

Repairs Policy

Housing Management Advisory Board

10th January 2024

Contents

- Introduction
- Policy statement
- Policy scope
- Legislative context
- Wider policy context
- Key features of the policy
- Consultation and implementation



Introduction - why a repairs policy?



- Outlines the Council's approach to meeting its obligations and responsibilities for repairing and maintaining the structure of our properties and various internal fixtures and fittings that the Council provides
- Allows customers to understand the service levels that the Council should be held accountable against
- Responsibility to protect the value of the housing stock and to ensure that the promises and obligations made to our customers in respect of their homes are honoured
- Best practice



Policy statement



CBC repairs service aims to:

- Provide a customer focused, efficient and cost-effective service
- Ensure customers live in safe, warm and well-maintained homes
- Carry out repairs right first time
- Maintain CBC's housing stock to a good standard
- Ensure all homes and communal areas are safe and comply with legislative requirements
- Work in partnership with customers to improve the service



Policy scope

- Applies to all council domestic properties and leaseholders (including temporary accommodation)
- Responsive repairs, planned maintenance, and improvements.
- Reference to the void lettable standard / the condition which properties are let in.
- Damp and mould covered in detail in the **Damp and Mould Framework**



Legislative context

Various pieces of legislation including:



- **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985** imposes on landlords an obligation to carry out basic repairs, covering the structure and exterior of the property and installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, and for sanitation and space heating and heating water. There is also an implied covenant to maintain the property in good order.
- **Environmental Protection Act 1990** makes provision for the control of premises which are considered to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance. This legislation means the council may become liable for damages and compensation to customers and their families who suffer as a result of failure to maintain properties so as not to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.
- **Right to Repair Regulations 1994** ensures certain small repairs (up to value of £250) which are likely to affect health, safety and security of tenants are finished within certain timescales. If not completed in time the tenant can engage another qualified contractor to carry out the work.

Legislative context (2)



We comply with relevant statutory regulations covering construction, asbestos, water hygiene, electrics, gas safety, and health and safety more generally. The **Housing Health and Safety Rating System**, introduced under the **Housing Act 2004**, is an important part of the legislative and regulatory framework governing our responsive repairs service.

We make sure that our homes comply with the **Decent Homes Standard** as a minimum. To meet the standard, homes must have modern facilities, be in a reasonable state of repair, and be warm and weather-proof.

Wider policy context

- Social Housing Regulation
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- New consumer standards from April 2024
- Awaab's Law...

It proposes new legal requirements for social landlords to investigate hazards within 14 days, start fixing within a further 7 days, and make emergency repairs within 24 hours. Those landlords who fail can be taken to court where they may be ordered to pay compensation for tenants.

Landlords will be expected to keep clear records to improve transparency for tenants – showing every attempt is made to comply with the new timescales so they can no longer dither and delay to rectify people's homes.



Key features

- CBC repair responsibilities and customer responsibilities
- Rechargeable repairs
- Repair categories and priorities
- Service standards
- Right to repair
- Adaptations
- Tenant alterations and improvements
- Leasehold properties



Key features (2)

- Communal repairs
- Compliance (gas and electrical safety, fire, asbestos, legionella, and lifts)
- Planned maintenance and improvements
- Void lettable standard
- Repair reporting
- Appointments
- Quality assurance
- Access and refused access



Key features (3)

- Vulnerable customers
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Customer engagement in the repairs service



Repair responsibilities - CBC



- The structure and exterior of the property
- Drains, gutters and external pipes
- Water and gas pipes
- Wiring
- Heating systems
- Drainage
- Power and light fittings
- Any items originally provided by CBC
- Outbuildings or sheds originally provided by CBC
- Fences, hedges and walls



Repair responsibilities - Customers



- Any damage which is not the result of fair wear and tear
- Door furniture
- Repairing or replacing cupboard catches, handles and knobs
- Fitting extra door or window locks
- Adjusting doors
- Fitting curtain rails, pelmets, picture rails and coat hooks
- Filling in minor cracks or holes in walls and ceilings
- Replacing light bulbs
- Testing smoke detectors CBC provides
- Internal decoration



Rechargeable repairs



A rechargeable repair arises when there has been accidental or deliberate damage, or where tenant alterations and improvements have been carried out and we require the property to be returned to its original state.

No charges are levied when criminal damage has occurred and a crime reference number obtained.

- At the end of the tenancy we will inspect the property and if there are outstanding repairs or damage we will recharge for work we have to carry out.

We will also recharge for the cost of:

- removing items left in or around the property when tenants move out
- removing items left in communal areas (internal and external)
- removing alterations or improvements where we have not granted permission
- pest infestations in the home

Other charges

Abuse of the repairs policy may also result in recharges, for example where:

- We have been unable to undertake essential repairs where we have been unable to gain access despite our reasonable endeavours to do so.
- We believe a repair situation has been deliberately misrepresented to us resulting in an unnecessary emergency out of hours attendance. We may charge a fee of £100 for the unnecessary callout. If tenants are unsure whether their situation is an emergency our call handlers will be able to provide advice.

Repairs categories and priorities



Category	What this includes	Response time
Emergency	Repairs that remove immediate danger to people, or stop serious damage to your home, for example complete loss of electrical power, a burst water pipe, or making your home secure. If we can't complete the repair in one visit, we will make the situation safe and follow-up as soon as possible	24 hours
Urgent	Repairs including, partial loss of electric power or water, a blocked sink, bath or basin, a tap which cannot be turned, a loose handrail, Loose or detached banister or hand-rail, rotten timber flooring or stair tread.	3 working days
Routine	Work, where the fault does not cause problems straight away or make it dangerous for people in the property or outside, but still needs to be done quite soon.	28 calendar days
Planned	We put certain non-urgent work into "packages" that can be carried out all together in an area. This is more efficient and cost effective.	6 months

Hazards

- We must ensure our homes are free from serious hazards, including damp and mould, and that homes are fit for habitation. This includes treating cases of damp and mould with the utmost seriousness and acting promptly to protect the health of our customers.
- The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which assess 29 housing hazards and the effect that each may have on the health and safety of current or future occupants of the property.



Hazards



Damp and Mould

Adequacy of, and disrepair to, floors, paths and yards.

Presence of trip steps and thresholds. Slip resistance of surfaces. Adequacy of surface water drainage and lighting.

Carbon Monoxide Detector Missing or Not Working

Smoke Detector Missing or Not Working

Service standards



<i>We will be polite and will respect you and your home</i>	<i>When we are replacing kitchens, bathrooms, and doors as part of our maintenance programmes we will provide you with a choice of finish, colour or style</i>
<i>Internal and contractor staff will always wear photo identification</i>	<i>We will check that you are satisfied with work we undertake</i>
<i>We will protect your belongings from damage, dust and paint</i>	<i>We will fit a smoke detector on every floor of your home</i>
<i>When doing repairs, we will clear rubbish from your home at the end of each working day</i>	<i>We will fit a carbon monoxide alarm in any room where you have a fixed combustion appliance (exc cookers)</i>
<i>When doing repairs, we will make sure that you have electricity, water and gas connected at the end of each day</i>	<i>We will service your gas boiler annually</i>
<i>We will make sure that we keep you informed of progress</i>	<i>We will undertake an electrical inspection every 5 years as a minimum</i>
<i>We will offer a choice of appointments</i>	<i>We will provide adaptations to your home to address disability needs in line with our adaptations policy</i>
<i>We will ensure our staff and contractors are aware of the diverse needs of our customers</i>	<i>We will fit extractor fans in your home in the kitchen and bathroom</i>

Right to repair



Gives tenants the right to request another contractor and to claim compensation if certain small urgent repairs valued at under £250 are not carried out within prescribed time limits



Tenant alterations and improvements



- Customers can carry out changes to their homes as long as they receive prior written permission from CBC. Customers are responsible for maintaining any new or replaced fixture or fitting that they install
- Most improvements can be done without permission (e.g. decorating and providing fitted units or shelves), but more drastic alterations such as installing a new kitchen or bathroom, structural changes, loft conversions, or garages need permission

Leasehold properties



- Under the terms of their lease, leaseholder customers are responsible for repairs to their own homes
- If a leaseholder lives in a flat, we will complete repairs to communal and external areas and leaseholders will be expected to make a contribution towards the cost of the repairs
- Major works, exterior decorations or improvements to communal areas resulting in any one leaseholder being recharged for works totalling £250 or more are subject to consultation (S.20 Landlord and Tenant Act)

Communal repairs



- We will undertake repairs to communal parts of buildings
- We will maintain electrical door entry systems, lifts, lighting and security systems We will ensure all communal areas are safe for customers and comply with all legislative requirements.



Compliance (gas and electrical safety, fire, asbestos)



- We will ensure all homes and communal areas are safe and that all properties comply with all legislative requirements. Management plans in place...
- Annual gas safety check
- 5-year electrical inspection
- Asbestos in communal areas removed or managed in situ - annual inspection.
- Legionella mitigation in place
- We will carry out Fire Risk Assessments of communal areas and respond promptly to all fire safety issues identified



Planned improvement works



- The replacement or renewal of building elements or components due to them reaching the end of their life, for example windows (in the case of tenants and leaseholders) and kitchens and bathrooms in the case of tenants.
- The council has agreed a 30-year programme of expenditure (set out in the HRA Business Plan) that meets the long-term investment needs of its housing stock.
- Improvement programme developed taking account of the investment requirements identified in stock condition surveys, and the expected life cycle of components.
- The council will aim to use high quality items that are more sustainable and offer tenants choice in colour and finish.

Charnwood standard



Enhanced Decent Homes Standard - Components are renewed to modern day standards in accordance with fixed lifecycles...

- Kitchens - 20years
- Bathrooms - 30 years
- UPVC or Composite Doors - 25 years
- UPVC Double glazed windows (except in conservation areas) - 30 years
- Boilers - 15 years
- Full central heating pipework, radiators and electric storage radiators - 30 years
- Roofs - 50 - 70 years (when required)



Disabled adaptations



Disabled Adaptations Policy

- Modification of the home environment to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for tenants and their families.
- Recommendations received from Occupational therapists (OTs) and Housing support co-ordinators on the needs of tenants.

Minor adaptations are, those under £500, examples include:

- handrails at the front and/or rear entrance of the property;
- grab rails;
- half steps

Major adaptations include:

- level-access showers or over-the-bath showers;
- major structural conversions.

£30,000 cap on the value of adaptations, unless there are exceptional circumstances, including where:

- all possible alternative options have been fully explored and exhausted;
- there are no suitable alternative properties within the Council's stock;
- it is reasonable and practicable to undertake the adaptations requested.

Void lettable standard



Standard new tenants can expect in their home – including (but not limited to):

- Electrical and gas safety checks completed
- Smoke detector on each floor
- Carbon monoxide detector where there is a fixed combustion appliance e.g. boiler
- No signs of damp and mould or other hazards
- Air vents functioning
- Extractor fans in kitchen and bathroom
- Property structurally sound with good condition internal fixtures and fittings.
- Doors and windows sound and operable
- Ready to decorate

Repair reporting



We offer a variety of ways to report repairs:

- Call Centre
- Online
- In person
- By letter
- You can call us about emergencies at any time day or night.



Appointments



- We offer a range of appointment slots and will offer you a time and date to suit you (morning, afternoon and school times)
- We will confirm the appointment for all repairs (except emergencies) by letter or text message with details of your repair and when it will be completed

Access and refused access



- Tenancy Agreement requires access for repairs and maintenance
- We may need to break into properties to undertake urgent repairs posing a health and safety risk
- If we can't gain access, we will leave a card and the job is rescheduled. We will make three attempts to carry out the work.
- If access is not reasonably provided, we may levy a charge or take legal action.
- If we can't keep an appointment we will make contact and re-arrange

Quality assurance



- We aim to carry out post inspections of repairs, planned maintenance, and improvements, to ensure they have been carried out to a high standard, and to monitor value for money
- Post inspections are to be carried out within 30 days of a repair being completed
- In addition, post inspections will be undertaken when we are informed the quality of work falls below our standards



Equality, diversity and inclusion



- We will ensure the repairs service is accessible, inclusive, and fair to all our customers
- Communication with customers will be appropriate, easily understood and easily accessible.
- We know that one size doesn't fit all, and we will use discretion depending on individual needs

Vulnerable tenants



We recognise that vulnerable customers may find it more difficult to cope if something goes wrong in their home and they need a repair.

In certain instances, and in accordance with individual or group needs, CBC may:

- Adjust the urgency of a repair to the needs of certain customer groups and individual customers if health and safety or security is an issue.
- Provide appropriate assistance or guidance for customers in carrying out repairs that are the customer's responsibility.
- Provide support through our Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) team before and when repairs or improvements are carried out, where this is necessary.
- Provision of a handy person service for vulnerable residents that need assistance, for example, around changing a light bulb or similar minor works.

Customer engagement

- Customer engagement is essential to ensure the service is customer focussed, effective, value for money, and meeting customer needs
- We will use feedback to learn from and improve the service
- Performance and customer feedback will be analysed, reported and published to customers
- We will agree service standards and key issues with customers (HMAB consulted on service standards last year)



QUESTIONNAIRE



FEEDBACK



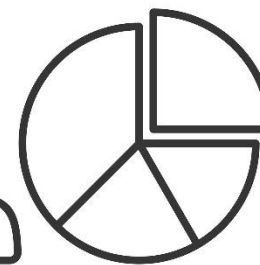
EVALUATION



RESEARCH



INTERVIEW



RESULTS

Consultation and implementation



- HMAB - Principles agreed
- HMAB and Charnwood Housing Residents Forum - Receive draft for comment
- Cabinet - March 2024



Questions