Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Easy Read Guide

This easy-read guide is designed for council house tenants and summarises the main points covered in the council’s Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy. It is designed to briefly set out:

- What sort of repairs service you can expect to receive from the council
- Which repairs the council as your landlord is responsible for and what minor tasks you, as a tenant, need to do yourself
- How to report a repair
- How the council organises repairs
- The specific support available for vulnerable and disabled tenants

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

The council aims to provide an efficient and effective repair and maintenance service to tenants and leaseholders.

We are committed to:

- Keeping your home in a **good state of repair**.
- Making sure we provide a **repairs service that can be relied upon**, responding quickly when the need arises, including an out of hours service.

- Complying with all legal and health & safety requirements
- Repairing and maintaining your home in a cost effective way so that **value for money** is achieved
- **Consulting with you on longer term plans** or improvement works, giving you choices where we can
- **Monitoring and reviewing how the repairs service is working** so improvements can keep being made

The council’s aim is to invest in its housing properties for the long term, making sure they are well maintained and that they continue to meet current and future standards at an affordable cost.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR REPAIRS

As your landlord, the council is responsible for completing most repairs to the inside and outside of your home. However, as a tenant, you also need to be aware that you also have responsibility for some minor maintenance matters.

**Landlord Responsibilities**

The council will take responsibility for repairing and maintaining:

- The structure and exterior of the property (including drains, gutters and external pipes) and the fixtures and fittings supplied by the council
- Communal areas, including lighting to these areas
- External paintwork
- Water, gas and electricity supplies; including the carrying out of gas, electrical and solid fuel certified checks, in line with current legislation
- All heating and hot water appliances within the property
- All toilets and bathing equipment
- Fencing (except when it has been installed by you as a Tenant Improvement)
Tenant Responsibilities

As a tenant you are responsible for a wide range of minor matters, including:

- Work needed as a result of deliberate damage or neglect
- Tenant’s own fittings and appliances including fridges, cookers, washing machines, showers, blinds and floor coverings
- Toilet seats
- Plugs and chains to sinks, wash basins and baths
- Easing of internal doors after installation of carpets or other floor finishes
- Damaged or missing internal door handles caused by the Tenant
- Replacement of door locks as a result of lost keys
- Internal decoration, including decoration required following repairs
- Clothes lines, posts or rotary dryers to houses and bungalows
- Broken glass to windows and doors arising as a result of wilful damage and neglect on the part of the Tenant or a member of their household
- Curtain, picture and dado rails
- Locks, latches and bolts to gates, garages, lock-ups, sheds and outhouses
- TV aerials (unless they are part of a council owned communal TV system)
- Replacement bulbs to interior and exterior lights (including low level security lights).
- Boundary fencing undertaken by the Tenant as a Tenant improvement
- The repair or replacement of any fitting, structure or finish that has been undertaken as a Tenant Improvement, including fencing
- Hairline cracks or small areas of damaged plaster which could be easily repaired with filler

The council may undertake the items listed above in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of Unitas’s Head of Responsive Repairs and Maintenance. This is especially the case for vulnerable tenants.

REPORTING REPAIRS

It is important that you report repairs as soon as they become needed, especially if leaving them could cause more extensive repairs to become needed or cause injury.

You can report repairs in any of the following ways:
- Telephone on: 01782 234100.
- In person at a Customer Service Centre
- On-line at: www.Unitas.co.uk

ORGANISING REPAIRS

‘Routine’ repairs are usually attended to within a day or so of being reported and within 2 hours if it’s an emergency.

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<tr>
<th>Emergency</th>
<th>Immediate and serious risk to people or property. For example:</th>
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<td>(initial attendance at property within 2 hours to repair or make safe)</td>
<td>- Gas escapes.</td>
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<td>- Exposed live electrical cables.</td>
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<td>- Severe water leaks.</td>
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<td>- Major drainage problems.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Routine</th>
<th>All other repairs that cannot reasonably wait for a programme of cyclical, planned or investment works.</th>
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<td>(by mutually agreed appointment)</td>
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When you notify the council of your repair you will be advised how quickly it will be attended to. You will also be asked to agree an appointment slot based on when you can be available at your property and when an operative is available. If you are an older tenant, have young children or are vulnerable then you will be prioritised accordingly.

Out of Hours Emergencies

Please ring the emergency repairs line on 01782 234100 if you have a repair that needs attending to that cannot wait until the next working day. This will include all ‘emergency’ repairs listed above, as well as problems of ‘no heating’ in the winter months.

In addition to ‘routine’ repairs the council also carries out programmes of cyclical and planned maintenance. These include for the planned servicing, renewal and replacement of internal
RIGHT TO REPAIR AND COMPENSATION

In some circumstances you may be entitled to compensation of up to £50 if a repair is not completed within the set time limits. This applies to many, but not all, tenants and to particularly important types of repair costing below the value of £250. Full details of this right can be made available on request or can be found in the full council housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy which is available on line.

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE TENANTS

If you are vulnerable the council may carry out some repairs more quickly or carry out some repairs that would otherwise be your own responsibility.

You may be classified as vulnerable if you:

- Live in a household where all people are aged over 70
- Are in receipt of a registered care package
- Are in receipt of one of a number of disability related allowances

To help protect vulnerable tenants the council will provide a safety password service.

CARRYING OUT AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

To help support independent living the council carries out home adaptations to meet the special needs of individuals. If you think you might benefit from having adaptations to your home, then the council may be able to assist by:

- Arranging a specialist Occupational Therapist visit to determine if and what adaptations are needed.
- Designing the works and undertaking the work.

The target time for completing minor adaptation works is within 6 weeks of an order being raised. Some major works may take up to 12 months because of the need for specialist permissions or tasks.

If you feel you need adaptations to your home, ring the Social Care Occupational Therapist Service on 01782 236950.

GAS SAFETY

The council has an absolute commitment to providing a high quality gas servicing and repairs service that:

- Ensures its legal and regulatory obligations are met, including the carrying out of an Annual Gas Safety Check.
- Secures the safety of tenants and their household and visitors
- Is delivered efficiently and effectively to high standards of customer care

If you fail to allow access for the service and Annual Gas Safety Check the council will take all necessary steps in order to gain access, which may result in legal proceedings and potentially the loss of your home.

The council operates a 24-hour emergency repairs service for making safe all gas appliances within tenant’s homes and for repairing broken down heating during the winter months.

CYCLICAL & PLANNED WORKS

These are maintenance works that tend to be carried out at defined time intervals. The main items of cyclical and planned maintenance are:

- Annual servicing of gas heating boilers and fires (to include the statutory requirement for an Annual Gas Safety Check)
- Communal boiler servicing
- Inspection and testing of electrical wiring
- Internal communal area redecoration
- Replacement of building elements or parts due to them reaching the end of their life e.g. kitchens, bathrooms, roof coverings, and windows

The council aims to develop cyclical and planned works programmes that reduce the need for annual expenditure on routine repairs and maintenance.