



Providing Choice



Addressing Inequalities

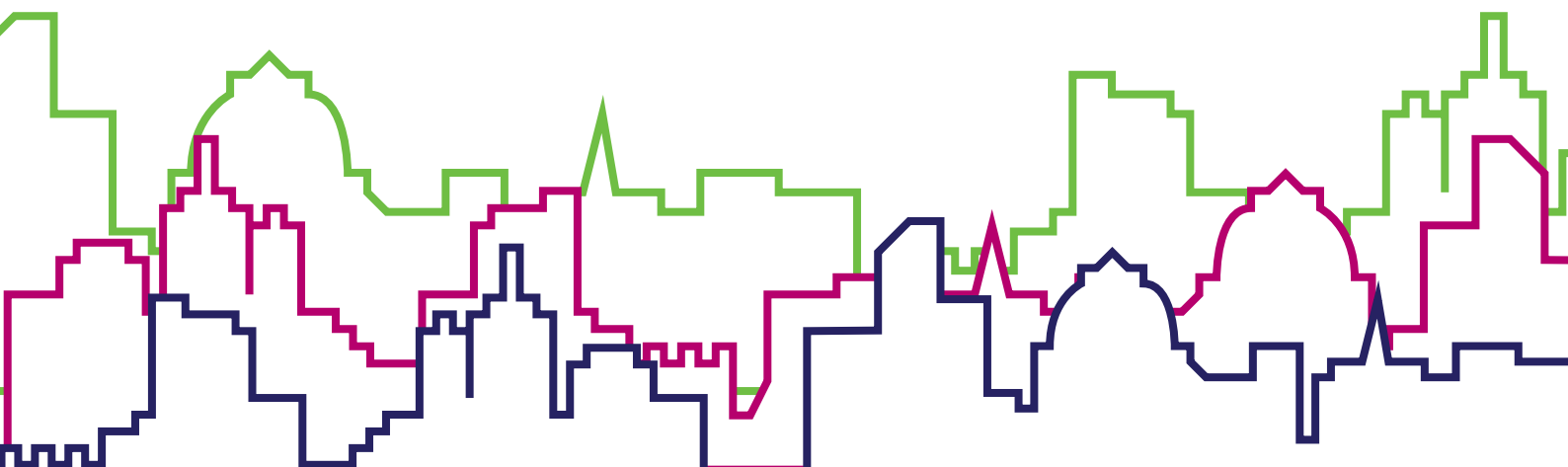


Improving Life Opportunities



Repairs Policy

Unity Housing Association's Asset Management Strategy details the association's strategic approach to managing its assets and its commitment to providing an excellent repairs service to its customers.



1. Introduction

1.1 Unity Housing Association's Asset Management Strategy 2011 details the association's strategic approach to managing its assets and its commitment to providing an excellent repairs service to its customers.

1.2 In the delivery of this strategy it is good business practice to implement an overarching 'Repairs Policy' that will act as an umbrella document drawing together other related policies and procedures such as the:

- Contractor & Supplier Selection Policy & Procedure
- Right to Repair Policy
- Repairs Recharge Policy & Procedure
- Asbestos Management Policy & Procedure
- Voids Policy & Procedure
- Stock Condition Survey Procedure
- Budget Preparation Procedure
- Tenders, Quotations & Estimates Procedure
- Planned & Cyclical Maintenance Procedure
- Responsive Repairs Procedure
- Aids & Adaptations Procedure
- Scheme Improvements Procedure
- Gas Servicing Procedure
- Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

1.3 It is also important that this 'Repairs Policy' supports the delivery of other strategies such as the 'Affordable Warmth' and the 'Housing Services' strategies and the 'Regeneration Design and Technical Brief'.



2.2 Legal & Regulatory Requirements

The Association is affected by a number of legal and regulatory requirements set by Central & Local Government, the Homes & Communities Agencies and others. These govern both the need to repair and the execution of the work. They include 'Right to Repair' legislation which provides financial recompense to tenants where qualifying repairs are not carried out to predetermined time scales.

The Association will undertake to comply with relevant legislation together with all other legal requirements which may from time to time, affect the Association's need to repair its properties and their environs. Each Tenancy Agreement entered into will state both the Association's and the tenants' responsibilities in respect of repairs.

2.3 Equal Opportunities

The Association, which as a BME (Black Minority & Ethnic) organisation provides services to a large variety of tenants from black minority and ethnic backgrounds. As such particular account will be taken of issues such as race, disability and sex discrimination and all forms of equal opportunities and their implications on repairs/maintenance service.

2.4 Other Requirements

A number of other parties have an interest in ensuring that the housing stock is properly maintained. The Association will ensure that these interests are protected and that at the same time the Association is not put at risk for failure to repair/maintain.

The two parties to which the above generally applies are:

- (i) Financial lenders who may hold security over the Association's property.
- (ii) Insurance companies who may provide risk cover over the Association's property.

3. Classification of repairs

3.1 Repairs and Maintenance fall into a number of categories:

- (i) Reactive (Day-to-Day Repairs)
- (ii) Cyclical Maintenance
- (iii) Planned / Major Repairs
- (iv) Scheme Improvements
- (v) Aids & Adaptations
- (vi) Void Property Repairs

(i) Reactive (Day-to-Day Repairs)

These are all emergency, urgent and routine repairs that need to be undertaken by the Association. They are identified by tenants, staff or third parties and required due to the normal wear and tear of components and fittings within our stock. They include building repairs, gas appliance repairs and void repairs.

(ii) Cyclical Maintenance

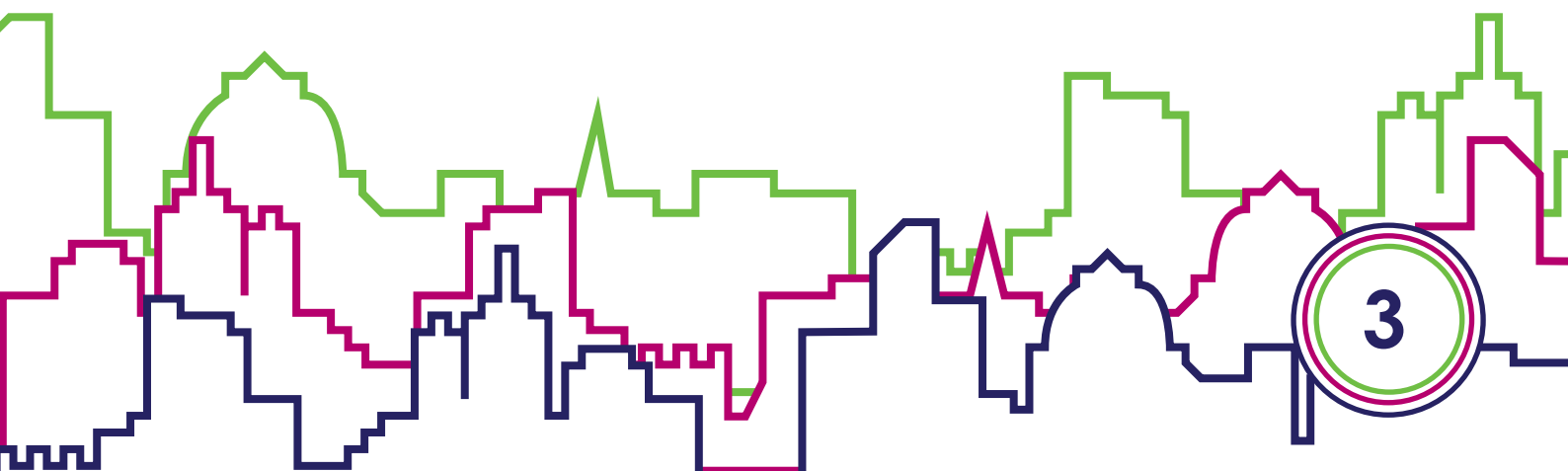
This is maintenance that the Association has to carry out on a regular cyclical basis. It includes cyclical painting, gas appliance servicing, disabled lift servicing, electrical testing and asbestos identification and control.

(iii) Planned / Major Repairs

These are larger programs of work undertaken by the Association. They are based on the Association's stock condition information that predicts the lifespan of each building component; estimates the cost of replacing each item and sets a timescale for replacement. It includes items such as kitchens, bathrooms, window frames, doors, focal point fires, central heating and boiler replacements and a major works category to facilitate other major structural items.

(iv) Scheme Improvements

These are schemes for environmental improvements to individual properties and estates. They are drawn up from requests from individuals or groups of residents, but may also come via staff responsible for the day to day management of estates. External organisations such as Leeds City Council, the Police or Community Safety initiatives may also suggest improvements that may form part of wider neighbourhood improvement plans.





(v) Aids & Adaptations

These are minor items of adaptation undertaken to make life easier for tenants who, through age or disability, find it difficult to carry out day to day tasks. They are usually valued at less than £1000 and include works such as the installation of grab rails, lever taps and door entry systems. Where appropriate such requests will be subject to verification via a doctor's letter or occupational therapists report.

The Association will support tenants who require more extensive alterations with applications to Leeds City Council for DFG's (Disabled Facilities Grants). When requested the Association will consider topping up such grants where they exceed the City Councils ceiling. Such cases will be considered based on their individual circumstance.

(vi) Void Property Repairs

These are repairs required to empty properties prior to letting to ensure that they meet all legislative and decency requirements. While there is a dedicated budget head for such works, individual items may be raised as part of planned and cyclical works in order to obtain the financial economies of scale these works attract.

4. Contractual Arrangements

4.1 The Association will have in place appropriate contractual arrangements for all work streams. These will enable all work to be undertaken in accordance with necessary legal requirements, to the best possible standards and to meet the objectives of the Association's 'Value for Money Strategy'. All contractual arrangements will seek to gain economies of scale by grouping like works (both from the housing and commercial arms of the organisation) where financially prudent and utilising appropriate contract periods.

4.2 Contracts will be broadly let under the following heads

(i) Painting

Let as one contract for a three to five year period enabling all stock to be painted to a five year cycle.

(ii) Gas Servicing & Gas Repairs (Including Boiler Renewals)

Let as one contract for a three to five year period enabling all gas appliances to be serviced within a rolling twelve month period. The contract will make provision for the prioritisation of urgent and emergency works and include for a 24hr emergency call out service.

(iii) Day to Day Repairs, Void Works, Cyclical Maintenance, Planned / Major Repairs, Scheme Improvement Works and Disabled Aids & Adaptations

Let as one contract for a three to five year period utilising an appropriate schedule of rates for drawing down individual items of work. Provision will be made to facilitate significant one off projects of mid ranging value (Up to £100K). The contract will make provision for the prioritisation of urgent and emergency works and include for a 24hr emergency call out service.

(iv) Communal Grounds Maintenance

Let as one contract for a three to five year period. This contract will include provision for the Association to discharge its responsibility for tree management, the management of external communal areas and of open spaces.

(v) Communal Area and Commercial Office Cleaning

Let as one contract for a three to five year period. This contract will include provision for the Association to discharge its responsibility for the management of internal communal areas.

(vi) Fire Alarm Maintenance

Let as one contract for a three to five year period. This contract will include provision for the Association to upgrade fire alarm systems as may be required.

(vii) Lift Servicing and Maintenance

Let as one contract for a three to five year period. This contract will include provision for the Association to fit new lifts as may be required.

(viii) Warden Call Equipment Servicing and Maintenance

Let as one contract for a three to five year period. This contract will include provision for the Association to upgrade such systems as may be required.



4.3 All contracts will allow for the provision of an annual contract review. The Associations stakeholders (staff, customers, end users and contractors) will participate in the review with the aim of identifying and building on good practice within the delivery and administration of the contract. Any areas identified where performance does not meet the contract requirements, or improvement can be made in contract delivery, will be subject to robust action planning.

4.4 The Association will consider procuring contracts in partnership with a range of community organisation (e.g. other housing associations, local authorities and voluntary/community groups) where this can demonstrate value for money savings or added value in respect of contract delivery.

4.5 All contracts will allow for the procurement of work outside the contract at the discretion of the Association if so required.

4.6 All contracts will be let in strict accordance with the Association's 'Standing Orders & Financial regulations' with approval being obtained from the Senior Management Team, Operations Committee or Board as required.

4.7 The Association will maintain an approved list of contractors/suppliers. This list will be submitted to the Board or delegated Committee annually for approval. Additions to the list during the course of the year will be as detailed in the Associations 'Standing Orders & Financial regulations'.

4.8 The Association has adopted the Construction Line contractor/supplier Registration Scheme as a suitable standard for automatic inclusion within the Association's list of approved contractors/suppliers. Any contractor/supplier registered with Construction Line is eligible to be approved to the 'Approved List' for the areas for which they hold Construction Line certification.

4.9 The Association is mindful of its role as a regeneration agent, particularly in encouraging small businesses to flourish and providing an opportunity for persons from the area to obtain gainful employment. The Association will therefore continue to seek applications from small contractors/suppliers and businesses that are not registered with Construction Line.

5. Responsibilities for repairs

5.1 The responsibility for repairs generally falls into one of the following categories.

(a) Landlord's Responsibilities

As outlined in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenant's Handbook

(b) Tenant's Responsibilities

As outlined in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenant's Handbook

(c) Leasehold Properties

The leases for such properties are drawn up to reflect the relationship between the Association and the leaseholder. The responsibility for repairs will be clearly defined in the lease agreement.

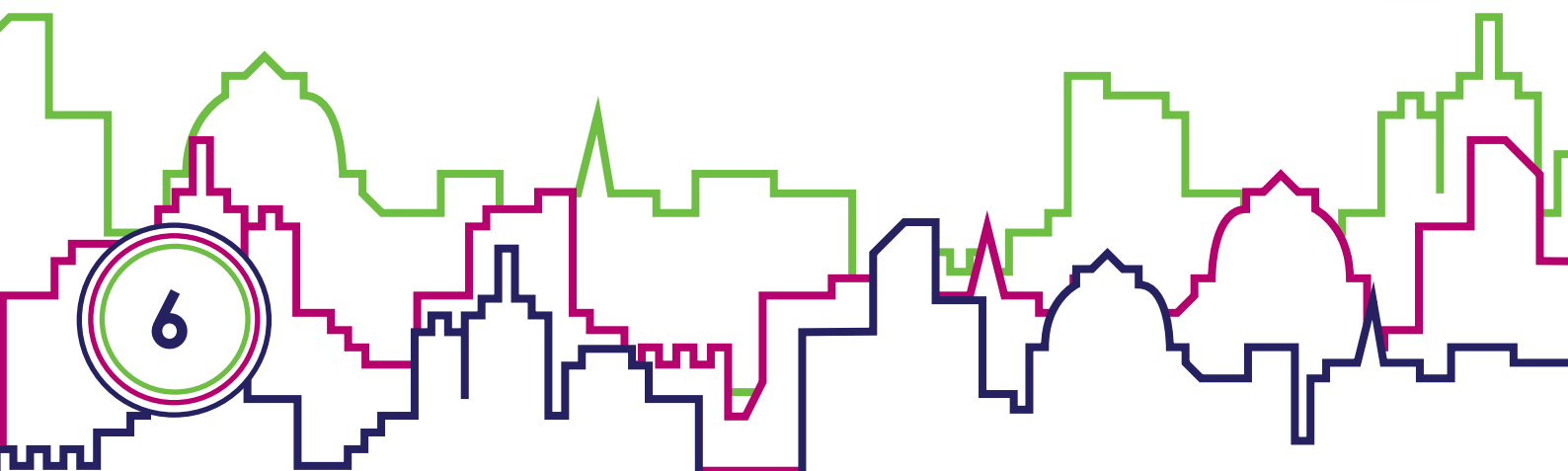
Generally, the responsibility for day to day and cyclical repairs will lie with the leaseholder and programme repairs with the Association. Reference will be made to the lease agreement in respect of any repairs ordered. Any repairs carried out by the Association that are the responsibility of the leaseholder will be recharged as per the 'Rechargeable Repairs Procedure'.

(d) Third Party Responsibilities

This applies to areas or facilities within any of the Association's developments not owned by the Association and covers adopted roads, footpath and street lighting, together with public utilities such as electric, gas and water mains. Similarly any services provided directly by a third party to a tenant will be the responsibility of either the tenant or the provider and not the Association, e.g. Cable Television, specialist adaptation equipment obtained via third parties etc. and gas/electrical meters.

6. Repair Requests

6.1 All repairs will be ordered as per 'The Tenants Handbook', the 'Responsive Repairs Procedure' and in accordance with the authorisation levels detailed in the Association's 'Standing Orders & Financial Regulations'. Each tenant, upon reporting a repair, will receive an order acknowledgement that will clearly indicate:



- (i) An order number for the work.
- (ii) The date the work was ordered.
- (iii) What the repair consists of (description).
- (iv) The name of the contractor.
- (v) The access time or arrangement agreed.
- (vi) The target date for attendance by the contractor.
- (vii) The priorities/response time allocated to the job, i.e. emergency, urgent, routine or none routine.

6.2 The acknowledgement will also contain a tenant response survey for completion and return by the tenant when the work is finished.

6.3 The time scales for undertaking the repairs will be set so as to ensure a top quartile performance for the Association. They will be reviewed annually as part of the 'Asset Management Strategy' review to ensure they meet the needs and aspirations of our customers. Details will be included in the 'Tenant's Handbook'.

6.4 When a repair is reported to the office it may not be immediately clear what work would be required to set it right or whether it is the Association's or Tenant's responsibility to do this. In these cases the Association will arrange for a member of staff to inspect the repair prior to ordering any works

6.5 Full details of 'Right to Repair Legislation' will be publicised in the Tenant's Handbook and the 'Responsive Repairs Procedure'.

7. Rechargeable Repairs

7.1 In certain circumstances the Association may have to carry out repairs that are not our responsibility and recharge the responsible party. This may be the case where we need to rectify damage caused by misuse, neglect or accidental damage or for communal works where other parties (i.e. owners of adjoining properties) are responsible for a share of the costs.

7.2 In these circumstances the Association will follow our 'Rechargeable Repairs Policy' and 'Rechargeable Repairs Procedure' in pursuing appropriate recompense for such works.

8. Funding for repairs and maintenance

8.1 The Annual Budget, established via the 'Budgets & Budgetary Control Procedure', will show the allowance for repairs and maintenance for each particular year.

8.2 The following budget heads will be used initially to identify the funding need and secondly to permit monthly management accounts to be produced which will monitor spending:

Budget Head	
(i) Routine Repairs	Day to Day Repairs Void Relet Repairs Gas Repairs
(ii) Cyclical Programme	Cyclical Painting Gas Servicing Electrical Testing Asbestos
(iii) Planned Programme	Scheme Improvements Kitchens Bathrooms Windows Doors Major Works Boiler Replacement Gas and Electric Fires Aids & Adaptations Unplanned Works

8.3 Annual budget allocations for repairs and maintenance will be based upon information from previous years, allowing for changing levels of housing stock, ageing of stock, knowledge of forthcoming planned maintenance projects and anticipation of changes to contractors pricing. It will be built around the Association's business planning process and take into account long its longer term financial forecasting.

8.4 The long term maintenance plan, usually five years, will be submitted to the 'Senior Management Team' and subject to approval by the Board.

9. Insurance claims

9.1 The main objective of 'Insurance Claims' is to minimise loss to the Association from events covered under the policy.

9.2 The Association will ensure that all of its properties are adequately covered by insurance to the full reinstatement value. Reference should be made to the insurance company policy, schedule and guidance notes for a full explanation of cover provided and full details of their claims procedure. All claims will be processed as detailed in the Association's 'Insurance Management Procedure & Plan'.

10. Asbestos removal and control

10.1 The Association has a legal obligation to manage any asbestos containing materials within its properties to ensure the safety of its tenants, contractors and others who may be adversely affected by its presence.

10.2 Asbestos identification surveys will be carried out to all void properties and any property subject to work on the planned programme. The results of these surveys will be entered into the 'Asbestos Register'. Wherever possible any asbestos discovered will be removed during void or planned programme works in order to reduce disruption to tenants, cost in removal and cost in the on-going management of asbestos in situ.

11. Affordable warmth works

11.1 The Association has a comprehensive 'Affordable Warmth' strategy that commits it to achieving and maintaining high levels of energy efficiency within its stock. It measures achievement of this is through the 'Reduced Standard Assessment Procedure' rating.

11.2 'Energy Performance Certification' (EPC) is obtained on all void properties and tenanted properties which may be below our target Reduced Standard Assessment Procedure rating. The information from the certificate is entered into a register in order to provide a sound base of management information to inform investment in affordable warmth type works.

11.3 All minor works identified on the 'EPC' that will bring the property to the target Reduced Standard Assessment Procedure rating are undertaken on identification, funded from appropriate budget heads.

11.4 All major works identified on the 'EPC' as being required to bring the property to the target Reduced Standard Assessment Procedure rating will be programmed into future planned works.

11.5 The Association will actively seek to work with other community partners in respect of undertaking 'Affordable Warmth' works and to secure funding for such via 'Green Deal', 'Energy Company Obligation' and other government funded schemes.

