



Providing Choice



Addressing Inequalities

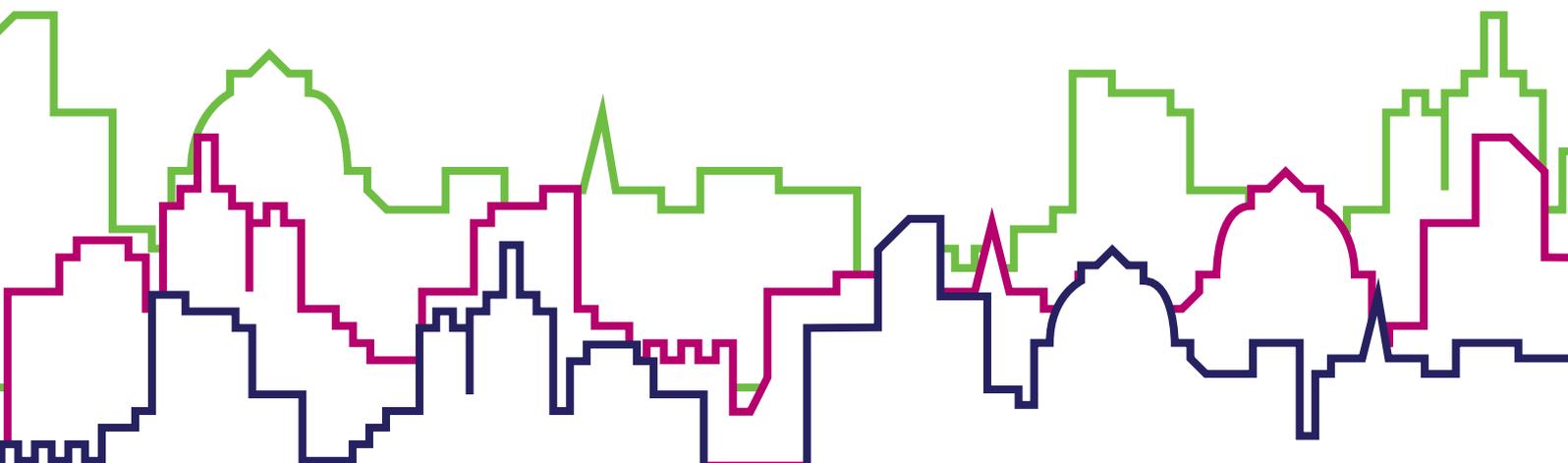


Improving Life Opportunities



Responsive Repairs Procedure

This procedure sets out to provide maintenance staff with guidance and support to provide a robust and fair administration of day to day repairs to all tenants.



1. Introduction

1.1 This procedure sets out to provide maintenance staff with guidance and support to provide a robust and fair administration of day to day repairs to all tenants.

1.2 It should be read in conjunction with all other Repairs and Maintenance Policies and Procedures.

2. Obligations Of Landlord & Tenant

2.1 Unity Housing Association is legally obliged and has responsibilities under the Housing Act (1985), the Landlord and Tenant Act (1988) and the Defective Premises Act (1972) to maintain its properties in a proper manner, free from disrepair and defects.

These obligations are laid down in the Tenancy Agreement and are detailed in Appendix 1 of this procedure

2.2.1 Similarly tenants must accept a degree of responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the property they occupy, in particular to ensure that any disrepair or defect is brought to Unity's attention. Tenants must accept the responsibility to look after the property that they occupy.

These obligations are laid down in the Tenancy Agreement and are detailed in Appendix 2 of this procedure.

3. What Is A Responsive Repair?

3.1 A responsive repair is any work required to a defective component of a building, to allow that component to work effectively, and which requires attention in the short term. Generally this will be an emergency (24 hour), urgent (7 days) or routine (28 days).

A repair can be to rectify a defective component and may include the replacement of that component part, for example a tap, a door handle or a pane of glass.

3.2 Some items that are reported as repairs may require more significant investment and will need to be dealt with outside of this procedure as a planned or cyclical repair. This would include items such as replacement kitchen units, whole

window replacement or defective boilers requiring replacement. Works in excess of £1000 will automatically be considered for this. Works below £1000 may be considered.

3.3 Officers will consider any works in relation to the planned and cyclical works programmed. Where works could be included in the planned and cyclical programme the repair requests shall be referred to the Maintenance Officer.

3.4 Where the value of the repairs requested exceeds £1500.00 the works shall be automatically considered for inclusion in the programmed and planned works programme.

3.5 In these cases a further inspection of the repair would be required.

3.6 Repairs arising from a Void Property inspection may be responsive in normal circumstances, but are dealt with as void re-let repairs (see Voids procedure)

3.7 Appendix 3 details a non-exhaustive list of what constitutes a responsive repair, but it does cover most situations.

It also details items that are deemed to be the responsibility of the tenant and subject to recharge, if Unity is required or requested to carry out any repair.

4. Reporting Repairs

4.1 It is primarily the tenant who is responsible for reporting repairs, defects or damage to the property to Unity as soon as they are aware of the problem.

However, Unity will also accept notification of repairs from:

- the tenants representative
- another tenant/neighbour
- member of the public
- staff or contractors/agents working for/with Unity
- other organisations such as the Police or Local Authority

4.2 Notification can be verbal, at the office or by phone or can be written, through the post, by fax or by email.

5. Recording The Details Of A Repair Request & Raising The Order

5.1 Repair requests should be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines (Appendix 4) and Authorisation Levels (Appendix 6). Every effort should be made to correctly determine the nature of the repair at this stage. Getting it right now will significantly increase the chances of getting the repair done effectively, efficiently and to the satisfaction of the tenant. The repair 'clock' will commence at the time the repair is reported. To avoid delays the repair should be placed onto the IBS computerised system in real time where possible.

5.2 A works order will be raised and passed on to the contractor to action. A copy of the works order should be sent to the tenant as confirmation that the repair has been ordered. Works orders will normally be batched and sent out to the appropriate contractor the day the repair is requested and entered on the system.

5.3 Emergency and Urgent repairs should be telephoned through to the contractor on the day that the repair request is taken.

6. Appointments

6.1 Appointments should be offered for all urgent and routine repairs. Appointments will be morning or afternoon. Routine appointments will be no sooner than 7 days after the repair is requested.

6.2 Appointments will be offered for Urgent repairs. All urgent repairs will be prioritised and the most urgent given an appropriate appointment within the 7 day timescale. All repairs should be scheduled to be completed as soon as practical and dependant on the contractor's available labour.

6.3 All emergency repairs, by their very nature, will require same day access and the tenant should be advised to ensure that access has to be provided for the next 24 hours.

7. Pre-Inspection Of Repair Requests

7.1 Most repairs will not require a pre-inspection. The work will be straight forward and easily diagnosed from the description of the work required by the tenant.

7.2 Where a pre-inspection of the repair is required, this will be raised on the computer by the officer taking the repair.

7.3 Some repairs will need an inspection to determine the exact nature of the repair. Good practice determines that we should inspect a number of repairs before they are undertaken. Unity Housing Association aims to pre-inspect 10% of all repairs.

7.4 Repairs most likely to be pre-inspected are:

- those of a complex nature
- those over £300.00 in value
- where there may be an insurance claim
- where the repair does not fall clearly into Unity's or the tenant's repairing responsibility
- where the officer taking the repair believes that the damage may have been caused by the tenant
- where similar works have previously been undertaken in the recent past. This shall generally mean within the guarantee period of the previous works, but this period could be extended for more major works such as adaptations for disabled facilities grants, etc.

7.5 Where it is decided that a pre-inspection is required the pre-inspection request will be raised and the tenant offered an appointment for this inspection. Unity has the right to access property to effect repairs (Appendix 5 - Access). The inspection period should be reflected within the overall repair period, i.e. if the repair period is 28 calendar days from date of reporting and an inspection is required that takes 7 calendar days to complete then the work period is reduced to 21 calendar days.

7.6 The inspecting officer will try to determine whether the repair is fair, wear and tear as part of the inspection. Where the

inspection reveals unusual wear and tear the tenant will be advised that the cost of the repair may be rechargeable. This will be a decision made by the Housing Officer/Customer Services Officer/Assistant/Maintenance Officer/Assistant.

7.7 The inspecting officer should advise the Customer Services Assistant of the outcome of the inspection so that they may complete the repair request and raise a work order. If a repair is not required, or if it is to be picked up as part of the cyclical or planned programme, the tenant should be informed.

8. Getting The Repair Done

8.1 The contractor should ensure that they keep to any appointment that is made and respond to emergency repairs on the day they are reported. If for any reason the contractor's visit cannot be made as agreed with the tenant, the tenant is to be informed as early as reasonably possible, but in any event before the time of the visit.

This may be done by the contractor or the Customer Services Assistant. In this eventuality the tenant will be offered an apology, a brief explanation of the reason for the breaking of the appointment and a new appointment.

8.2 If the contractor breaks the appointment directly with the tenant, the contractor is to notify the Association of the rearranged appointment immediately.

8.3 If the tenant is not informed that a contractor's visit is cancelled before the time of the appointment, this will be classed as a missed appointment and the tenant may be eligible for compensation (See Compensation Policy & Procedure)

9. Abortive Visits - Tenant Not In

9.1 If the tenant is out, a note is to be posted through the letter box by the contractor identifying the job number and asking the tenant to contact the contractor directly or the office to re-arrange an appointment.

9.2 The abortive visit should be noted by the contractor on the work order, detailing the date & time of the visit.

9.3 The contractor should notify the Customer Services Assistant of all missed appointments by the tenant. The

Customer Services Assistant will update the computer with the details of the visit. If the tenant fails to respond after 7 days the Customer Services Assistant will contact the tenant in writing to arrange another appointment.

9.4 If no response is received after a further 7 days a third attempt at gaining access by appointment will be made by letter. After a further 7 days, if the tenant has failed to make contact to rearrange the appointment the work will be considered for closing off as not required. The tenant will be recharged for the cost of the abortive visit in accordance with the Recharge Policy and Procedure.

9.5 Work involving gas and electrical repairs will not be closed off without consultation with the Maintenance Officer/Manager.

9.6 Where the tenant responds within the timescales the contractor or the Customer Services Assistant will re-arrange for a further visit. If the initial visit was an appointment, which the tenant failed to keep, the tenant will be advised that a recharge may be made against them if a second appointment is missed without good reason.

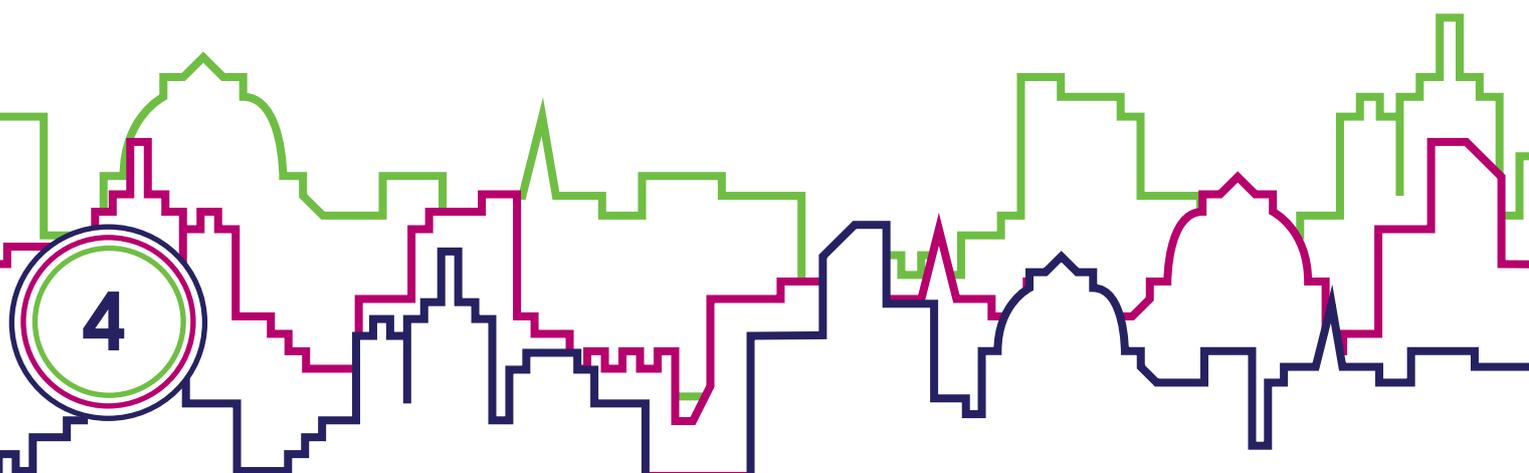
10. Managing The Works Order

10.1 Where it is apparent that further work is required it will be necessary to vary the order. This can be done by the Customer Services Assistant / Officer / Maintenance Officer / Assistant / Housing Officer / Assistant who may need to take advice if the variation results in increased expenditure. The order will be varied on the computer in order to maintain the commitment accounts.

10.2.1 Each day the Customer Services Officer shall check outstanding orders and any that are about to be out of time or are out of time shall be urged with the contractor and notes added to the IBS database.

10.3 Where orders are not completed and are more than one week out of time a written notification should be sent to the contractor urging the work and giving a further 7 days to complete the work.

10.4 If the repair cannot be completed because other materials, plant, or other Contractors are required the repair



should be referred to the Maintenance Assistant to resolve. If a repair requires materials, plant or other contractors the main contractor will order the necessary items and reschedule the work. The main contractor will make a new appointment with the tenant.

11. Variations

11.1 Where a variation to the order is required, the Customer Services Officer/Assistant / Housing Officer / Maintenance Officer/Assistant shall check the details of the variation requested and as far as reasonably practical ensure that the request is reasonable and appropriate.

11.2 Where the value of the variation does not exceed the value that would generate a pre-inspection and the value of the variation will not exceed the limit for the individual officer, the officer may authorise the variation.

11.3 Where the value of the variation does not exceed the authority limit of the individual officer, but there is insufficient information for a decision to be reasonably arrived at, a site inspection will be made by the appropriate officer, before authorising a variation.

11.4 Where the value of the variation exceeds the value that would automatically generate a pre-inspection, the individual officer will refer the variation request to the Maintenance Officer for a decision.

11.5 The Maintenance Officer shall decide if a pre-inspection is required. This decision shall be based on what information the Maintenance Officer has available. Where insufficient information is available to make a decision, the Maintenance Officer shall carry out a site inspection before making a decision.

12. Completed Orders

12.1 When the repair is complete the contractor will inform the Customer Services Officer of the completion and will return completed copies of the order to Unity. It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that, wherever possible, they get a signature from the tenant to say the work has been done. Where a signature is not obtained the contractor should indicate the reason on the works order.

The Maintenance Assistant will then complete the job completion section on the repairs system.

12.2 The copy of the repair order which is sent to the tenant includes a satisfaction questionnaire, which tenants are encouraged to complete and return to the Association. Where these are returned the Maintenance Assistant should enter the details onto the Customer Satisfaction database.

12.3 The Maintenance Assistant/Customer Services Officer should also, at random, seek to contact by phone a sample of tenants where a repair has been carried out and ask the questions included on the repair order. Again a record of the outcome of the conversation should be recorded on the database.

13. Invoicing

13.1 When the contractor determines that the repair is complete an invoice will be raised and forwarded to the Association in accordance with the timescales prescribed in the contract documents.

13.2 The invoice will be forwarded to the Finance Section where it is logged and prepared for authorisation. The Finance Section will forward the invoice to the Maintenance Section for checking and authorisation.

13.3 The Maintenance Assistant should check that the invoice information is consistent with the information on the payment order (yellow), and that the works and costs specified by the contractor match those on the original work order/variation orders.

13.4 The Maintenance Assistant will check and sign the work content claimed on any invoice up to the value of the limit set for the post, beyond that invoices should be passed to the Maintenance Officer who should check and sign them. Any queries should be referred to the Maintenance Officer.

13.5 If an invoice is to be recharged to the tenant or to a third party this should be marked up on the payment order (yellow)

14. Querying The Invoice

14.1 The invoice may need to be queried for a number of reasons:

- The invoice is arithmetically incorrect
- The codes that have been claimed are incorrect
- The work is not complete

14.2 The invoice should be queried in writing, except where the query is so insignificant that it can be resolved by telephone or other means. It may be possible to resolve the query with the contractor link. The information to be supplied to the contractor includes; the invoice number, the order number, the 'repi' number (the number given to each invoice by the Finance Dept), the address and the details of the query.

14.3 Where the order requires a final variation this will be completed after all queries etc have been resolved.

15. Authorising The Invoice

15.1 Invoices must be authorised in accordance with the limits laid down in the Financial Regulations. Generally speaking most invoices can be authorised by the Maintenance Officer/Manager/Housing Officer/Services Manager.

15.2 If a recharge is to be raised the Customer Services Officer/Assistant should ensure that an invoice is raised in accordance with the Recharge Procedure.

16. Post Inspection

16.1 All jobs over the value of £300 will be post inspected together with 10% of all other jobs over the value of £25.00. Where jobs are valued at less than £25.00 a 10% check may be made by telephone.

16.2 Where a post inspection is required, the Maintenance Officer/Housing Officer will make an appointment where appropriate with the tenant to inspect. If the repair is not completed to a satisfactory standard they should arrange for it to be redone.

17. Procedure Review

17.1 The Association will review this procedure annually and provide for interim review should governing policy or procedures determine. It is not subject to Board or Committee approval.

17.2 This procedure is owned by the Maintenance Manager and was produced for the first time in Dec 2004.

It was reviewed in June & October 2006, June 2007, September 2009 and September 2010.

