



Guildford Borough Council Housing Services Repairs Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Guildford Borough Council (the Council) is committed to providing an effective repairs and maintenance service in order to ensure high levels of resident satisfaction and to protect the value of its housing stock.
- 1.2. This repairs policy is the overarching guide to how we deliver, and what we deliver, in terms of responsive repairs and maintenance in our properties and associated areas and clearly sets out the services and standards our customers can expect.
- 1.3. This policy applies to general needs, sheltered and supported housing properties including temporary accommodations and communal areas of the stock owned and managed by Guildford Borough Council. This policy also applies to the council's responsibility to repairs for leaseholders as stipulated by their individual lease agreements. The policy should be read alongside the repairs leaflet, which sets out the repair responsibilities of the Council and the customer.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1. The Council will maintain its housing stock in good condition by providing an effective repairs and maintenance service to residents.
- 2.2. The Council will ensure that its repairs and maintenance services reflect the following overall principles:
 - Provide a flexible, convenient and customer-orientated repairs service that gives priority to the safety and comfort of our residents
 - Repair and maintain the housing stock to at least the Decent Homes Standard
 - Meet the council's legal and contractual obligations
 - Ensure the repairs service meets the performance and quality standards set by the council
 - Ensure the services provided are cost effective and obtain the best value for residents from available financial resources
 - Ensure the principles of health and safety and equal opportunities are central to working procedures and practices
 - Maximise economic benefits where possible by creating employment and training opportunities in maintenance related work and by purchasing goods and services locally
 - Maximise opportunities for resident involvement in determining the quality of the services delivered
 - Measure and monitor customer satisfaction and make use of the information to continuously improve services

3. Aims of the Policy

- 3.1. The aim of this policy is to enable an efficient and effective repairs service that maintains the properties we let as a decent place to live. To achieve this, we will:

- Be clear about the repair and maintenance responsibilities for the Landlord and the Tenant
- Enable repairs to be reported in a number of ways
- Organise repair priorities that balance operational needs and tenants' requirements; aiming to deliver a right first-time approach that achieves value for money
- Deliver a consistent and reliable service to our tenants
- Make best use of performance information to continually improve the service
- Ensure that the health and safety of all concerned are at the forefront of what we do

4. Legal Framework

4.1. This policy is governed by many regulations and statutory law, which Guildford Borough Council must adhere to. They set out the duties that need to be undertaken to provide a repairs and maintenance service. They include (but are not limited to):

- Construction, Design Management Act 2015 (as amended)
- Sections 9A and 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Building Safety Act 2023
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Public Health Act 1963
- Housing Act 1985
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- HM Government Decent Homes Guidance
- Regulator of Social Housing - Safety and Quality Standard
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities Right to Repair Regulations 1994
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Guidance specifically the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)
- Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 2018 (as amended)

5. Rights and Responsibilities

5.1. Guildford Borough Council responsibilities

The type of repairs and maintenance that we will carry out for tenants include repairs to:

- Heating and hot water
- Electrical wiring, sockets and light fittings including mains powered smoke alarms provided by the council
- Plumbing
- Roofs, outside walls, windows (inc. frames, catches and cords) and doors
- Chimney stacks and flues
- Rains, gutters and down pipes
- Internal structural floors and ceilings
- Kitchen units, worktops and safety flooring
- Baths, basins and toilets (excluding blockages inside the dwelling) and safety flooring
- Internal and external shared areas including lifts.
- Gas pipes and equipment supplied by the council
- Pathways, steps and means of access
- Repairs to boundary walls/fences
- Making good following a repair in preparation for tenants' decorations
- Repairs to windows unless the tenant has caused the breakage

5.2. Tenant responsibilities

Tenants in general needs accommodation are responsible for carrying out any repairs that are caused by accidental damage, misuse or neglect. This includes any damage caused by friends and visitors to the property. Tenants are responsible for their own white goods and other appliances, unless otherwise formally agreed with the council. All tenants are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of elements they have undertaken, such as their own improvement or adaption work.

General needs tenants are also responsible for minor works, such as those listed below:

- Internal decoration
- Replacing internal light bulbs, tubes, starters, plugs and fuses
- Replacing keys and locks when the tenant has lost their keys and any additional security locks
- Fitting and replacing smoke/CO alarms, including battery replacement (unless mains powered alarms are provided by the council)
- Clearing blockages to baths, sinks and basins inside the dwelling unless there is fault to the drainage system

- All floor coverings except for flooring fitted by the council in kitchens and bathrooms
- Repairs to internal doors and associated locks, hinges and handles (except for where the tenant is advised otherwise due to the doors being fire doors)
- TV aerials and satellite dishes unless it is a shared aerial or dish we have provided
- Phone lines, satellite and cable TV, and internet connections
- Doorbell and chain (unless fitted by the council or if there is a door entry system)
- Upkeep of tenants' private gardens. This includes maintaining and pruning trees and the upkeep of washing lines
- Paving and non-paved areas in private gardens
- Garden sheds or other outbuildings
- Loss of power due to faulty appliance or fuse blowing
- Pelmets and curtain fittings
- Adapting doors to fit carpets, unless fitted by the council
- Moving kitchen cupboards to fit large appliances such as cookers and freezers
- Connection of and plumbing of appliances such as tumble driers, washing machines and dishwashers and repair of leaking flexible pipes and connections serving these appliances
- Shower curtains, rails and hoses
- Tenants' own possessions such as carpet and furniture
- Damage to tenants' possessions from water
- Infestations by animals or insects inside the property, which are not due to a defect in the property or a wider infestation affecting multiple properties in a block
- Replacing glass in doors and windows, unless due to fair wear and tear

5.3. **Communal Repairs**

Guildford Borough Council is responsible for repairs that are necessary to any communal areas such as:

- Stairs
- Lifts
- Fire alarm systems and emergency lighting
- Landings
- Door entry systems and security gates
- Communal lighting
- Communal drains
- Communal windows

- External areas such as bin storage areas, boundary fencing and walls, paving, communal gardens etc.

5.4. Leaseholders and shared ownership

We will undertake repairs to leaseholders' and shared owners' properties where there is a contractual (lease) or other legal obligation to do so. In most circumstances, the leaseholder/shared owner is responsible for repairs to internal building components (such as internal doors) subject to lease agreement specifics and services inside the property, while the council is responsible for maintaining the structure, common parts, and supply of services to each flat.

Leaseholders are required to pay a proportion of the cost of repairs and maintenance to the structure and exterior of the block and the common parts as set out in their lease.

6. Reporting a Repair

- 6.1. It is the tenant's responsibility to report repairs promptly, to avoid causing further damage to the property or risk of injury to tenants or others. Failure to report repairs may be considered neglect of the property and is a breach of the tenancy agreement.

6.2. Reporting Repairs during office hours.

The council offers a range of ways for reporting repairs, including emergency repairs. Tenants can report repairs online, by telephone, in person (during office hours) by email, in writing or to a member of staff.

6.3. Reporting Emergency repairs outside of normal office hours.

Tenants can report emergency work to the council's out of hours helpline by telephone. These are repairs where there is a potential to cause significant risk to the tenant or property that cannot wait until the next working day.

7. Repairs Priorities

7.1. Emergency Repairs

These are repairs where there is a potential to cause significant risk to the tenant or the property. Emergency repair is used to describe such works that can be defined as removal of the risk that generated the emergency situation. In all instances, if possible, a full repair will be undertaken on attendance. Our agreed response time for emergency repairs is attendance within 4 hours of the repair being reported and completed within 24 hours depending on the nature of the issue.

7.2. Urgent Repairs

Urgent repairs are deemed to be more time critical than routine repairs but are not classed as an emergency as there is no immediate or significant risk to the tenant or the property. Our agreed response time for urgent repairs is attendance within 3 working days of the repair being reported.

7.3. Routine Repairs

A routine repair is any type of repair that does not fall into the emergency or urgent repair criteria. Our agreed response time for a routine repair is attendance within 30 days of the repair being reported.

7.4. Assessment of residents' needs and circumstances

The health and vulnerabilities of the household will be considered when assessing priority of repairs.

8. Rechargeable Repairs

- 8.1. The Council will charge residents for repair works carried out on their behalf where this expenditure has been caused either by damage which is not the result of fair wear and tear, or by unauthorised alterations to the property. All repairs that are caused by damage whether intentional, accidental or as a result of negligence will be recharged to the tenant in the following circumstances:
- Repairing any damage caused to the property, garden or communal area
 - Replacement of fixtures and fittings that are beyond repair
 - Reporting emergency repairs that are not an emergency
 - All associated costs incurred as a breach of Tenancy Agreement conditions
 - All associated costs incurred as a result of neglecting the upkeep of a garden
 - Where the removal of rubbish, goods and belongings is required to clear a property left behind by the former tenant. The cost of storing former tenants' belongings will be made in accordance with the relevant policy.
 - An additional call out charge will be added for out of hours call outs where the repair is rechargeable
- 8.2. All costs associated with the repair will be recharged including an administration fee and vat.
- 8.3. Where there are outstanding charges or other breaches related to a tenancy agreement the right is reserved not to attend subsequent chargeable repairs.

9. Right to Repair

- 9.1. The right to repair scheme gives a tenant the right to request another contractor and to claim compensation if certain small and urgent ("Qualifying") repairs valued at less than £250 are not carried out within prescribed time limits.
- 9.2. Qualifying repairs under the Right to Repair Scheme 1994 will be carried out within the statutory timescales. Should these timescales not be met, the council will be liable to pay compensation to the tenant at the prescribed rate (See Compensation and Reimbursement Policy).
- 9.3. The Right to Repair Scheme involving compensation only applies if works are not carried out within the timescales specified and the following qualification criteria are met:
- The repair must be an emergency or urgent repair that affects the tenant's health, safety or security

- Guildford Borough Council must be responsible for the repair
 - The repair must cost less than £250.
- 9.4. If the repair is not carried out within the initial timescale the tenant can request that another contractor carries out the works. If the works are then not completed within the second specified period, the tenant may request compensation.
- 9.5. The council will only meet claims for compensation where tenants have followed the appropriate repairs reporting and notification procedure.
- 9.6. There is no compensation payable for Right to Repair if:
- The repair was as a result of damage caused by the tenant
 - The tenant had not informed the council that the repair was needed
 - The tenant did not allow access to complete the repair or missed the appointment
 - Access could not be gained for health and safety reasons.

10. Policy Outcomes

- 10.1. By successfully implementing this policy it will enable an efficient and effective repairs service that maintains the properties we let as a decent place to live.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1. In order to ensure that the policy is effective and delivering the intended impact, it will be monitored using Key Performance Indicator's (KPI's) in line with Guildford Borough Council's Policy Framework.
- 11.2. Furthermore, in line with the Guildford Borough Council's Policy Framework, this policy is scheduled to be reviewed every 3 years, unless due to a change in Government legislation or regulatory requirements, the review period will be brought forward to ensure compliance.
- 11.3. Input and approval will be sought from our residents (via the Tenants Group) prior to making any substantive changes.

12. Reviews and Complaints

- 12.1. Any individual who is dissatisfied with the service experienced should be encouraged to provide feedback. Complaints regarding the implementation of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's corporate Customer Complaints Policy and associated procedure.

13. Equality and Diversity

- 13.1. GBC is committed to equal and fair treatment of all sections of the community. Accordingly, no person will be discriminated against during the implementation of this policy on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.
- 13.2. We are committed to helping customers to access information about their homes and services in a way that suits individual needs.

- 13.3. The council aims to provide homes and services that meet the diverse needs of customers. We believe that all customers should be able to access housing, support, and care services with the same ease and that the quality of our service is the same high standard for all.
- 13.4. In delivering this policy, GBC Housing's staff will comply fully with the requirements of the Council's Equalities and Human Rights Policy.
- 13.5. In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, an equality impact analysis (EIA) was completed as part of the policy review. Upon completing the EIA, it was found that the implementation of the policy would support and encourage the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

14. Data Protection and Retention of Information

- 14.1. All information will be handled in accordance with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. The handling and storage of personal data will be managed and stored in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and our Record Retention Disposal Schedule.