West Dunbartonshire Council

Responsive Repairs Policy

Draft August 2024





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Section 1

Introduction and scope of the policy

Introduction

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to delivering a high quality, efficient and effective responsive repairs service to all our tenants, in a manner which delivers high rates of customer satisfaction.

Responsive repairs are those that are carried out in response to you notifying us of a problem or defect within your home. This policy sets out the relevant statutory and regulatory context related to the delivery of our responsive repairs service, it provides information around repair responsibilities so you know the type of repairs we're responsible for and the repairs that you, our tenants, are responsible for and outlines the different repair categories and the level of service you can expect from us as we deliver this service.

Scope of the policy

The policy outlines the service we provide in relation to responsive repairs and provides information about what cyclical maintenance programmes we have in place. The policy refers to our approach to rechargeable repairs where relevant and this is outlined in more detail in our Rechargeable Repairs Process available on our website. The policy does not cover improvements carried out as part of our capital investment programme or our approach to void repairs (repairs carried out when a property is empty).

This policy applies to tenants who have a Scottish Secure Tenancy, a short Scottish Secure Tenancy or occupants who have an occupancy agreement for temporary or supported accommodation with West Dunbartonshire Council.

Section 2 Policy context

We aim to make sure that the service we provide not only meets our legal obligations but reflects best practice where possible. The policy was developed taking tenant views into account and within context of the following statutory and regulatory framework:

The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 which outlines the tolerable standard, which is the minimum standard that applies to all residential dwellings including social rented homes.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which details landlords' repairing obligations and introduced the Right to Repair Scheme.

The Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement based on the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, which includes the following key commitment:

"During the course of your tenancy, we will carry out repairs or other work necessary to keep the house in a condition which is habitable, wind and watertight and reasonably fit for human habitation. We will carry out all repairs within a reasonable period of becoming aware that the



repairs need to be done. Once begun, the repairs will be finished as soon as reasonably possible. All repairs will be done to the standard of a reasonably competent contractor, using good quality material."

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 which introduced a revised tolerable standard.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter which sets out the outcomes and standards that all social landlords should be delivering for their tenants and other customers. The outcome most relevant to this policy is:

➤ Charter Outcome 5: Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements - social landlords manage their business so that tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

There are also a series of health and safety duties and regulations that are in place to ensure that tenants, staff, and contractors are living and working in a safe environment.

Section 3

Aim and objectives of the policy

Aim of the policy

The key aim of this policy is to deliver a high quality, efficient and effective responsive repairs service, that will provide a safe, secure and healthy living environment, in a manner which delivers value for money, high rates of customer satisfaction, maintains properties in a good and safe state of repair and contributes to maximising the quality and long-term life of our housing stock.

Objectives of the policy

The main objectives of the are:

- To ensure that our properties are well maintained, with repairs carried out when required, and giving you reasonable choices about when the work is done.
- To carry out repairs right first time and provide a good value, reliable and customer centered service.
- To comply with legal responsibilities and implement best practice, ensuring value for money.

How we will deliver these objectives

- We will ensure that you are provided with clear information on your repair responsibilities.
- We will provide an emergency repair service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- We will provide an accessible service that has a range of ways that you can easily contact to report a repair.



- ➤ We will provide a service which identifies and logs all repair requests efficiently and effectively, minimising the need to carry out pre-inspections.
- We will carry out repairs by appointment where appropriate and within our published target timescales and complete these with minimum disruption and right first time where possible.
- We will carry out post inspections of a range of repairs to ensure that they are completed to a high standard.
- ➤ We will give you the opportunity to comment on the standard of the service received and use this feedback to continuously improve our service.
- ➤ We will reclaim costs from those who wilfully, or through neglect, cause damage to their home via the implementation of our Rechargeable Repairs Process.

Section 4

Repair responsibilities

The responsibility for repairing and maintaining homes is shared between the Council as your landlord and you as the tenant.

Our responsibilities to you

As your landlord, we are responsible for repairing and maintaining the structure of your home and for the repair and maintenance of common areas. This includes the fixtures and fittings which supply gas, electricity, water and drainage (your gas or electricity provider is responsible for the supply and for any repair issues relating to your electricity or gas meter). If you live in a block of flats, we are also responsible for any communal facilities provided.

To ensure your home is maintained to a safe standard, we will carry out repairs to:

- the structure of your home (chimney, roof, walls, drains, floors ceilings and stairs).
- the external fabric of your home (external doors, windows, gutters, downpipes).
- the plumbing system within your home (including the water tank, pipe work and stopcocks).
- the heating within your home (radiators, storage heaters, panel heaters, any pipe work).
- the water heating system within your home (boiler, immersion heater, any pipe work).
- kitchen and bathroom fittings (including toilet, bath, basins/sinks, cupboards, worktops, pipe work).
- electrical wiring and fittings (sockets, light fittings, light switches, mains operated smoke detectors).
- internal doors, door surrounds and skirting boards.
- boundary walls, fences, paths, gates, driveways, and any garden structure put in place by the Council.
- bin areas and clothes poles.



Common repairs

Where there are homeowners in a block, responsibility for repairs and maintenance of common areas is shared between us and the homeowners.

This may impact the repairs and planned maintenance carried out to common areas such as roofs, external walls, gutters, fences, paths, and stairs.

We will carry out emergency and urgent repairs to common areas which are a risk to health and safety or to prevent further damage and will recharge homeowners for their share of the cost.

For other planned repairs or cyclical maintenance programmes, owners need to agree to contribute to the cost of these works to allow them to proceed. We will work to encourage participation to get agreement to take these works forward, although this can cause delays in work being carried out to Council owned properties.

Your responsibilities as a tenant

You are responsible for taking reasonable care of your home and you must report to us promptly, any repairs that are our responsibility any damage to your home. You must also take action to prevent further damage once a fault has been identified.

You are also responsible for the internal decoration of your home, for carrying out minor repairs and for the maintenance of any appliances or garden structures you install or accept at the start of your tenancy.

Whilst you are not responsible for carrying out repairs which are due to fair wear and tear, your responsibilities do include the following:

- all internal decoration including the provision and fitting of floor and window coverings.
- repairing minor cracks or holes in walls and ceilings that can reasonably be filled before decorating.
- taking action to avoid condensation by heating and ventilating your home, not blocking air vents and opening windows.
- replacing lost or stolen keys.
- repairing any damage caused by you, your family, or any visitors to your home.
- reporting any criminal damage or vandalism to the police and obtaining an incident number.
- renewing plugs and chains to baths, sinks and basins.
- replacing a broken or damaged toilet seat.
- the fitting of any additional locks.
- the purchase and installation of any doorbell, door chain or door nameplate.
- the purchase and installation of consumable items, such as electrical plugs and light bulbs (not communal lighting).
- resetting tripped switches or fuses.
- attempting to clear any minor plumbing blockages.
- the maintenance of any heating system that you install (permission would be required).



- the maintenance of any appliances that you install, such as a cooker, hob, or fire.
- the maintenance of any fittings installed or accepted at the start of your tenancy, such as shelves or built-in wardrobes.
- the maintenance of television aerials and reception equipment that you install.
- the maintenance of your garden, including grass, hedges and trees and ensuring that it is kept clear of debris.
- the maintenance of fences, gates, sheds, and any other garden structure that you install or accepted at the start of your tenancy.

Where you ask us to carry out work that is your responsibility, we will recharge you for the cost. This includes helping you to gain access to your home if you have lost your keys and are locked out. You will also be recharged for repairing damage caused by you, your family, or by visitors to your home. Further detail is outlined in our Rechargeable Repairs Process.

Alterations, improvements, and adaptations

You must ask for written permission from us before you carry out any alterations or improvements to your home, including:

- the renewal of, or alteration to your kitchen or bathroom.
- the installation of a shower.
- the renewal of, or alteration to electrical work.
- the installation of laminate flooring.
- the installation of external structures, such as fencing, gates or sheds.

We will recharge you the cost of any repairs necessary to make good any unauthorised, unsafe or unsuitable alterations that you carry out. Further detail about gaining permission is provided at Alterations and Improvements.

If you, or a member of your family need an adaptation to assist you accessing or getting around your home or with independent living, medical adaptations can be carried out by us. These adaptations could include ramps, showers, handrails, door alterations or path widening. Further detail is provided is provided at Council Housing Adaptations.

Allowing access to you home

You are responsible for allowing us access to your home to carry-out repairs and maintenance to your home, including for any pre-inspection that may be required. We will give you reasonable notice of our requirement for access (except in the case of an emergency) and aim to carry-out repair work by appointment where possible (see Section 7 "Carrying out repairs").

Allowing access is vitally important when related to your safety. For example, we are required by law to carry out a gas safety check in your home once a year and an Electrical Installation Condition Report in your home every 5 years. You must allow access for this to be carried out, if you do not, we will force access to your home under the terms of your tenancy agreement. In circumstances where this is necessary, we will recharge you for the cost of this. Further detail is provided at <u>Gas Safety</u>.



You should ensure that areas are clear for our operatives to work to avoid any issues that would prevent a repair being carried out. This may include clearing work surfaces, emptying cupboards, taking down curtains, moving furniture away from an area or lifting carpets or laminate flooring.

Section 5 **Reporting a repair**

We aim to provide a service that is accessible and convenient for you and have a range of ways to easily contact to report a repair.

You should report repairs that are our responsibility as soon as reasonably possible, to prevent further damage and ensure the property does not fall into disrepair.

Reporting an Emergency Repair

The Council provides an emergency repair service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for emergency repairs which are necessary due to a threat or danger to health and safety, or there is a risk of serious loss or damage to a property.

You cannot report an emergency repair online.

Freephone 0800 073 8708 to report an emergency repair during office hours.

- 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Thursday
- 8:30 to 4:00 Friday

Freephone 0800 197 1004 out-with normal working hours.

Reporting a Non-emergency Repair

Freephone 0800 073 8708 during office hours.

Online Repairs Reporting Form

Emailing housing.repairs@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Gas Central Heating Repairs

For repairs to your gas central heating or hot water you can contact City Technical direct on 0333 202 0708 or 0800 073 0341.

Should you have a suspected gas leak call National Grid on 0800 111 999 (calls to 0800 numbers are now free from a mobile phone).



Section 6

Repair categories and target completion timescales

We aim to provide a service which identifies and logs all repair requests efficiently and effectively, minimising the need to carry out pre-inspections.

However, to ensure that the right operative, with the correct materials is tasked to carry-out a repair, in some instances it may be necessary for a pre-inspection to be carried out.

This could be in circumstances where:

- the person reporting the repair is unable to fully explain the problem.
- measurements and/or technical specifications are needed to carry out work.
- the source of the problem needs to be properly identified.
- specialist materials or equipment may be required.
- it isn't clear who is responsible for the repair.

Repairs reported will be assigned one of the following repair categories with a target timescale for completion, ensuring that the most urgent repairs are carried out first.

Emergency Repair

The repair issue may cause a threat or danger to health and safety or where quick action is required to prevent further loss or damage to a property.

Examples of an emergency repair include:

- a total loss of heating or hot water.
- unsafe power, electrical socket, or light fitting.
- serious water/plumbing leaks to prevent further damage.
- insecure external window, door, or lock.
- the removal of serious fire risks (clearing/removing objects).
- the removal of serious environmental risks (such as blockages to bin chutes).
- make safe any danger due to damage to the structure of a building (e.g. slates, other roofing defects, masonry).
- security lighting that poses a threat or danger.
- close lighting that poses a threat or danger.
- lock change/forced entry if you cannot access your property.
- faulty door entry system if you cannot access your property.

Emergency repairs will be attended to and made safe within **24 hours** of being reported. Where possible, we will carry out the full repair, however if this is not possible, we will carry out temporary repairs immediately to make the situation safe, and then return to complete follow up repair work identified.



All follow-on repairs from emergency repairs will be treated as separate works orders and be recorded as a non-emergency repair. There should be no time lapse between the completion of the emergency work and the raising of any follow-on non-emergency repairs.

Urgent Repair

These are repairs that are not emergencies but need to be carried out quickly to prevent more damage to a property or undue risk to a tenant.

Examples of an urgent repair include:

- minor plumbing leaks.
- central heating faults.
- non-emergency electrical work.
- extractor fan in kitchen or bathroom not working.
- faulty door entry systems (where you can still gain entry to your home).
- reglazing a window.
- floor in danger of collapse (unknown infestation/rot).
- renewal of faulty electric shower where this is the only bathing amenity.
- renewal of storage heater.
- renewal of immersion heater.
- renewal of insecure entrance door.
- insecure manhole.
- repair slabs/steps presenting a trip hazard.

Urgent repairs will be carried out within **5 working days** of being reported.

Routine Repair

These repairs are not emergencies or urgent but are of a routine nature and are not part of an existing cyclical maintenance programme. Routine Repairs could be due to normal wear and tear and would apply where no danger exists.

Examples of a routine repair include:

- all non-urgent internal repairs including plaster work.
- sealing around windows and doors.
- replacing ceilings following water ingress.
- gutter and roof repairs which are not dangerous and where scaffolding is not required.
- burst underground water main.

Routine repairs will be carried out within 20 working days of being reported.



Planned Repairs

These are day-to-day repairs which are general maintenance repairs and are not part of an existing cyclical maintenance programme. Planned repairs may involve working at height and could include repairs that affect more than one property and where it would be more cost effective to respond and deliver on a planned basis rather than carrying out individual routine repairs. Planned repairs are likely to require a pre-inspection to fully determine the scope of work required.

Examples of planned repairs include:

- gutter and roof repairs which are not dangerous and where scaffolding is required.
- blocked gutters or rainwater pipes where scaffolding is required.
- gutter cleaning
- external roughcasting which is not dangerous.
- dry and wet rot works which is not dangerous.
- fencing repairs.

Whilst the length of time to complete planned repairs will vary, dependent on the volume and type of work, the aim is that these will be carried out within **60 working days** of being reported.

Cyclical Maintenance

In addition to responding to reported repairs, we have a range of cyclical maintenance programmes in place to ensure the safety of tenants and that we meet our statutory and regulatory obligations.

These programmes include:

- an Electrical Installation Condition Report carried out every 5 years.
- annual gas safety checks including the boiler.
- annual cleaning and testing of smoke, carbon monoxide and heat detectors.
- annual sprinkler system maintenance and testing.
- annual dry riser maintenance and testing.
- annual cleaning and testing of large capacity cold water cisterns aimed at preventing legionella.
- annual testing of water pumps in high rise buildings.
- annual maintenance of air source/other source heat pumps.
- annual maintenance of domestic ventilation systems.
- annual communal fan cleaning.
- 6 monthly lift maintenance.
- 6 monthly laundry maintenance.



Right to Repair

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the Right to Repair Scheme which gives you the right to have small urgent repairs up to the value of £350 carried out within a given timescale.

These repairs are known as 'qualifying' repairs and the type of repairs covered by the scheme and the timescales within which these should be carried out are outlined below:

1 Day Target		
Blocked Flue to Open fire or Boiler		
Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet		
Blocked sink, bath or drain		
Total loss of electricity		
Insecure external window, door or lock		
Unsafe access path or step		
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks or cisterns		
Total or partial loss of Gas supply		
Total or partial loss of heating with no alternative heating		
Only toilet in the house not flushing		
Unsafe electrical sockets or lighting socket or fitting		
Total loss of water supply		
3 Day Target		
Partial loss of water supply		
Partial loss of electricity		
Loose or detached banister or handrail		
Unsafe timber flooring or stair tread		
7 Day Target		
Extractor fan in kitchen or bathroom not working		

How do I know if I can use the scheme?

When you report a repair, we will let you know if it is a "qualifying repair" and covered by the scheme. If we have not started the repair within the timescale shown above, you have the right to approach an alternative contractor nominated by us for the trade needed to do the job for you.

If we arrange to carry out the repair within the target date but got no access to your home, the Right to Repair scheme does not apply

We will not consider claims for jobs not included in this list and you will have to pay for the work yourself if you go ahead and arrange for repairs to be done. If you are not sure whether the repair is covered by the scheme you can telephone 0800 073 8708 or email your enquiry to housing.repairs@west-dunbarton.gov.uk



What happens next?

If we have started but not completed the repair within the maximum time, you will be entitled to £15 compensation. If we have not started the repair, we can arrange for an alternative contractor to carry out the repair. If this happens, you will be entitled to £15 compensation for the inconvenience.

This alternative contractor has the same length of time to carry out the repair as we did. If they do not carry out the repair within the time limit set, you will be entitled to another £3 compensation for each working day until the repair has been completed.

This £3.00 daily compensation starts when the alternative Contractor has not met the timescale for the repair from the time you contact them. This amount can add up to a maximum compensation payment of £100 for any one repair. If you are in arrears or owe money to the Council, any compensation due will first be used to pay these debts with any remainder issued to you.

Section 7

Carrying out the repairs

Appointments

Where appropriate, we will carry out non-emergency repairs by appointment, within our target timescales for the repair category and will aim to carry out the repair right first time where possible.

An appointment will be agreed with you, or person reporting the repair on your behalf, and will be either a:

- Morning appointment operative will arrive between 8.00am and 12 noon or
- Afternoon appointment operative will arrive between 12.30pm and 4.00pm.

Appointments will also be given for any pre-inspection that is necessary where access to your home is required. Repairs identified at any pre-inspection will be discussed with you and a further appointment agreed for the works required where this is possible. This appointment will be within the target completion timescale from the date the repair was reported.

When an appointment is agreed you should:

- provide an up-to-date contact number or email address in case the appointment needs to be rescheduled.
- ensure a responsible adult over the age of 16 will be at the property to allow access at the agreed appointment time.
- ensure that areas are clear for our operatives to work to avoid any issues that would prevent a repair being carried out. This may include clearing work surfaces, emptying cupboards, taking down curtains, moving furniture away from an area or lifting carpets or laminate flooring.

If an agreed appointment is no longer suitable, you should contact us as soon as possible and it will be re-arranged for a more convenient date.



Right First Time

We aim to carry out repairs Right First Time where possible. To meet this definition, a repair must be completed within the target completion timescale and without the need for an operative to be recalled due to a defect with the original repair, within the reporting year.

Due to the nature of some repairs, one or more visits may be planned to carry out the works. If the repair is completed within the target timescale and works are discussed with you and delivered as planned, the repair will be considered completed right first time (if there is subsequently no recall due to a defect with the repair carried out).

Service commitments

When an up-to-date contact number or email address is available, we will keep you updated with the status of a repair from reporting until completion.

- we will send you a text or email to confirm the agreed repair appointment or preinspection appointment.
- where possible we will include an estimate of the time it will take to carry out the repair.
- we will send you a reminder text or email the day before the appointment.
- we will send you a text or email when the operative is on their way on the day of the appointment.

We will also ensure that:

- all members of staff will wear an ID badge and introduce themselves when attending your home.
- all members of staff will be smart and appropriately dressed or wear a uniform when attending your home.
- all members of staff will be polite and treat you with respect and dignity when attending your home.
- operatives carrying our repair works will explain the nature of the work before it commences.
- all members of staff will follow appropriate health and safety requirements when attending your home.
- the quality of repair work is carried out to a high standard.
- all members of staff will take care to minimise disruption, prevent damage to your home, protect it from dust and paint and remove all work-related rubbish.
- repairs are carried out Right First Time where possible. This will not always be at the first visit, as some repairs will require more than one planned visit to be completed (eg multitrade jobs)
- when a repair is completed, we will send you a text or email asking for feedback in terms
 of satisfaction with the service provided in respect of that repair.

We expect you to treat our staff and contractors with respect and dignity when they are in your home. For health and safety reasons, pets and young children should be kept away from the area whilst a repair is being carried out. Anyone present in your home must also ensure that they don't smoke or vape whilst operatives are there to work. Not meeting these



expectations could result in work not being carried out.

Missed appointments due to no access

It is important you provide us access to your home to carry-out repair work. This helps us deliver an efficient, reliable and customer centered service.

If an operative does not obtain a response when they arrive at your home, we will attempt to contact you if a contact number is available. If we have no contact number and are still unable to gain access, a card will be left where this is possible, asking you to contact us.

In these circumstances the repair will be cancelled, and it is your responsibility to contact us to arrange a new appointment. When a repair is cancelled due to no access, a text or email will be sent to you confirming this.

Quality Assurance

Regular inspections are carried out when works are in progress to ensure staff are following appropriate health and safety requirements, minimising disruption and preventing damage to your home.

Post work inspections are carried out on a range of repairs to ensure the work has been carried out to the high standards required.

On completion of repair work we will contact you asking for feedback in terms of satisfaction with the service provided and use this feedback to continuously improve the service we provide.

For more information you can read our **Quality Policy Statement**.

Whilst we are committed to providing the best quality of service that we can, in circumstances where we have done something wrong, failed to do something that you expected or have not treated you with courtesy, you can use our <u>Complaints Procedure</u>.

Section 8

Individual circumstances

We aim to deliver the best service possible to all our tenants but realise that in certain circumstances the service will need to be tailored to accommodate individuals and their needs.

Those who may benefit from their individual circumstances being considered could include:

- tenants with communication impairments.
- tenants with hearing impairments.
- tenants with a physical impairment (such as a wheelchair or walking frame user).
- tenants with learning difficulties.
- tenants with an advance terminal illness.



When a repair is reported, let us know if there are relevant circumstances and every attempt will be made to ensure reasonable adjustments can be made. This could include carrying out some repairs more quickly than normal or agreeing specific arrangements for appointments (such as knocking loudly, allowing for extra time for a door to be answered or contacting a third party to facilitate access).

Section 9

Performance monitoring

We will monitor our performance in relation to delivering the commitments within this policy using a range of key performance indicators.

This will include monitoring how well we are meeting the target timescales outlined and the following indicators which are part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Average length of time to complete emergency repairs

Average length of time to complete non-emergency repairs

% of repairs completed Right First Time

The number of times we did not meet our statutory obligation to complete a gas safety check within 12 months

% of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service

We will share this information with tenants and ensure that we use it to continuously improve service delivery.

Section 10 **Review**

We will review this policy every three years or earlier if required, for example to comply with any legislative changes. We will consult tenants and other relevant stakeholders when carrying out a review.

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

British Sign Language users can contact us via contactSCOTLAND-BSL, the on-line British Sign Language interpreting service.

The Council contact number is 01389 XXXXXX

Chinese (Cantonese)

本文件也可應要求,製作成其他語文或特大字體版本,也可製作成錄音帶。

Gaelic

Tha an sgrìobhainn seo cuideachd ri fhaighinn ann an cànanan eile, ann an clò mòr, agus ann an cruth claisneachd ma thèid iarraidh

Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ. ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਰਾਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Ukrainian

Цей документ також доступний іншими мовами, великим шрифтом та в аудіоформаті за запитом.

2 01389 737527

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