- Create employment opportunities and enhance the offering for young people through training programmes,
- Make the use of technology and develop our e-learning capacity and digital services.

2.2 Maintenance Service Standards

Maintenance service standards go beyond our legal obligations. We measure a number of key performance indicators that assess our performance and ensure that we are operating responsibly and efficiently. We adopt our SPIRIT culture recognising that through setting challenging targets we can continually develop our service and improve and innovate ultimately with the aim of improving the customer experience.

Castle Rock Edinvar is a registered social landlord and must meet certain standards, in relations to repairs the Housing Act set out a Right to Repair. These standards are prescriptive. We believe that we can offer an enhanced service and aim to go beyond the statutory minimum. We have set out both the statutory and aspirational targets.

The table 1 below highlights the key maintenance performance targets together with the response times.

Table 1

Category	Operation	Frequency	Performance Targets
Responsive Repairs	Emergency (ECO 1) (Safety, security and health reasons could adversely affect structure of building)	On demand	Attend within a 4 hour timescale and make safe
	Right to Repairs- ER1	On demand	Right to repair 1 type works by the end of the next working day, (for SST only)
		On demand	Right to repair 3 type works by the end of the third working day, (for SST only)
		On demand	Right to repair 7 type works by the end of 7 working day, (for SST only)
Appointments	On demand	Appointment at time of call to report a repair. Aim to compete on average all repairs within 12 working days. Appointment times are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning – 8 to 12.30 • Afternoon 12.30 to 4.30 • Evening – 4.30 to 6.30 (Monto Friday) • 8.30 to 12.30 - Saturday 	

<p>Void</p> <p>Cyclical Maintenance</p>	<p>Repair and/or decoration of empty properties</p> <p>Rhone repair/renewal</p> <p>External/ Internal painting</p> <p>Lift Servicing/Inspections</p> <p>Environmental Improvements, e.g. fencing</p>	<p>On demand</p> <p>Cyclical programme</p>	<p>Return empty houses to our 'Homepledge' lettable standard averaging 12 days.</p> <p>Programme derived from stock condition input as well as input from local housing staff and customers via estates walkabout process</p> <p>Gas servicing to achieve 100% of properties with a valid certificate <u>within</u> 12 months of the anniversary date.</p> <p>Conduct electrical fixed wire testing every 5 years focusing initially on long duration tenancy.</p>
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Performance against repairs response targets, achieving 98% in each category.</p> <p>First time fix actions, achieving 85% on the first visit for repairs.</p> <p>Aim to achieve target levels of satisfaction with the repairs service in excess of 85%.</p> <p>Average time taken for non-emergency repairs completion 12 days working days</p>		

Timelines	<p>Emergency repairs attended to within 4 hours</p> <p>Non-emergency repairs attended and completed within 12 days</p> <p>Right first time for non-emergency repairs 85%</p>
Satisfaction measures	<p>Satisfaction with the repairs service 85%</p> <p>Satisfaction with gas servicing 90%</p>

2.3 Qualifying Repairs

For tenants that hold a Scottish Secure Tenancy we are duty bound to comply with the Right to Repair. This sets out repairs which are qualifying repairs and the maximum time for landlords to complete the repairs. These definitions inform our Responsive Repairs Targets and service delivery for our Castle Rock Edinvar tenants.

Qualifying Repairs and the completion times are set out in Appendix 2.

2.4 In-House Delivery

2.4.1 Growing our in house maintenance team has allowed assurance of service whilst controlling expenditure. We have recognised other benefits and the model is supported across our Group. Locally the team are known as Places Management. The name was derived through our engagement with the Group. As we develop our wider trade and work stream offering the rebrand will focus on a “place and asset management model” reflecting the wider group delivery.

2.4.2 Any ambitions to expand our in house maintenance operation will need to achieve a number of key objectives. Each year we set out our plan and seek Board approvals for additional expenditure and staff. The key objectives are:

- Continue to strengthen the teams depth and experience thus maintaining an efficient service for our customers,

- Ensure that the core trade service meets our diverse property portfolio,
- Achieve target levels of customer satisfaction and response times,
- Achieve value for money through economies of scale,
- Create enhanced services to support the more vulnerable customers,
- Offer efficiencies in our administration and management.

2.4.3 Our direct works team currently operate across all of our stock, regardless of company ownership. We will continue to work with other parts of group where synergies can be achieved to maximise the internal return. We will innovate and develop in areas that are new to us, perhaps geographically or specialist in nature. Any likeminded organisation we would seek to engage in partnering, avoiding contracts that fail to embed the wider values of our business.

2.4.4 We will explore opportunities to achieve some economies of scale through sharing in our services either as an approved contractor or through a cost sharing group model. Any long term commitments will be brought to the Board for consideration and approval and each case individually assessed and agreed.

2.4.5 Working with external contractors, we will agree a set of service standards that reflect the service of our internal resource to avoid variable service levels. A service level agreement and code of conduct will be a requisite of working for our business. Essential health and safety qualifications for the relevant field will be obtained and maintained throughout the relationship.

2.5 Measuring Performance

Our repair standards and performance targets will be achieved and monitored through a number of Key Performance measures. We will report every quarter to our Board. We will also conduct monthly reporting to SMT and our Group. Audits and annual reviews will also be supported as we seek to continually develop and seek further improvement. We engage with our internal audit, Business Assurance who assesses compliance with policy and report to our Audit and Risk Committee with an outcome report. Each action is developed in to an action plan to ensure we operate within the wider group framework.

The views of customers will be captured through various methods (passive & proactive). Each month we will capture telephone customer satisfaction surveys through our Customer Service Centre. In addition we will use a range of other methods for seeking tenant's views, including consultation with our Customer Direct, the Sheltered and Amenity tenant forum, registered tenants and residents groups. We also seek feedback from tenants on our repairs and maintenance service through involvement in specific focus groups. Scrutiny assessments by our customers will offer a form part of an audit service with the aim of comparing our ambitions with customers and their perceptions.

3.0 Tenure Diversification

A key strategic priority is to broaden our tenure and customer base. There are a number of key objectives in adopting this approach, including achieving customer groups with a more diverse balance of income, bridge the affordability gap for those who wish to seek ownership and offer flexibility in tenure choice as income and personal circumstances change.

Our maintenance service has been amended to reflect the growing diversification of our customer base. We have opening hours that ensures that customers have more choice of when to report and have multiple time schedules for repairs to be attended. This together with flexible appointments will avoid the need for customers to take time off work for access.

We offer an enhanced repairs service for our older customers. This addresses minor repair issues that could impact on both the physical and mental health of the resident. The aim is to sustain the tenancy and wellbeing of the customers through addressing small repairs that are the responsibility of the tenant.

4.0 Void Management

Our stock appraisal process includes an assessment of properties when they become void. Each void will be assessed to ascertain whether it should be:

- Re-let for the existing client group,
- Is more appropriate for use for an alternative client group, such as older people,
- The property meets our lettable standard,
- Sold on the open market, based on our achievement with ESSH, demand and influence over future maintenance liabilities.

We operate to a void standard, known as Homepledge. This offers some consistency within our standards and set a level of expectations for our customers. Through direct engagement with the Voids and Lettings Team we adjust the standard to reflect demand and to minimise the void period through an element of choice. Our aim is to start tenancies with a view to sustaining over a long period, to achieve this we will aim to personalize the standard. At the end of the tenancy we expect the property to be to the same standard when returned to us for re-let. In the event it is not we reserve the right to recharge the outgoing tenant.

5.0 Gas Management

- 5.1 Within the Operations team we manage gas safety for all domestic supplies. This is a statutory requirement and has been identified as a key business risk. As a result our approach to managing gas safety is beyond a statutory requirement and captures best practice with independent assessment.

Our direct works team deliver gas services directly through gas safe registered contractors and employed staff. We operate an integrated gas management scheduling system together with electronic data capturing to maximise our resource and ensure accuracy of data.

Our Gas team are assessed through regular NICEIC audits and are subject to a wider group gas management policy that sets out the management arrangements across our stock portfolio.

6.0 Customer Consultation

- 6.1 We recognise the importance of the statutory framework for tenant participation set out within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 that requires that we consult with tenants either individually or through a Registered Tenants Organisation on policies and standards of service for repairs and maintenance. In addition we have our customer direct and various groups to allow us to consult on our service offering.
- 6.2 We will specifically consult our staff team, tenants or tenant representative groups on changes within the following areas:
- Repairs handling proposals,
 - Customer survey outcomes,
 - Procurement arrangements around Contractor selection,
 - Code of conduct/ Respect Standard for working within our communications,
 - Customer service standard and customer charter.
- 6.3 We will consult through a menu of participation methods best suited to meeting the needs of the process as follows:
- Customer scrutiny will assess key areas of service delivery.
 - Focus Groups will be consulted on major service changes.
 - Utilise forum and other events for feedback on ideas and services.
 - Resident Groups or groups of individual tenants will be consulted on specific service failures or enhancements.
- 6.4 In addition to the statutory right we will also engage with customers when opportunities arise particularly where there is choice, for example utilise a customer representative on contractor and product selections.
- 6.5 The outcome of our customer scrutiny will prioritise our approach and each guide will achieve customer approval.
- 6.6 Our website will be updated to reflect the growing access by our customers to technology. Recognising the growth in web based online enquires, emails and communication are growing in popularity we will develop our service to meet this need by being digitally enabled.

7.0 Repair Handling

- 7.1 We will utilise our National Customer Contact Centre for all first line repair enquires, allowing calls to be fielded and advice provided. Calls relating to existing repairs will come direct to the local scheduling team. Repair requests will be booked in at this point of call. The contact number will be a Lo-call number. Response to calls will be monitored and all calls recorded. A number of key performance outcomes will be measured and a formal Service Level Agreement will set out the CSC relationship.
- 7.2 Repair responsibilities will be set out within the on line handbook as well as the website. A rechargeable repairs policy will ensure that tenants are held to account for their responsibilities.
- 7.3 Complaints with repairs will be logged and investigated in line with our complaints policy (mirroring the SPSO guide).
- 7.4 The repairs process will be set out in a flow chart to assist in achieving consistency of service. Deviations from process will be minimised through aligning our process with our scheduling management system. A strict version control approach is adopted to avoid miscommunication.
- 7.5 External contractors will be applied on occasions; this may be when works are out with the core skills set provided or where a more efficient utilisation of resource to cope with peak demands to remain within the agreed KPI's.
- 7.6 Request for repairs to communal areas that are not wholly owned or controlled by our business will be referred to the appointed factor to address. In the event there is no factor/management agent the repair will only be attended with the consent of the other owners who are jointly liable. We have a common area repair policy to support staff in making the appropriate decisions.

8.0 Equality Impact

- 8.1 We recognise the diversity of our customers and in order to ensure Respect we have developed a range of tool box talks that specifically address the everyday needs of our customers.

- 8.2 Our code of conduct is presented to all contractors and trade staff setting out the anticipated behaviour expected to ensure that we can offer a consistency of service and Respect for our customers.
- 8.3 We engage directly with our Equalities team and conduct regular impact equality assessments and training to sustain our knowledge of good practice and learning from across the Group.
- 8.4 Any special requests to deviate from the standard repair reporting process will be made by the Housing Officer/Manager who will take account of any disability or sensitive requirements. A strict protocol around flags and vulnerability is set out to avoid any discrimination or data protection breach.

9.0 Health and Safety

- 9.1 The delivery of maintenance services brings risk whether this is delivered in occupied or empty homes or whether this is an external contractor or staff member we must comply with our statutory duties. We have a separate health and safety policy that sets out the key requirements across our Group.
- 9.2 To achieve satisfactory levels of competence we only engage with contractors that are CHAs and Constructionline approved. This set minimum parameters around the business processes that demonstrate a level of competence.
- 9.3 As part of the tool box talk approach, health and safety is a standard agenda item and across the business there are various working groups, committee and board that measure the risk and ensure that the needs of our staff and customers are considered in undertaking maintenance tasks.
- 9.4 Our in house repairs team have developed a number of management actions that ensure that we meet CDM regulations. This is registered with the health and safety executive and forms part of our wider health and safety management approach.

- 9.5 We follow up on all accidents and near misses to ensure that the safety culture is developed to avoid risk. We report every quarter on the incidents and accidents and share this learning across our business functions.

Appendix 1

Landlords Responsibilities

(a) To keep in good repair the structure and extent of all properties and communal areas, this will include:

- foundations, roof, chimney stack, external walls, external doors, window sills, window frames, drains, gutters, external pipes
- internal walls, ceilings and floors, fair wear and tear
- repairs to fitted cupboards and kitchen units, from wear and tear
- pathways, steps and other types of entry, boundary walls/fencing and gates
- garages, external stores, outbuildings (not those installed by tenant)

(b) To keep in good repair and proper working order installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity, sanitation, space and water heating, this will include:

- repairs to sanitary fittings (for example, sinks, washbasins, baths, showers and toilets)
- fittings which supply water, gas and electricity
- fire and central heating systems which we have installed or have agreed to maintain
- Water heating systems which we have supplied.

(c) Where Service Charge agreements are in place to repair and maintain communal areas, this will include:

- cleaning of common areas, including access stairs
- lighting and fuel where appropriate
- lifts and door entry systems
- grounds maintenance of open spaces
- undertake regular external and common landscaping.

(d) Publish and inform tenants of their, and the Association's responsibilities in respect of repairs.

APPENDIX 2

QUALIFYING REPAIRS

<i>Defect</i>	<i>Maximum Period in working days from date immediately following the date of notification of qualifying repairs or inspection</i>
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house.	1
Blocked sink, bath or drain.	1
<i>Electric power:</i>	
Loss of electric power.	1
Partial loss of electric power.	3
Insecure external window, door or lock.	1
Unsafe access path or step.	1
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks or cisterns.	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply.	1

Loss or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available.	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house.	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting.	1
Loss of water supply;	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Loose or detached banister or hand rail.	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads.	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working.	7