

# HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

2024



**Winchester**  
City Council

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# 1. PURPOSE

Winchester City Council (the council) will work collaboratively with residents to create and provide homes, estates, and neighbourhoods that we are all proud of.

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This policy sets out the council's approach for the delivery of housing repairs and maintenance. The policy reflects responsive repairs and the planned & cyclical maintenance programs, all of which ensure the council's stock is well maintained, safe and meets the needs of residents.

The policy will support the aims of the council's HRA Asset Management Strategy.

We will work in partnership with residents to continuously improve and shape the service to meet regulatory requirements. Resident feedback is highly welcomed and collectively we will find ways to improve.

This policy applies to all residents. Please refer to the council tenancy agreement, leases and tenancy handbook for specific information.

## 2. SCOPE AND STANDARDS

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### THE COUNCIL'S AIMS WILL:

- Deliver a value for money, responsive repairs and maintenance service that meets the needs of the council's residents.
- Comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and meet the council's contractual and legal obligations.
- Ensure a safe and secure environment for the council's residents to live.
- Ensure that all homes meet decency standards.

### THE COUNCIL'S OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- Provide a reliable responsive service.
- Ensure the service is easily accessible through a range of different contact points.
- Deliver repairs at times that suit the council's residents in alignment with the terms of the repairs contract.
- Achieve high standards of customer care and satisfaction.
- Ensure all relevant stakeholders are aware of responsibilities for repairs and the costs associated with these.
- Deliver 'first time fix' repairs whenever possible.
- Complete work to appropriate standards.
- Offer choice of materials and finishes in line with the council's standards/specifications.
- Undertake only those repairs that are the council's responsibility.
- Undertake repairs within defined timescales to ensure the upkeep of the council's assets.

# 3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

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## **Statutory and regulatory duties that apply to the council.**

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Secure Residents of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Equalities Act 2010
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- CDM regulations
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Homes (Fitness for Habitation) Act 2018
- Party Wall Act 1996
- Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004
- Decent Homes Standard (DHS)
- Section 4 of the Defective Premises Act 1972
- Social Housing Regulation Act (HL) 2023
- Ensure that all homes meet decency standards.



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**The council's Repairs and Maintenance Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:**

- The Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy
- The Council's Asbestos Policy
- The Council's Gas Servicing Policy
- The council's Decarbonisation of Housing Policy
- The Council's Fire Safety Policy
- The Council's Electrical Safety Policy
- The Council's Loler (Passenger lifts) Policy
- The Council's Water monitoring (L8) policy
- The Council's HRA Asset Management Strategy
- The Council's Environmental Policy
- The Council's Health and Safety Policy
- The Council's Void Standard
- The Council's Recharge Policy
- The Council's Safeguarding Policy
- The Council's Lone working policy
- The Council's Residents' Handbook
- The Council's Tenancy Agreements
- The Council's Lease Agreements

## 4. DEFINITIONS

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### RESPONSIVE REPAIR

'Responsive repair' is a term used to describe day-to-day repairs that are reactive in nature, rather than planned or those included in longer-term investment programs. It covers repairs that are needed to fix a single or multiple defect that should be carried out within a defined period. If the repair does not fit this description, it may be classed as either cyclical or planned works.

### CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

This is maintenance and servicing carried out on a regular cycle of between 1 and 10 years. This can include external decorations and gutter clearance.

### PLANNED PROGRAMMES

This covers any major works that are normally planned. This includes new kitchens, new bathrooms, new heating systems, replacement roofs, rewiring, new windows and Decent Homes works.

### DECENT HOMES

The Decent Homes Standard (DHS) is a benchmark set by government for all social housing landlords. For a property to be designated as a decent home, it must:

- Meet statutory minimum standards for housing, currently defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Be in a reasonable state of repair.

- Have reasonable modern facilities and services.
- Provide thermal comfort.
- Free of damp and mould.

### VOIDS

Voids refer to empty homes. The Council's Voids Standard will apply to the extent and standard of work within voids.

The Void standard can be accessed through the Council's website. \*\*\*

**\*\*\* Not currently included in the service**



# 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

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## THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The council is responsible for repairing and maintaining the structure and any shared parts of the building which dwellings are part of.

The council is generally responsible for repairing and maintaining the interior of tenanted dwellings. Where defects are identified as being wilful damage or neglect then tenants may be charged full or partial cost of the repair/s.

The council will externally inspect its tenanted homes every 5 years.

## THE COUNCIL WILL

- Ensure electrical installations are safe and in good working order.
- Maintain and service all council owned gas appliances.
- Ensure a council owned home is structurally sound and weatherproof.
- Maintain windows, drains, guttering, roof, and external pipes.
- Maintain the plumbing of hot and cold water.
- Maintain adequate heating and ventilation within a dwelling.
- Maintain external walls, outside doors, windowsills, soffits, fascia's, window catches and window frames (not including internal painting and decoration)
- Maintain garages.
- Maintain communal boundary walls and fences only. The council may repair dwelling boundary fences in exceptional cases where a Health and Safety matter prevails.
- Maintain installations for heating water.
- Maintain kitchen fixtures and fittings.
- Plasterwork
- Maintain pathways and steps.
- Maintain basins, sinks, baths, electric showers, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes.
- Common entrances, lifts, rubbish chutes and any other communal parts.

## 5. RESPONSIBILITIES (CONTINUED)

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### TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The council's Tenancy Agreement sets out the specific repair responsibilities for tenants.

The council expects tenants to:

- Keep the inside of the home clean and in good condition.
- Gardens should be maintained and clear of debris.
- Communal areas should be clean and tidy and free from all personal items.
- Minor repairs should be carried out as should all internal decorations.
- Report repairs quickly to prevent on-going damage.
- Meet the cost of repairs that are listed as being resident's responsibility.
- Provide access for statutory gas and electrical inspections and where applicable chimney sweeping.
- Provide access, in accordance with Tenancy Agreement conditions so that repairs can be undertaken in accordance with priority timescales. the council's contractors will not carry out work where a child under 16 years old is alone at a property.
- Treat the council's property with respect and care, avoiding wilful damage and neglect.
- Seek permission to make improvements and maintain those improvements.
- Replace lost keys and/or gain entry if accidentally locked out.
- Replace light bulbs/lamps.
- Repair broken glass to windows and doors if damaged by resident behaviour. Residents will need to provide a crime reference number where glass has been broken through criminal activity.
- Clean shower heads and shower curtains.
- TV aerials where not on a communal council-maintained system.
- Installation and maintenance of own appliances. This includes connection of gas and electric cookers, which must be fitted by an appropriately registered installer. A completion certificate for the work must be forwarded to THE COUNCIL within one week.
- Ventilate and heat the property, cleaning of mould caused by condensation.
- Maintain humidity levels in the home.

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Leaseholders are responsible for all maintenance, repairs, and servicing within the property as defined in the lease, excluding communal areas. (For more details and responsibilities, refer to the council's lease agreements)

Wherever possible the council will replace items with like for like but this is not always achievable where a fixture or fitting is non-standard or no longer available. In these circumstances we will try and find the closest match available, but we will not undertake unnecessary works or full replacements simply for aesthetic reasons.

The council will accommodate resident choices wherever possible except where this may have implications on cost, on future repairs or replacement obligations. If a resident has replaced fixtures or fittings themselves (such as tiling, flooring etc.) the council is not responsible for any repair or replacement.

## 6. RECHARGES

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Whilst residents are responsible for the repairs outlined in 5 above, in some cases where residents continue to neglect their responsibilities the council may undertake and recharge for works and an administration charge.

Any repairs or maintenance works carried out by residents must be to the council's standard and if not, the council reserves the right to rectify the works and recharge residents for the costs incurred.

It is resident's responsibility to insure the contents of their home and are responsible for any loss or damage to the contents due to theft, flooding, fire, or accidental damage.

Resident's may also be held responsible for damage caused to other properties as a result of flooding or fire if the cause is found to be arson, wilful damage or neglect.

## 7. RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

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The council has target times for different types of repairs priorities. Such timescales may vary dependent on the nature of the repair, resident vulnerabilities and health safety concerns. These will be agreed with the resident according to the nature of the repair at the time of appointing the job.

### **EMERGENCY REPAIRS – 2 HOURS**

This response priority is reserved for incidents that require an immediate response to either prevent danger to life or extensive damage to the property, if the incident/problem will have a serious and unavoidable adverse effect on someone's medical

needs or personal health and/or safety or if there is an infant in the property under 1 year old living in the property. Emergency repairs will be attended to within two hours and made safe at a subsequent visit if a full repair cannot be completed and are:

- Total loss of water supply (other than by water supplier)
- Total loss of electricity (other than power cut)
- Serious water leak or flood inside a home that you cannot contain
- Blocked toilet (where there is only one in a dwelling)
- Broken external doors or windows

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where there is a threat to security

- Serious structural damage e.g., loose or falling brickwork, tiles, etc.
- Lift breakdowns
- Making safe collapsed ceilings and floors
- Blocked flue to an open fire or boiler
- Major health and safety repairs to communal parts
- Stair-lifts in communal areas (not within dwellings) and ceiling track hoist breakdowns

The council may recharge a resident for an emergency call out if it is determined that it was not a genuine emergency.

## OUT OF HOURS

During the periods that are deemed to be Out of Hours, the council will provide an emergency repairs service. The council may recharge a resident for an Out of Hours call out if it is determined that it was not a genuine emergency. Residents should call the repairs telephone number **01962 865405** and this will transfer directly to the Out of Hours service.

- 5pm - 8am each working day
- Weekends

- Bank holidays

## URGENT REPAIRS - 24 HOURS

These repairs require urgent attention to prevent residents from experiencing significant inconvenience, risks to health and safety or further damage to the council's property.

The following Urgent repairs will be attended to within 24 hours and made safe at a subsequent visit if a full repair cannot be completed:

- Blocked toilet, soil stacks and sewers
- Restore flush to WC where tenant is unable to flush with a bucket of water.
- Insecure windows and doors
- Unsafe electrical fittings and lights
- Blocked or leaking foul drains.
- Total or partial loss of heating and hot water (between 1 Nov -30 April). Where this cannot be completed because there is a need to obtain parts, an alternative source of heating will be provided.
- Minor health and safety repairs to communal parts
- Providing access where a key is lost or misplaced.

The council may recharge a resident for the following:

## 7. RESPONSIVE REPAIRS (CONTINUED)

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- Blocked WC's
- Blocked sinks, WHB's baths and showers
- Broken windows or doors
- Blocked drains
- Gaining access where a door key is misplaced

### ROUTINE REPAIRS – 1-30 WORKING DAYS

The following repairs will be attended to within 3 working days:

- Total or partial loss of heating and hot water (between 1 May -31 Oct).
- Door entry systems if security is a significant concern.
- Restore flush to WC where a tenant can flush with a bucket of water.

All other repairs will be carried out within 1 to 30 working days.

### REPAIRS APPOINTMENTS

The council will aim to make appointments for all routine repairs except for those relating to communal areas. Appointments will generally be made at the first point of contact with the resident and for a time and date that is convenient. We will offer appointments for pre- and post-inspections as required.

The following appointment time slots

will be available:

- Morning - between 8am and 12pm
- Afternoon - between 12pm and 5pm
- Avoiding school run appointments 9.30am -2.30pm. \*\*\*
- Saturday mornings (9am- 1pm) and twilight appointments (5pm -8pm). \*\*\*

Residents will be informed about progress with their repairs through various channels including telephone, text messaging and email. The council will keep residents informed of progress with repairs as required.

Residents will be able to log in to the council's website to track repair progress. \*\*\*

If an appointment cannot be kept, residents must inform the council at the earliest opportunity. If there is no access and no contact from the customer, the job order will be cancelled after the council's access procedure has been complied with.

Gas leaks should be reported to National Grid immediately by calling the National Gas emergency number.

Power cuts should be reported by calling UK Power Networks.

**\*\*\* Not currently included in the service**

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## KEY REPAIRS PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The council aims to consistently achieve and surpass the following performance measures.

- The number of jobs completed first time - > 90%
- The number of appointments kept -> 95%
- Customer satisfaction in day-to-day repairs - > 90%

Performance will be reported monthly on the WCC website and via internal communication channels \*\*\*

**\*\*\* *Not currently included in the service***

## 8. PLANNED PROGRAMMES

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### CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

These works will be carried out based on need and cost. Timescales for any agreed works will be communicated with residents who will be impacted by the works.

### PLANNED WORKS

The council will undertake planned works to deliver home improvements for residents. The council will create a planned programme which will be publicised on the council's website. This programme will be reliant on available funding, informed by the 5-year stock condition survey and therefore subject to change.

The council will consult with residents on all planned works, explain how the works will be carried out and be clear about the impact of the works.

Wherever possible the council will give residents choice in the selection of certain design aspects for example, kitchen and bathroom replacements.

The council will publish the planned and cyclical programmes on the website. \*\*\*

[Find out when your external repair and painting is due - Winchester City Council](#)

**\*\*\* Not currently included in the service**

## 9. VOIDS

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The council aims to maintain a consistent, cost-effective letting standard for all void properties. All voids should be turned around within set timescales and will be safe, secure, clean, free of damp and mould, in sound condition and with services in full working order.

Residents must remove all personal effects inc debris and waste on leaving the property. Failure to do so could lead to the full cost being recharged.

Residents must ensure that the property is clean when leaving. Failure to do so could lead to the full cost of a deep clean being recharged.

Residents must ensure that the internal decorations of the property are restored to moderate colour schemes on leaving. Failure to do so could lead to the full cost of re-decorating being recharged.

Residents must ensure that any alterations to the property are restored to the original condition unless specifically agreed with the council. Failure to do so could lead to the full cost of restoration being recharged.



## 10. DEFECTS

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For newly built homes the developer/builder is responsible for any defects that may occur for the first 12 months, which is known as the 12-month defect period. Residents will be made aware of when the 12-month defect period started and is due to end when moving into their new home.

During this 12-month defect period of a newly built home, residents should report repairs directly to the council to ensure that they are resolved with the developer/builder. Defects which come to light following the initial 12-month period must also be reported directly to the council to investigate.

Housing Property Services will undertake Post Inspections of jobs that are above a value that is commensurate with contract terms.

## 11. AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

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The council can help facilitate and support independent living, by carrying out alterations and adaptations to meet the needs of residents and enhance the quality of life within the home. The council's Aids and Adaptations Policy will apply.

## 12. CONTRACTORS

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All Contractors working with the council will be required to adhere to the council's Contractor's Code of Conduct (Appendix A). The council's Code of Conduct outlines the standard of service that all contractors are expected to deliver to the council's residents.

All contractors will be made aware of this policy and any other relevant policies such as the council's Health and Safety and Environmental policies.

All contractors will be required to implement their own Safeguarding Policy and comply with the council's Safeguarding policy.

## 13. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (ED&I)

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Diversity is about respecting people's individual differences and ensuring that all people that encounter the council's repairs service have access to the same high standards of behaviour and service.

The council is committed to ensuring that no resident will be treated less favourably because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

### **Housing Accessibility Statement 2022**

These measures require staff to design contact and communication around the individual. Respect what we already know about people or ask them what would help. By taking this approach the outcome is more likely to be successful; plus it should mean that residents will be happier, that there'll be less work and conflict for council from follow up and complaints as well as saving the organisation costs.

Monitoring performance against this standard (for those living in council homes) is through the annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey which looks for variances between household groups to check for disparities in service delivery. The survey also asks about ease of use, fairness and respect. Survey reports can be found on the website.

## 14. CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

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The council aims to ensure that all residents are consulted prior to any major decision being taken on planned or major works that affect their home. A range of approaches to consultation will be used regarding repairs and maintenance.

- TACT
- Service Delivery Groups

# APPENDIX A



# CONTRACTORS - CODE OF CONDUCT

## APPENDIX A

# CONTRACTORS -CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards that contractors will be expected to meet to ensure a good service for the council's residents.

### **CUSTOMER FOCUS**

The contractor will deliver a service at a standard which meets the needs of residents. This will include:

- Introduce themselves and show formal identification.
- Always behave in a polite and professional manner.
- Will endeavour to keep appointments for all repairs appointments.
- Aim to fix the repair at the first visit.
- Communicate with residents about the work in a way that is clearly understood.
- Communicate with neighbours who may be affected by works.
- Respect the homes, contents, and environment of the council's residents.
- Always ensure the safety of residents.
- Keep residents informed about the status of a repair. In the event of any delay or cancellation, notifying residents as soon as possible.
- Apply the council's Safeguarding policy and report any areas of concern to the relevant council staff.

## **WORKING IN COUNCIL HOMES**

On arrival the contractor will:

- Produce a photo identity card which shows the employee's name, company name, address, and telephone number. Residents are guided to not let anyone in if the contractor does not show relevant identification and report the incident to the council's Repairs Team
- Be dressed appropriately and in branded clothing where applicable.
- Advise the resident about the work, how long it will take and any relevant matters.
- Be respectful of shared areas such as gardens, car parks and access ways.
- Speak to residents before crossing or encroaching on a resident's personal space and/or privacy. For example, when using ladders to work on upper flats, contractors must notify the residents of the flats below that they will be there.

## **WHILST WORKING AT THE PROPERTY THE CONTRACTOR IS ALWAYS REQUIRED TO:**

- Be polite and courteous and not use abusive or offensive language.
- Always liaise with the resident during works.
- Be considerate of the needs of residents who are elderly, disabled or otherwise vulnerable.
- Take care of resident's possessions (and replace any items that are damaged).
- Use shoe protectors or dust sheets as appropriate.
- Cause minimum disruption to the resident.
- Not move residents' possessions unless the resident is unable to do so themselves and only with permission.
- Confine and protect the area to ensure safety of both residents and the operative/s.
- Provide their own power source.
- Make sure all materials and equipment used on site are kept safe and with a minimum of inconvenience to residents.

- Be mindful around security and not leave entrance doors to properties open and unattended.
- Supervise sharp tools, heavy plant, power tools and toxic substances and keep them out of the reach of children and pets.
- Regularly clean up all debris created by the work.
- Completing repairs to a high standard, within the specified target time, and within one visit wherever possible
- Advise the residents when the work is complete.
- Provide residents with easy-to-understand explanations of work completed and guidance on how to use various components.
- Check that the resident is happy that the work has been satisfactorily completed.

### **WHILST AT THE PROPERTY THE CONTRACTOR WILL NOT:**

- Play music or the radio.
- Smoke, drink alcohol, take drugs or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Use a resident's WC, kitchen, phone, or belongings for personal use or for cleaning unless given permission.
- Work outside of defined areas unless by agreement.

### **WHEN LEAVING THE PROPERTY OR SITE THE CONTRACTOR IS REQUIRED TO:**

- Leave the site clean, tidy, and secure at the end of each working day.
- Clean up thoroughly and remove all materials upon completion.
- Make sure that, wherever possible, supplies of gas, electricity and water are fully restored at the end of each day, or where this is not possible ensure that there is an adequate temporary supply.
- Ask the resident if they are satisfied with the work undertaken.





Winchester  
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