

# Repairs and Maintenance Policy

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|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Title                       | Repairs and Maintenance Policy                                                                           |
| Users of Policy             | Colchester City Council tenants and leaseholders, staff at Colchester Borough Homes                      |
| Date Adopted                | December 2018                                                                                            |
| Date last Reviewed          | August 2026                                                                                              |
| Review Frequency            | Every 3 years                                                                                            |
| Best Before Date            | August 2029                                                                                              |
| <b>Scheme of Delegation</b> |                                                                                                          |
| Formation of Policy         | Portfolio Holder(s) with delegated responsibility for the Management of the Housing Revenue Account      |
| Amendments                  | Portfolio Holder(s) with delegated responsibility for the Management of the Housing Revenue Account      |
| Monitoring                  | Client Asset Manager                                                                                     |
| Implementation              | Client Asset Manager                                                                                     |
| Approval of requests        | Client Asset Manager delegated to Director of Operations and Director of Assets Colchester Borough Homes |

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy provides our principles for providing an efficient repairs and maintenance service to Colchester City Council tenants. It applies to work within individual properties and communal areas.
- 1.2 The policy has been developed in consultation with Colchester Borough Homes Residents Panel members, and focus groups held with customers. The priority of our customers is for the service be as easy to access as possible, with communication from the Landlord or its contractors to keep customers informed, and complete repairs within a reasonable timescale.
- 1.3 The policy aims to provide customers with information about responsibilities for repairs within their home and sets standards for completion of works where they are required to be repaired by the Landlord. We aim to provide a prudent and transparent approach to repairs and maintenance of homes and communal areas.
- 1.4 Where the policy refers to a “customer” this relates to a starter tenant, secure tenant or leaseholder.

## 2. Legal duties and statutory requirements

- 2.1 The Council and its Arm's Length Management Organisation; Colchester Borough Homes has a statutory duty to undertake repairs following the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)<sup>1</sup>. This sets out the Landlord's obligation to carry out repairs, covering the structure of the property and installations for the supply of utilities to maintain the property in good order.
- 2.2 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (also known as Awaab's Law) sets out the Landlord's obligation to address hazards that present a significant risk of harm within fixed timescales
- 2.3 The Defective Premises Act 1972 (Section 4)<sup>2</sup> places a duty on Landlord's to take reasonable care to ensure that anyone who might be expected to be affected from any defects arising in a property, is reasonably safe from injury or damage to their property.
- 2.4 The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018<sup>3</sup> provides that dwellings let are fit for human habitation and that Landlord's meet responsibilities regarding property standards and safety, to ensure they remain so during the term of the tenancy.
- 2.5 The Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994<sup>4</sup> sets out qualifying repairs and timescales for completion of them, along with entitlement to compensation if repairs are not complete within the prescribed timescales.

### **3. Policy statement**

- 3.1 We are committed to delivering a good-quality, modern and effective repairs service and to providing homes that are comfortable, maintained and safe for people to live in.
- 3.2 The primary purpose of this policy is to ensure that our staff and customers are aware, understand and are equipped with information to deliver the requirements of the repairs service.

### **4. Repairs service standards**

- 4.1 We aim to deal effectively with requests for repairs which are the Council's responsibility.
- 4.2 Our customers are encouraged to report repairs as they occur to prevent further damage. When our staff visit homes, they may identify repairs which will be raised on behalf of our customers.
- 4.3 Generally, we expect customers to take responsibility for raising repairs, which can easily be reported to us through our website or by telephone.

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<sup>1</sup> [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/11)

<sup>2</sup> [Defective Premises Act 1972 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/11)

<sup>3</sup> [Guide for Landlord's: Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/legislation/homes-fitness-for-human-habitation-act-2018)

<sup>4</sup> [The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities \(Right to Repair\) Regulations 1994 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukreg/1994/11)

- 4.4 Emergency repairs must be reported to us by telephone.
- 4.5 [Repairs Request link](#)
- 4.6 Once we have received a request for a repair or an inspection of a defect, we will agree a date by which it will be expected to be completed and confirm this to you by text or email.
- 4.7 We have set standards which are intended to be easily understood by our customers and provide reasonable assurance of completion within our target timescales and to comply with the Governments Right to Repair Regulations 1994<sup>5</sup>.
- 4.8 The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures which require information to be submitted and available to our customers. The relevant measures in relation to this policy are:

| From Annual Tenant Satisfaction survey: |                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| TP02                                    | Satisfaction with repairs                                       |
| TP03                                    | Satisfaction with time taken to complete the most recent repair |
| TP04                                    | Satisfaction that the home is well maintained                   |
| From management information:            |                                                                 |
| RP02                                    | Repairs completed within target timescale                       |

- 4.9 The target timescales which are approved following consultation with customers are:

**Responsive repair work** – These are works that are raised by customers, to repair and maintain their home. Based on the seriousness of the work, different timescales will be applied to complete the repair.

1. **Hazards under Awaab's Law**, any hazard identified as being a significant risk of harm will have relevant safety work completed as soon as reasonably practicable and within 24 hours. If the hazard cannot be addressed within this timeframe (remediated or hazard reduced to acceptable levels), alternative accommodation will be sought.
2. **Emergency repairs** (an immediate threat to the safety, security or health and safety) to attend and make safe within **24 hours**. The emergency repair may be to temporarily make good or safe, with a further new repair raised to complete the work.
3. **Urgent repairs** (causing a serious inconvenience or likely to cause further problems if left) to be carried out within **5 working days (one week)** – excludes work where estimates or a procurement process is required.
4. **Routine repairs** (repairs that are not urgent or emergency) to be complete within **30 working days**.
5. **Planned/batched repair work** – These are repairs that may be identified through stock condition surveys, fire risk assessments and more complex repairs which may require a pre-inspection, estimation and/or procurement to achieve best value and service to customers.

<sup>5</sup> [The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities \(Right to Repair\) Regulations 1994 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

The standard for completion of these works will be within **120 working days** with appointments made and confirmed with customers in writing (post or email) or by telephone, along with any relevant contractor information.

6. **Full component renewals** - For replacement of items such as complete Kitchens, Bathrooms, Roofs, Windows, and Doors (to a whole property), we will normally arrange these through our 'pre planned' major works program. Only if such items are in a condition that's assessed as a 'health and safety concern' will we consider arranging repairs or replacements through our day-to-day repair contract.

- 4.10 Our policy will take account of any special requirements, particularly in relation to the health and safety of the customer or household members, and works may be completed more quickly where a risk is identified. Where this is the case, the repair ordered will remain in the assigned category but may be completed ahead of other scheduled work.
- 4.11 Where a hazard is identified that presents a significant risk of harm, the timescales under Awaab's Law take precedence. These hazards will be addressed within 24 hours or alternative accommodation will be found for the customers until the hazard can be remediated.
- 4.12 Our guide to repair categories and response times are included at Appendix A.
- 4.13 Our aim is to complete repairs on our first visit, but some repairs may require the timescale to be extended, this could be done for the following reasons:
- The repair is more complex than anticipated
  - The repair requires specialist work
  - The repair requires parts that are not quickly available
  - The work type and/or priority is re-assessed in line with this policy
  - Access is not provided by the tenant / leaseholder (refer to our access policy)
  - The tenant specifically requests a date outside of the target completion date
- Where this is the case, we will inform you of an extended target date for completion of the work.
- 4.14 To provide an efficient service we use a blended approach of directly employed trade operatives and specialist contractors. Our directly employed team are qualified and trained regularly to ensure that they are competent to complete repairs. Contractors are required to abide by our code of conduct to ensure competent and professional services.
- 4.15 Following completion of repairs, we may ask customers to complete a satisfaction survey - the information which is returned helps us to improve our services.

## **5. Vulnerable or special requirements**

- 5.1 Customers should advise when reporting a repair if any member of the household is vulnerable or are adversely affected by the defect or the operation of undertaking the repair.

- 5.2 We understand some people will have needs and we will adapt the way that we deliver our service in consultation with you.

## **6. Chargeable repairs**

- 6.1 Where repairs are required as a result of wilful damage or neglect (by the customer, a member of their household or visitor) which results in essential repair or replacement, the customer will be charged the full cost of the repair.
- 6.2 The following lists examples where customers may be charged for repairs or maintenance to the home:
- At the end of the tenancy the property is damaged or has missing fixtures
  - Broken windows
  - Changing locks or requiring access for essential maintenance or servicing
  - Negligence or failure to notify of repairs required
  - Wilful damage to the property or its fixtures
  - Unauthorised alterations which may cause damage or risk.

## **7. Customers right to repair**

- 7.1 Customers may be entitled to compensation if a repair is a qualifying repair which the law states should be complete within given timescales which have not been met. Qualifying repairs, up to the value of £250, are urgent works that can affect health, safety, or security.
- 7.2 These are generally Emergency repairs which are scheduled to be completed within one working day. Where not attended customers have the right to request an alternate contractor be appointed, if the second contractor doesn't complete the work within the time limit compensation can apply (£10 plus £2 for every day that you have to wait, up to a maximum of £50)

## **8. Awaab's Law**

- 8.1 Where a hazard is identified that is determined to present a significant risk of harm and therefore fall under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (also known as Awaab's Law), the timescales described within the act will take precedence over any timescales within this policy.

## **9. Gas safety**

- 9.1 The Council has a Gas Safe registered contract in place to maintain and service all gas heating appliances.
- 9.2 We have a statutory duty under the Gas Safety Regulations<sup>6</sup> to carry out safety checks at least once every 12 months. **Customers are legally required to provide access into their homes for these works to be carried out.**

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<sup>6</sup> [The Gas Safety \(Management\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2023/01/13/ukdsi20230001)

## **10. Safeguarding**

- 10.1 We are committed to meeting statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults. Our aim is to support customers to maintain their tenancy without risk to themselves or others.
- 10.2 Our staff and contractors will report issues or concerns to our Designated Safeguarding Officers which may lead to a referral to Social Care, Police or another relevant agency.

## **11. Improvements and alterations**

- 11.1 Secure tenants can request consent to carry out improvements to their home. The request form is available on our website.
- 11.2 Where the alteration requires Building Regulations or Planning Consent from the Council, these should be obtained prior to requesting consent for the works.

## **12. Complaints**

- 12.1 We aim to continuously improve our services and outcomes by listening to feedback and learning what suits customers' needs.
- 12.2 We will regularly review our service standards and performance, but we value our customers' feedback.
- 12.3 If you have a compliment, comment, concern or complaint regarding our service or the services of our contractors please do let us know.

[Complaints, Compliments and Comments link](#)

## **13. Equality and diversity**

- 13.1 The Equality Impact Assessment for the policy has been reviewed and updated and is available to view on the Council's website [Equality Impact Assessments · Colchester Borough Council](#)

## **14. Monitoring and Review**

- 14.1 Colchester Borough Homes will monitor performance in meeting the Service Standards set out in this policy.
- 14.2 Reviews will be conducted every 3 years to ensure the policy continues to be efficient and effective, meeting current legislation and regulations.

## **15. Communicating the Policy to Staff**

- 15.1 Managers and staff involved in the implementation of the policy will receive a copy of the policy.
- 15.2 Colchester Borough Homes will provide sufficient training to enable staff to understand and comply with the policy.
- 15.3 A copy of the policy will be accessible from the Council's document management system and websites of Colchester City Council and Colchester Borough Homes.
- 15.4 Any amendments to the Policy will be communicated, in a timely manner, to managers and staff involved in implementing the policy.

## **16. Communicating the Policy to customers**

- 16.1 The policy will be communicated to customers using the following methods:
  - Articles in Housing News and Views
  - Sheltered Scheme newsletters
  - Colchester City Council and Colchester Borough Homes websites
  - Social Media

## **Appendix A – Repairs Categories and Response Times**

Repair timescales:

### **Emergency Repairs / Hazards under Awaab's Law**

Hazards that present a significant risk of harm WILL have relevant health and safety work undertaken as soon as reasonably practicable and within 24 hours.

We aim to deal with emergency repairs within 24 hours.

We carry out emergency repairs when there could be a risk to someone's life or serious damage to your home. Examples of emergency repairs include, but not limited to:

- Loss of water
- Burst water main
- Flooding • Severe storm damage
- Major fault with the electrical supply
- Unsafe electrical fittings
- Breaches of security to outside doors and windows
- Gas leak
- Blocked flue
- Blocked mains drains, Soil pipe or sole WC
- Faulty smoke alarm

- Defective communal stair tread
- Failure of lift
- Failure of warden/alarm call system
- Collapsed brick wall
- Blocked drains.

## **Urgent Repairs**

We aim to deal with urgent repairs within 5 working days.

We will make an appointment with you for these repairs. Urgent repairs are repairs that need to be carried out fairly quickly to stop a problem getting worse or to stop the problem affecting other people. Examples of urgent repairs include:

Minor plumbing leaks or defects • Blocked drains, sinks, basins, bath or toilet • Minor electrical faults • Roof leaks • Failure of entry phone • Damage to stair treads, handrails or banisters.

## **Routine Repairs by Appointment**

We aim to attend to routine repairs within 30 working days (some repairs may require an additional visit).

We will make an appointment with you for routine repairs. Work that we do not consider to be a danger to people's health may be carried out as part of routine maintenance. Examples of routine repairs include:

- Repairs to doors, floors and windows
- General joinery repairs
- Plaster work
- Minor plumbing repairs
- Easing doors and windows
- Blocked gutters
- Repairs to gutters and downpipes
- Repairs to tiling
- Repairs to kitchen fittings
- Defective flooring.

## **Planned repairs by Appointment**

We aim to complete planned repairs within 120 working days.

We will make an appointment with you for planned repairs. Work that requires planning in advance often where materials need to be manufactured and will normally need more than one trades person to attend. Examples of planned repairs include:

- Complete kitchen and bathroom refurbishment or replacement
- Replacement of windows and/or doors
- Major roof repairs or replacement
- Boundary wall or fence replacements
- Structural works that require scaffolding to be erected.