

Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy



1 Aims of policy

Chorley Community Housing has a duty to repair properties under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1988. The aims of the Repairs and Maintenance Policy are to set out how Chorley Community Housing will provide an effective and responsive repairs and maintenance service to keep its homes and communal facilities in good repair. This policy sets out the levels of customer service and quality that the repairs and maintenance service will provide. The policy also sets targets in terms of timescales for completing repairs and targets for providing value for money.

2 Scope of the policy

This policy outlines how tenants, leaseholders and prospective tenants of Chorley Community Housing can access the repairs and maintenance service and be involved in setting and reviewing service standards in terms of both quality and value for money. The policy also provides a customer focussed framework to enable staff to provide a consistent high quality approach to service delivery.

3 Monitoring, review and consultation

Chorley Community Housing will agree performance standards with The Tenant's Repairs and Maintenance Theme Group. Using a suite of performance indicators established by the group performance will be monitored monthly and reported quarterly to the Board of Chorley Community Housing and the Tenant's Repairs and Maintenance Theme Group. The policy will be reviewed annually.

Review date: May 2007

4 Responsible Officer

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Executive Summary

Chorley Community Housing's Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy sets out how tenants can access the service, sets the standards tenants can expect and the level of performance that will be delivered. The policy outlines how the repairs and maintenance service will be delivered in terms of timeliness, quality and value for money. The policy also sets out the standards and turnaround times for void properties.

The policy sets out the code of conduct required by both in-house staff and external contractors and what are the responsibilities of Chorley Community Housing and what are the responsibilities of tenants.

The policy sets out how Chorley Community Housing meets the Audit Commission's best practice and key line of enquiry (KLOE) guidelines.

The policy demonstrates how Chorley Community Housing will provide value for money and best procurement practice with the optimum balance of planned and responsive expenditure.

1 Introduction

The Repairs and Maintenance Policy will outline the service provision under the following headings:

- Access, Customer Care and User Focus
- Diversity
- Responsive Repairs
- Void Repairs
- Value for Money
- Complaints

2 Policy

ACCESS, CUSTOMER CARE AND USER FOCUS

Reporting a Repair

- During office hours of 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday repairs can be reported by telephone using two repairs 'hotline' numbers.
- During office hours repairs can also be reported in person at the Cleveland Street offices.
- Repairs can be reported at any time by e-mail.
- Repairs can be reported on-line via the Chorley Community Housing web-site.
- Emergency repairs can be reported outside of office hours using a dedicated freephone telephone number.

Diagnosing the Repair

- Customer Assistants will help to determine the exact nature of a repair, reported by telephone, using diagnostic software – this includes diagrams, which are shown in the Tenant's Handbook.
- The accuracy of the diagnosis will help to complete the repair on the first visit.

Prioritising the Repair

Chorley Community Housing will complete repairs within time limits set by The Tenant's Repairs and Maintenance Theme Group. The categories of repair and the time limits are:

- Emergency Repairs 2 hours
- Urgent Repairs 24 hours
- Routine Repairs 3 working days
- Non-urgent Repairs 20 working days by appointment

Chorley Community Housing recognises the diverse needs of its tenants so flexibility in prioritisation, in certain circumstances, will be afforded to vulnerable tenants with special needs.

Emergency repairs are classified as:

- Emergency boarding up
- Severe roof leaks
- Burst pipes
- Blocked drains with sewage discharge
- Total loss of electrical power or light
- Major gas leak (call National Gas Emergency Services on 0800 111 999)

Urgent repairs are classified as:

- Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting
- Total loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of gas supply
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
- Total loss of space or water heating between 1 November and 30 April
- Blocked or leaking foul drain or blockage of only WC in property
- Only WC in property will not flush
- Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern
- Insecure external window, door or lock

Routine Repairs are classified as:

- Partial loss of electric power
- Partial loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 1 May and 31 October
- Blocked sink, bath or basin
- Tap which cannot be turned
- Loose or detached banister or handrail
- Rotten timber flooring or stair treads
- Leaking roof
- Door entry phone not working
- Mechanical extractor fan to kitchen or bathroom not working

Non-urgent repairs are classified as:

- All other works not listed above.

Appointments

- Chorley Community Housing will carry out non-urgent repairs by appointment.

- Appointments will routinely be offered between the hours 8:00am until 8:00pm Monday to Friday and 9:00am until 1:00pm on Saturdays.

Pre-inspections

- Chorley Community Housing aims to keep repair pre-inspections within the guidelines set by the Tenant's Repair and Maintenance Theme Group. (Best practice guidelines suggest that no more than 10% of repairs are pre-inspected but the Repairs and Maintenance Theme Group say tenants value the judgement of the Maintenance Inspectors and have requested that 15% of repairs be pre-inspected).
- Appointments will also be made for pre-inspection during office hours of 9:00am until 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

Code of Conduct

Chorley Community Housing will ensure that repairs are carried out with the minimum of disturbance to tenants. To this end Repairs and Maintenance staff and contractor's staff are required to:

- Introduce themselves and show proof of identity.
- Explain the nature and purpose of the repair.
- Behave in a proper and professional manner at all times, refraining from smoking, using inappropriate language, playing radios, etc.
- Take care of tenant's property and possessions and protect them from dust, paint, etc.
- Keep the tenant's home secure at all times.
- Keep safe all materials and equipment used to avoid danger to occupants and visitors.
- Reconnect and test services such as water, gas and electricity at the end of each working day.
- Clear any rubbish arising from the repair from the garden and other areas outside the property.
- Make good any damage to the fabric of the property.
- Comply with health and safety legislation, relevant codes of practice and the Chorley Community Housing Health and Safety Policy.
- Comply with the Chorley Community Housing Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Where the repair requires it, agree with the tenant the extent of removal of carpets, furniture, etc and their condition before the work commences.

Rechargeable Repairs

Chorley Community Housing will charge for damage caused:

- Thoughtlessly
- Deliberately
- By neglect

A debt recovery agency will be employed to ensure payment for rechargeable repairs.

Repairs will not be rechargeable if the damage was caused by:

- Fair wear and tear
- The age of the property or installation
- A crime that has been reported to the police with a crime number provided
- The tenant being a victim of anti-social behaviour

Access for Repairs Staff and Contractors

Chorley Community Housing will gain access for repair work to be carried out by:

- Mutual arrangement
- Appointment
- Liaison with Tenant Relations
- Independent conciliation
- Injunction (Injunctions will only be applied for where Chorley Community Housing has a statutory duty to carry out the work or there are health and safety issues. Legal costs in obtaining injunctions will be re-charged to the tenant)
- Forced entry will be used where immediate emergency access is required e.g. water leaking from one property to another.

Tenant's Own Improvements

Tenants have the right to make improvements or alterations to their homes. Written permission must be applied for to Chorley Community Housing. Permission will be confirmed in writing and the standard of work required detailed. The works must not damage the property or make it unsafe. The contractor used to carry out the works must be adequately insured against damage to the property or other people's property, possessions and personal injury. Tenants will be responsible for obtaining all Planning and Building Regulation approvals.

If any alterations or improvements are removed good quality replacements must be provided at or above the original standard. If any work to the property causes damage Chorley Community Housing will either insist that the tenant or their contractor carries out the necessary repairs or will recharge the tenant for the repairs.

Compensation for Improvements

Tenants could be entitled to compensation for improvements they have made to their property at the end of their tenancy. Tenants wishing to claim compensation for improvements, at the end of their tenancy, will need to get three written estimates for the work. Tenants must send copies of the estimates indicating which they have chosen and why. Chorley Community Housing will confirm, in writing, agreement to the estimate before the works commence.

The improvements Chorley Community Housing will consider for compensation are:

- Bathroom suites
- Replacement bath (colour to match existing)
- Shower (replacing bath)
- Shower (above bath)
- Full kitchen replacement
- Additional kitchen units (to match existing)
- Additional kitchen work surfaces for food preparation
- Replacement external door
- Full central heating
- Balanced flue gas room heater
- Electric storage heater
- Gas fire (only if appliance replaced is over 5 years old)
- Gas fire and back boiler (only if appliance replaced is over 10 years old)
- Expansion of existing heating system (provided boiler has sufficient capacity)
- Mains wired smoke alarms
- Additional lights
- External security lights

- Extractor fans to bathroom or kitchen
- External window replacement
- Replacement of single glazing with double glazed unit
- Loft insulation (must bring insulation up to 200mm)
- Insulation of pipework water tanks and cylinder
- Cavity wall insulation
- Draught proofing of external doors and windows
- Door or window locks of improved specification to those currently fitted.

Claiming Compensation for Improvements

Tenants wishing to make a claim for compensation should inform Chorley Community Housing within 14 days of the end of the tenancy. Compensation will not be paid if the tenant is buying their home through 'right to buy' as improvements are not included in the purchase price.

Compensation is calculated on the current value of the improvement at the end of the tenancy. The value of the improvement will reduce over time and is dependent on the condition at the end of the tenancy. Chorley Community Housing will offset any arrears from the compensation due. The maximum amount of compensation that will be paid is £3,000. No compensation will be paid for claims below £250.

Tenants cannot claim compensation for their own time spent on improving the property.

DIVERSITY

Tenant Profile Information

The Tenant Profile Survey 2005 has provided Chorley Community Housing with a clear understanding of the service user profile.

From this Chorley Community Housing will keep records and monitor information about tenants in terms of:

- Ethnicity
- Vulnerability
- Disability

The housing management system will automatically highlight this information when repairs are issued allowing the service to be tailored to individual needs.

Provision of Information

Chorley Community Housing will provide the 'Language Line' interpreting facility in the customer facing offices at Cleveland Street.

Information about the service and service standards will be provided in:

- A range of languages
- Large print
- Braille
- On tape

Discrimination

Chorley Community Housing does not discriminate against any person or other organisation on the grounds of:

- Race
- Ethnic origin
- Disability
- Nationality
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Age
- Class
- Appearance
- Religion
- Responsibility for dependants
- Unrelated criminal activities
- HIV positive
- AIDS
- Or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

Schedule of Rates

Chorley Community Housing uses the National Housing Federation (NHF) Schedule of Rates (SOR) to allow repair orders to be issued quickly and efficiently without the need for long-winded approvals.

Additional work necessary to complete the repair can be identified and added to the repair order using SOR codes by the Repair Officer on site.

Quality Assurance

Maintenance Inspectors and Senior Housing Repair Officers carry out post inspections. Any sub-standard repair work discovered is corrected without additional payment to incentivise high quality work. Work is chosen for post inspection using a risk based methodology.

Telephone satisfaction surveys to determine the quality and timeliness of repair work are carried out by the Customer Assistants.

The number of repeat visits and timescales against each category of repair are monitored monthly and reported quarterly to the Board of Chorley Community Housing and the Tenant's Repairs and Maintenance Theme Group.

Service Delivery

Chorley Community Housing delivers the Repairs and Maintenance Service in a responsive and customer focussed way by using the following combination of resources:

- Contractors
- In-house Multi-tasking Repair Officers
- Community Caretakers
- Handypersons

Service delivery is carried out in accordance with the Repairs and Maintenance Service Code of Conduct which ever of the above resources are used.

Inspections

Regular inspections are carried out to establish the:

- Condition of communal areas
- SAP ratings
- Location of asbestos

The results of the inspections are used to update the stock condition information, which provides feedback for updating the Asset Management Strategy.

Responsibilities

Chorley Community Housing is responsible for keeping in good repair the structure, exterior and communal areas together with installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity for sanitation, space and water heating. Chorley Community Housing is responsible for the following elements in this respect:

- Roof
- Chimney
- External flues
- Outside walls
- Gutters
- Rainwater pipes
- External doors
- Window frames
- Window sills
- Window fittings
- External painting and decoration
- Kitchen units
- Sinks
- Basins
- Baths
- WC's
- Toilet seats
- Flushing systems
- Drains
- Waste pipes
- Electric wiring
- Gas pipework and taps
- Water pipework and taps
- Water heaters
- Space heating
- Fireplaces
- Fires (fitted by CCH)
- Electrical sockets
- Light fittings (fitted by CCH)
- Gates (fitted by CCH)
- Boundary fencing
- Footpaths (within the boundary of the dwelling)

- Clothes posts
- Outhouses
- Garages
- Communal areas in flats and maisonettes
- Communal aerials

Tenants are responsible for keeping their homes in a reasonable condition and for attempting to solve minor problems. These include:

- Making good any minor cracks in plaster
- Internal decorations
- Changing fuses
- Changing light bulbs
- Replacing keys
- Replacement of locks due to loss of keys
- Replacing plugs and chains to baths, basins and sinks
- Replacing shower heads
- Replacing bathroom cabinets
- Replacing mirrors
- Replacing towel rails
- Replacing toilet roll holders
- Replacing floor coverings
- Changing starters to fluorescent light fittings
- Fitting plugs to electrical appliances and equipment
- Replacing washing lines
- Maintaining garden areas
- Taking reasonable precautions to prevent damage by fire and frost
- Taking reasonable precautions to prevent blocking of drains
- Clearing any sink blockages
- Replacing individual TV aerials
- Plumbing in washing machines
- Plumbing in dishwashers
- Connecting and maintaining cookers
- Adapting doors to accommodate carpets
- Replacement of rear dividing fences
- Sweeping chimneys

Chorley Community Housing recognises the diverse needs of its tenants so flexibility in responsibility, in certain circumstances, will be afforded to vulnerable tenants with special needs.

VOID REPAIRS (Work carried out at change of tenancy)

Lettable Standard

Chorley Community Housing, working with the Tenant's Investment Group (TIG), has set a Lettable Standard for the condition of all properties that new tenants can expect and covers:

- Services – Gas, Water, Electricity
- Amenities – Kitchens, Bathrooms
- Ventilation
- Dampness
- Ceilings
- Walls
- Floors

- Windows
- External Doors
- Fixtures and Fittings
- Internal Joinery
- Roofspace
- Cleaning
- Decoration
- Exterior
- Garden Areas

Safety Records

Chorley Community Housing will provide a Landlords Gas Safety Record for the new tenant following inspection and testing of the gas pipework and appliances. If any work has been carried out to the gas installation or appliances then a CORGI Declaration of Safety will be issued.

Chorley Community Housing will provide a Domestic Electrical Installation Periodic Inspection Report for the new tenant following inspection of the electrical installation. If any work has been carried out to the electrical installation then a Minor Electrical Installation Works Certificate will also be issued.

Additionally a lockable double pole (DP) switch will be provided by United Utilities to enable secure isolation of the electricity supply when any work is carried out to the electrical installation.

Void Turnaround Times

The Tenant's Repairs and Maintenance Theme Group will advise on the target for the number of working days as an average turnaround time for repairs and safety checks to void properties.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Cost Information

Chorley Community Housing collects information on the costs of responsive repairs and void repairs. This cost information is reported monthly to Officers and quarterly to the Board of Chorley Community Housing and the Tenants Repairs and Maintenance Theme Group.

Chorley Community Housing uses the cost information to benchmark performance through the Housemark North West Performance Improvement Club.

Procurement

Chorley Community Housing follows Egan initiatives and good practice in procurement by partnering down the chain and securing discounts for long contract periods and is a member of the following procurement consortia:

- Vantage
- Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation
- The Eaga Partnership

Internal Service Provision

Chorley Community Housing is committed to providing an in-house responsive repairs and maintenance service, using its Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) to provide high levels of customer satisfaction and value for money through efficiency and VAT savings on the labour cost

element. (The 'VAT shelter' only applies to works that Chorley Borough Council should have carried out before the transfer of its stock to Chorley Community Housing).

The use of in-house Repair Officers by Chorley Community Housing will ensure employment, training and apprenticeships for local people.

Chorley Community Housing uses the NHF SOR, which is a pre-priced schedule of rates that is used by over 300 Registered Social Landlords (RSL's)'s throughout the country. Contractors and DLO's are invited, by RSL's, under tender conditions to reduce or increase the rates by an overall percentage. This allows value for money benchmarking to be carried out and assures minimal uplift on the rates.

Optimum Balance of Expenditure

Chorley Community Housing will provide the optimum balance of expenditure between planned maintenance and responsive repairs. Best practice guidelines state this balance should be 60% planned maintenance: 40% responsive repairs.

COMPLAINTS

Chorley Community Housing is committed to providing a high standard of service to tenants. However if there has been a failure in this service then use should be made of the complaints procedure which is designed to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

3 MONITORING, REVIEW AND CONSULTATION

The Repairs and Maintenance Service is monitored using 3 national and 16 local Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). These performance indicators are monitored monthly by Officers and quarterly by the Board of Chorley Community Housing and The Tenant's Repairs and Maintenance Theme Group. The purpose of monitoring and reviewing the performance of the Repairs and Maintenance Service is to ensure that there are continuous improvements in terms of customer service, quality and value for money.

The performance indicators, listed below, will be reviewed with targets set and put in place annually to cover customer satisfaction, timescales, repeat visits and value for money.

Indicator Type	PI Number	Definition
National	BVPI 184a	Decent Homes – the proportion of homes which were non-decent at 1 April
National	BVPI 184b	Decent Homes – the percentage of change in the proportion of non-decent homes between 1 April and 1 April the following year
National	BVPI 212	Average relet time in calendar days
Local	HRM 1 (old BVPI 185)	Percentage of non-urgent repairs for which an appointment was made and kept
Local	HRM 2	Percentage of emergency repairs completed within target
Local	HRM 3 (old BVPI 72)	Percentage of urgent repairs completed within target
Local	HRM 4	Percentage of non-urgent repairs completed within target
Local	HRM 5	Percentage of non-urgent repairs pre and post inspected

Local	HRM 6	Percentage of repeat visits on all repair tickets
Local	HRM 7	Percentage of re-inspections
Local	HRM 8	Percentage of voids meeting lettable standard
Local	HRM 9	Percentage customer satisfaction on the door and window contract
Local	HRM 10	Percentage customer satisfaction on responsive repairs
Local	HRM 11	Percentage compliance with code of conduct
Local	HRM 12	Average cost per property of responsive repairs
Local	HRM 13	Average cost per property of void repairs
Local	HRM 14	Average cost per property of gas repairs
Local	HRM 15	Number of CP12's expired before seeking possession
Local	HRM 16	Percentage of services completed within target

4 Jargon Buster

NHF	National Housing Federation
SOR	Schedule of Rates
DLO	Direct Labour Organisation
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
TIG	Tenant's Investment Group
COT	Change of Tenancy
CP12	Landlord's gas safety certificate.
Egan Principles	A movement away from compulsory competitive tendering. Contractors and suppliers are selected on quality and service under a partnering agreement. Incentives in the partnering agreement allow sharing of saving between client and contractor/supplier.
Procurement Consortia	A group of clients who together can raise large orders with suppliers and achieve far greater economies of scale in purchasing than they could individually.