

## Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Version Control						
Version	Date drafted	Date approved	Approved by	Date reviewed	Next review date	Owner
Final	10/01/2023	23/01/2023	Board	N/A	23/01/2025	Head of Property and Assets
2025 review			Board	24/03/2025	24/03/2027	Head of Property and Assets

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy details Westmoreland Supported Housing Limited's (WSHL) repairs and maintenance service, covering both the standards and delivery that can be expected by our customers and service providers.
- 1.2. Effective maintenance is a critically important and high demand service for service providers and their customers. It is vital that a cost-effective service is delivered which meets the diverse needs of our customers and service providers.

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to:
  - Ensure that all properties are maintained to a high standard;
  - Ensure that our customers and service providers live and work in homes which are safe and comfortable;
  - Ensure that high standards of customer care are achieved;
  - Ensure customers know what to expect from our service;
  - Provide users with a service which is appropriately tailored to their needs;
  - Adhere to relevant statutory compliance obligations;
  - Provide an efficient responsive repairs service;
  - Provide a value for money service whilst meeting regulatory requirements;
  - Ensure active asset management is implemented to maximise efficiencies.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to the delivery of all Repairs and Maintenance obligations and the requirement to meet the Decent Homes Standard in respect of all buildings and associated structures either owned, leased, occupied or managed by WSHL.
- 3.2. This policy applies to all employees, supplies and contractors who undertake repairs and maintenance work on WSHL's properties.

#### **4. Legal and regulatory responsibilities**

- 4.1. The policy complies with all relevant statutory provisions and will be updated to consider any future relevant legislation.
- 4.2. The policy complies with the Regulatory requirements set by The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and more specifically the Safety and Quality Standard.

#### **5. Reporting of repairs**

- 5.1. Customers and service providers can report a non-emergency repair in one of two ways:
  - By phone, on 01254 205200
  - Via webform, available from WSHL's website under "Request a repair"
- 5.2. Repairs reported through either of these methods are processed by WSHL's repairs contractor, Renov8.
- 5.3. Where requests for repairs are notified to WSHL colleagues, including Housing Officers when on site visits or head office staff when answering the main phone, the WSHL staff member will assist the requestor in reporting the repair via one of the methods listed in 5.1.
- 5.4. Customers and service providers should report an emergency repair by phone on 01254 205200. An out-of-hours service is available via this number for all emergency repair calls received outside of normal office hours.
- 5.5. An emergency repair is defined as any repair that is required to sustain the immediate health, safety or security of the customer at risk, or that materially affects the structure of the property or those around it. A list of repairs that are usually considered as emergency repairs is shown at 6.2.

#### **6. Repair priorities**

- 6.1. All repairs will be prioritised based on an assessment of the following criteria:
  - Health and Safety risk to persons or property of the fault being reported;
  - The vulnerability of the customer/s reporting the fault;
  - Access to the property and/or location of the fault.

6.2. The following items are ordinarily considered to be emergency repairs:

- Loss of entire supply of electricity, and/or water and/or gas;
- Loss of entire heating provision;
- Loss of hot water facilities where customer's health condition or vulnerability requires regular bathing and where there is no electric shower;
- All serious plumbing leaks where the property structure is in danger of damage;
- Report of a gas escape;
- Serious structural failures;
- Issued concerning the security of the property;
- Broken glazing to windows;
- Blocked toilet where it is the only toilet in the property;
- Main drain to property is blocked;
- Repairs to communal door entry systems where controlled access is required;
- Out of service lifts including stair lifts;
- Customer locked out of home;
- Mains smoke alarm and/or carbon monoxide (CO) alarm faulty.

6.3. This list is not exhaustive and other items may be considered to be emergency repairs, depending on the needs of the individual customer(s) impacted.

6.4. In addition, some of WSHL's leases and tenancy agreements may list other items as being emergency repairs.

## 7. Repair response times

7.1. All repairs are prioritised as per the table below, with the timescale for remediation shown alongside each category:

Priority	Timescales (days)
OOH (Out of Hours)	Same day (make safe)
P1	1 (within 24 hours)
P2	7
P3	28
Planned Works	90

7.2. WSHL and its repairs contractor use a fluid decision making process to apply priorities to repairs, combining the nature of the issue with the tenant risk to determine the urgency of works. For example, a broken external door in a property facing a busy road which houses a tenant under a Deprivation of Liberty Order will require a faster response than a broken external door in a block of flats occupied by adults with capacity.

7.3. The requirement to complete emergency repairs within 24 hours is in line with WSHL's obligations under Awaab's Law.

## **8. Repair appointments**

- 8.1. WSHL's repairs contractor will determine the priority code of a repair at the point that the repair is reported to them.
- 8.2. Emergency repairs will be attended to the same day to make safe as per the table at 7.1.
- 8.3. Wherever possible, all remediation works required by an emergency repair (i.e. works to restore full service, not just making safe) will be completed on attendance. However, in circumstances where this is not possible, a follow-up appointment will be raised and the customer will be informed of the timescale for completed as per the table at 7.1.

## **9. Rechargeable repairs**

- 9.1. Current and former customers will be recharged where repairs (including emergency repairs) are required because of negligence, deliberate or accidental damage. WSHL will take into account mitigating factors and individual circumstances before a final decision is reached on whether or not to recharge a customer.
- 9.2. Where a recharge is made, an administration charge of 5% + VAT of the total repair cost will be made, with the charge capped at £20 + VAT.

## **10. Customer repair responsibilities – reporting**

- 10.1. Customers are responsible for reporting any defects in their home as soon as they become apparent, so that a repair can be scheduled before any damage becomes more serious.
- 10.2. However, there are some types of repair that WSHL would never undertake, and that would therefore be the responsibility of the customer or service provider.
- 10.3. Examples of such repairs are as follows:
  - Repairs to unauthorised alterations carried out by a customer or service provider;
  - Changing easily accessible light bulbs;
  - Gritting;
  - Cleaning or gardening outside of the agreed specification.

## **11. Customer repair responsibilities – access to property**

- 11.1. Customers have an obligation as per their tenancy agreement to ensure their home is kept to an acceptable standard and allow access to inspect and/or carry out any works. WSHL, through their contractors, will confirm with the customer the appointment for the repair work. The customer and service provider must provide access at the requested time and date.

- 11.2. WSHL will not tolerate any instances of a member of staff or a contractor being threatened or intimidated when visiting or working in a customer's home. If this happens, the work will be stopped and the staff member/contractor will leave the property. The incident will be reported to the appropriate teams and tenancy enforcement action will be taken where necessary.
- 11.3. Alternative arrangements to complete the repair will be made where possible; however, this will take into account an assessment of whether the threat or intimidation is likely to reoccur on the subsequent visit.
- 11.4. Health and safety compliance activity is a top priority and so WSHL operates a robust access procedure for undertaking statutory compliance checks such as water hygiene, gas and electrical servicing activities. Legal enforcement action will be taken if necessary to complete these activities.

## **12. Requests for alterations**

- 12.1. WSHL will take a reasonable approach when considering a request for alterations. If the request is likely to cause a financial impact to WSHL then this request will generally be refused, unless the customer is in a position to fund the works themselves or can obtain third-party funding.
- 12.2. If the alteration requested would not be compliant with health and safety law / regulations, then the request will always be refused.
- 12.3. Further information can be found in WSHL's Adaptations and Equipment Policy.

## **13. Customer feedback**

- 13.1. WSHL will provide a range of opportunities for customers to provide feedback on the Repairs and Maintenance service and will look to use this information to improve this service wherever possible.

## **14. WSHL inspection of internal communal areas**

- 14.1. As part of WSHL's programme of monthly visits to properties, inspections of internal communal areas will take place, to identify any property-related repairs that may be required.
- 14.2. Where these have not already been reported, the WSHL colleague who identifies the issue will be responsible for reporting the repair.

## **15. Health and Safety compliance**

- 15.1. In addition to completing day-to-day and emergency repairs, WSHL is also responsible for ensuring its properties remain safe and compliant with various health and safety standards, including gas, electrical, fire, asbestos, lifts and water safety.

15.2. All appointments for compliance testing works, as well as any follow-up appointments for remediation, will be arranged between WSHL and the customer/service provider, with a mutually convenient time agreed.

15.3. WSHL has published various policies covering health and safety compliance works which contain more details of the responsibilities of WSHL and its customers.

## **16. Decent Homes Standard compliance**

16.1. WSHL must also ensure all its properties meet the Decent Homes Standard in order for them to be considered lettable.

16.2. The Decent Homes Standard requires all of the following conditions to be met for each property:

- a) It meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- b) It is in a reasonable state of repair
- c) It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- d) It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

16.3. To meet condition a), a property must be free of category 1 hazards unless practical steps to remediate them cannot be taken without disproportionate expense or disruption. Where a hazard cannot be dealt with effectively, WSHL will ensure that all occupiers are fully aware of the position.

16.4. A property will meet condition b) unless one or more key building components are old and, because of their condition need replacing or major repair, or where two or more other building components are old and, because of their condition need replacing or major repair.

16.5. A building component cannot fail condition b) based on age alone, it must also require replacing or repair.

16.6. A property is not considered to meet condition c) if it lacks three or more of the following facilities:

- A reasonably modern kitchen (20 years old or less);
- A kitchen with adequate space and layout;
- A reasonably modern bathroom (30 years old or less);
- An appropriately located bathroom and WC;
- Adequate insulation against external noise; and
- An adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.

16.7. Condition d) requires all properties to have both efficient heating and effective insulation. The exact requirements will vary by property according to condition, age and the source of heating/insulation in place.

- 16.8. WSHL completed a stock condition survey of all of its properties during 2020 to determine whether they met the Decent Homes Standards. Where deficiencies were identified, a programme of investment was agreed between WSHL and its landlords to ensure all properties were brought up to this standard.
- 16.9. In order to maintain compliance with the Decent Homes Standard, WSHL operates a rolling programme of completing stock condition surveys across 20% of its portfolio every year, meaning that all properties are surveyed at least once every five years. This survey programme ensures that all data is refreshed and tested on a regular basis in line with the Decent Homes Standard as well as current good practice and sector guidance.
- 16.10. All properties will be visited during this period by a surveyor competent in the collection of building metrics and building surveying. Age and condition data will be collected on all building components that have a defined lifespan.
- 16.11. The scope of the survey encompasses all internal and external areas of each building, and the resolution of any immediate Health and Safety concerns (HSRR Category 1) that are identified will be managed through the repairs contractor as emergency repairs.
- 16.12. As part of the process of assessing potential new properties, WSHL conducts pre-handover inspections to ensure that they meet the Decent Homes Standard. Where issues are identified, WSHL will refuse to accept handover until they are resolved satisfactorily.

## **17. Void properties**

- 17.1. Where a property becomes vacant, WSHL will determine what works are required to bring the property back into a lettable condition as per WSHL's Void Policy.

## **18. Linked documents**

- 18.1. This policy is linked to the following documents and should be read in conjunction:

- Adaptations and Equipment Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Damp and Other Hazards Management Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Gas Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lift Safety Policy
- Voids Policy
- Water Safety Policy

**19. Policy review**

19.1. This policy will be reviewed every two years.