



Loddon Homes Limited
Repairs and Maintenance Policy
April 2016

APPROVED

Contents

Page Number

1. Policy	1
2. Purpose	2
3. Principles	2
4. Review	2
5. Application	2
6. Policy Statements	2
7. Maintenance Delivery	4
8. Environment and Sustainability	11
9. Leaseholders	11
10. External Decoration	12
11. Procurement	12
12. Showers	12
13. Resurfacing and private owners	12
Appendix	14

APPROVED

1. Policy

This policy sets out Loddon Homes Limited's (LHL) principles for Repairs and Maintenance delivery and provides clear guidance on how the stock is maintained.

LHL is committed to providing its customers with homes that are safe, comfortable and well maintained.

All LHL staff, Board Members and contractors are expected to adhere to the principles laid down in this policy and to have individual and collective responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied

We want to deliver a high quality repairs and maintenance service that provides our tenants with:

- High levels of customer satisfaction through providing a responsive, effective and efficient day to day repairs service including emergency out of hours repairs and void repairs.
- Achieve the Decent Homes standard and are designed to drive forward to provision of housing stock (app1). Consult and involve tenants to ensure we meet their priorities and expectations.
- Continuous improvement to the quality and value for money of our planned and reactive maintenance services
- A consideration of environmental issues in the development of new homes and use of replacement products
- A consideration of the longer term financial impact on our customers of choosing one system over another (e.g. energy products)
- Confidence that we comply with Health and Safety, statutory, regulatory and best practice aspirations.

2. Purpose

Loddon Homes will maintain its property to a good standard by developing and implementing a planned programme of improvement works together with approaches for remodelling or replacement of obsolete stock

Continual improvement of the quality of services to customers will be sought through regular service and procedural reviews.

We will regularly consult with customers, Service Review Groups and other representatives to ensure that the policy and its procedures remain fit for purpose.

3. Principles

The following principles will apply to this policy:

- It will be open, fair and transparent.
- It will reflect the current standards of operation and legislation and will be reviewed every three years.
- It will promote consistency in the approach to the Repairs and Maintenance services.
- It will reflect the Company's staff, tenant and Board members views.
- It will be realistic, achievable and provide value for money.
- It will be periodically reviewed to an agreed timescale
- It will support all Corporate customer care standards

4. Review

We will review this policy, procedures and staff training needs at least once every two years to ensure that it continues to operate within best practice, achieve measurable results, and achieve continuous service improvement.

Alternatively, the policy and all associated procedures will be reviewed immediately following any relevant change to government policy, regulation, legislation or change of service provision from LHLs nominated contractor.

Wokingham Housing Limited (WHL) officers will be responsible for ensuring that policy reviews are undertaken, that appropriate consultation takes place and that revisions are reported to the LHL Board for its approval.

5. Application

LHLs Board will approve this policy and delegate responsibility to the Asset and Maintenance Manager at Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) for ensuring that it is communicated and implemented.

The Asset and Maintenance Manager will provide training for staff to ensure that they fully understand the wider issues surrounding this policy and the procedure.

6. Policy Statements

6.1 Health and Safety

Scope

To provide assurance that all works will comply with Construction Design and Management (CDM) Legislation and that all significant Planned Maintenance operations will comply with the latest Legislative changes.

We are committed to ensuring that all works are delivered in accordance with current Construction and Design Management (CDM) Regulations to ensure the safety of customers, contractors and staff.

The service area will utilise WBCs (as an appointed contractor) Health and Safety Policies to provide consistent guidance and undertake safety audits to active sites on a regular basis.

Application

We will:

- Ensure Contractors adhere to the Construction (CDM) Regulations.
- Appoint a health and safety advisor.
- Exercise Clients duty of care for tenants, contractors and staff
- To ensure our contractors comply with the Contractors Code of Conduct.
- Pass Asbestos information data on individual properties to contractors prior to works commencing
- Pass on information to contractors in accordance with Data Protection Act with regards to known risks at properties
- Ensure that contractors are members of the Considerate Constructors Scheme.
- Ensure all Contractors operatives have a minimum qualification of Asbestos Awareness when undertaking work in our homes.

6.2 Customer Service (Equality and Diversity)

Scope

To set out how we are able to provide help and assistance within planned maintenance operations.

We seek to embrace equality and diversity in all aspects of our service delivery.

We aim to ensure that all of our customers regardless of race, colour, gender, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or appearance have the right at all times to:

- Be treated fairly and equally
- Enjoy their homes quietly.

We undertake to produce this document or parts of it on request in other languages or formats such as large print to ensure that everyone is able to access the policy.

We are committed to the principles of fairness and respect at LHL and, therefore, seek to embed statutory guidance and policy relating to Equality and Diversity in to all activities.

We will seek to ensure that it does everything reasonably within its power to combat any form of harassment.

6.3 Supporting Customers

Scope

To demonstrate how we involve customers in our processes as well as offering support to those customers with additional needs.

Supporting Customers' Needs

We will consider any particular requirements of our customers due to disability, age or vulnerability and where achievable create individual solutions for customers that are more suitable to their needs.

Additional information can be provided such as links to Social Services where aids and adaptations can be obtained through referrals and separate budget provision within the organisation.

Customer Involvement Should involvement be in Supporting needs

- We are committed to engaging with our customers and consult on views regarding planned maintenance installations and will involve them through the Repairs and Maintenance Group (RAMG), which enables tenants to actively shape and influence the services it delivers
- Have a voice and input to the repairs and maintenance service delivered by WBC
- Question and discuss issues in relation to the service
- Receive and scrutinise performance reports, including voids and customer satisfaction
- Actively promote repairs and maintenance
- Monitor and scrutinise the Local Standards and Service Improvement Plan (app1)
- Ensure value for money for tenants and Loddon Homes is achieved
- Respond to any changes in national or local policy and governance, in relation to repairs and maintenance
- Be involved in the development of specifications for programmes of work
- Be involved in contract selection and monitoring

The RAMG works closely with WBCs Asset Management Team to ensure these objectives are met. Tenants from the group are represented at the voids operational meetings as well as the repairs operational meetings. The group is also actively involved in target setting, the annual programme for reviewing and agreeing targets and areas for improvement.

6.4 Customer Satisfaction

Scope

To show how important customer feedback is to the continuous improvement of planned and reactive maintenance operations.

Application

We are committed to evaluating the quality of planned maintenance operations and will seek to obtain views and comments from customers in order to continuously improve service delivery:

- We will provide a Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire for every improvement and repair completed.
- Results will be broken down into individual work streams so that contractors performance can be analysed.
- Customers will be informed of the results of surveys via the newsletter and those customers who have had improvement works will additionally receive a letter setting out the results from the scheme.
- Satisfaction Results will be reported to the RAMG
- The RAMG will continue to audit the satisfaction reporting process

7. Maintenance Delivery

Scope

To set out how responsive repairs are delivered.

Application

We are committed to delivering effective and efficient maintenance programmes and repairs. We will ensure value for money for Loddon Homes as well as a high level of service for our customers.

7.1 Responsive Repairs

These are repairs which are carried out when components fail, and which cannot wait to be undertaken under a cyclical, planned or improvement programme. These works comprise of day-to-day responsive repairs to items such as plumbing/sanitary equipment, door/window fittings, heating appliances, electrical installations etc.

Loddon Homes will have a contract in place that provides for the carrying out of all landlord responsive repairs work. The contract will be designed to bring a range of benefits such as improvements in meeting target response times, year on year improvement in levels of tenant satisfaction and a range of cost and efficiency savings.

Details of how to request a repair can be found in the Tennant Handbook

7.1.1 Repair Priorities

In order to help deliver a more efficient service, repairs will be prioritised according to the nature of the work involved. Thus, repairs that are required as a result of damage or breakdowns that put tenants' health and safety or the property at risk will be dealt with faster than those that can safely wait.

The repair priority times that LHL will utilise are:

Priority 1 Emergency (3 hours)	There is an immediate and serious risk to people or property
Priority 2 Emergency (48 hours)	A serious risk to people or property is likely to develop if action is not taken quickly

Priority 3 Urgent (15 working days)	Problems are likely to cause major discomfort to tenants, or damage to the property is likely if the repair is delayed
Priority 4 Non-urgent (40 working days)	Items must be pre-ordered or made to measure

Pre-set priority groups will be agreed with Involved Tenants for the most common sorts of repairs. Tenants will be advised of the priority assigned to their repair at the time of it being booked.

7.1.2 Completing repairs

LHL will set targets of their selected contractors to complete repairs within timescales. However, this may sometimes not be possible, such as if special parts have to be ordered or if repairs are dependent on other organisations or suppliers. If there is a delay in being able to complete a repair then tenants will be notified, advising of the reason and when the repair is likely to be completed.

7.1.3 Aids and Adaptations

Loddon Homes do not provide Aids and Adaptations for our homes. For adaptations included in the below list, please contact Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) who will make arrangements for these enhancements. These works are subject to the adaptations being physically possible and the tenant meeting the requirements of the WBC policy :

- Minor handrails and grab rails
- Large scale adaptations such as wet rooms

Note - If a bathroom is due for replacement and this coincides with a Disabled Facilities Grant for a level access shower, our allocated budget can be added to the Disabled Facilities Grant installation. This approach to service delivery provides value for money and enhances customer satisfaction.

Additionally where a bathroom is due for replacement those customers in supported person schemes, aged over 65 or with a specific medical difficulty in bathing will be able to choose to have an oversize shower tray fitted to the same footprint of the existing bath rather than a replacement bath.

This offer is not intended for 'general needs' properties as these should reflect a family need over the property's lifetime and intended usage where family requirements are more likely to favor a bath.

This would be combined with a shower screen and separate electric shower unit. These works will be carried out with the engagement of an Occupational Therapist who will notify WBC of additional showering needs such as a shower seat or support handle.

7.1.3 At risk groups

If a tenant or a member of their household is deemed vulnerable, less mobile (perhaps because of advanced age or a disability) or the household contains a young child/baby then some types of repairs may place greater risks. These situations will be identified and repairs attended to more quickly than the usual timescales.

7.1.4 Out of hours emergencies

Loddon Homes will ensure that arrangements are in put in place for attending to emergency repairs outside of normal office hours where there is a serious and immediate risk to people or property. The normal response will be to assess the situation and make the property safe and secure, returning on the next working day to effect a full repair.

7.1.5 Appointments

WBC on behalf of Loddon Homes operates an appointments system that aims to strike an appropriate balance between efficiently organising the works and ensuring convenience for tenants. With this in mind the aim is to make appointment arrangements on the first contact with the tenant, with four appointment categories available for use:

Appointment Categories	
Non-specific within repair priority category	Generally used when access to your home isn't required to carry out the repair
Specified Day	Generally used when you are available at home all day

7.1.6 Pre-inspections

Some jobs will require a pre-inspection and a visit by one of our surveyors before the repair is arranged. These will include damp-related problems, re-plastering where the scope of the job is not known or if the diagnosis given by the tenant is not detailed enough. An appointment will be made when necessary and carried out within 4 working days.

7.1.7 'First time fix'

Loddon Homes recognises that both levels of efficiency and levels of tenant satisfaction are maximised by repairs being completed on a 'first time fix'. By this we mean:

'Fix' - being completed to a good standard to the satisfaction of the tenant.

'First time' - completed by the repairs operative during the allocated appointment slot, without the need to return for a second or further visit because the repair was inaccurately diagnosed and/or the operative did not fix the problem during the first visit.

Therefore, Tenant services on behalf of Loddon Homes will aim to maximise the number of repairs completed on a 'first time fix', with a target of at least 85% of repairs being fixed first time.

7.1.8 No access

Where access cannot be gained to undertake a repair Tenant Services will take appropriate measures to make further arrangements for works to be carried out.

These measures will include:

- Carding the tenant to rearrange a visit
- Telephoning the tenant to rearrange the visit
- Writing to the tenant requesting that they contact Tenant Services to rearrange a visit

Sending a surveyor out to inspect in instances where the tenant's original repair report suggests a potentially hazardous situation exists

7.2 Planned Maintenance Delivery

Scope

To set out how Planned Maintenance is delivered and monitored.

Policy

These are works that are carried out as routine preventative maintenance, in many instances at defined time intervals. The works are undertaken on regular planned cycles for servicing, inspection and testing of equipment, often as required by statute or regulations or to maintain the generation condition of the stock, and particularly the electrical and mechanical installations within the stock.

The principal items of cyclical and planned maintenance are:

- Annual servicing of gas heating systems/installations (to include the statutory requirement for an annual gas safety check)
- Communal boiler servicing
- Periodic inspection of electrical installations
- Periodic inspections of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- Periodic inspections of legionella when present
- Fire alarm checks for schemes with communal areas
- External painting and internal communal area redecoration
- Other planned works, to include the replacement or renewal of building elements or components due to them reaching the end of their life e.g. roof coverings, windows etc.

Gas servicing and gas safety check works are carried out annually and completed in tandem with the smoke detector testing programme. The combination of these programmes reduces tenant disturbance, improves access rates for smoke detector checking, and increases value for money by using one contractor. It is a requirement under the tenancy agreement for all tenants to provide access for an annual Gas Safety Check and LHL has a statutory duty to inspect every gas appliance within every one of its housing properties every year. Occasionally LHL has to take legal action to enter tenants' homes where access has previously been refused, this relates specifically to Health and Safety issues such as gas boiler servicing as detailed in section 7.4.

Loddon Homes together with Tenant Services aims to develop cyclical and planned works programmes that minimise annual expenditure on responsive repairs and maintenance.

7.2.1 Carrying out Planned Improvement Works

As of 2016 Loddon Homes stock consists of 100% new or renovated properties. At the point which this stock needs improvement works we will work towards a 30 year programme of expenditure that meets the long term investment needs of its housing stock.

7.2.2 Planned Maintenance Monitoring and Reporting

The Planned Maintenance Manager will report on expenditure, delivery and customer satisfaction in relationship to Planned Maintenance Operations.

7.2.3 Stock Condition Survey

We undertake to Survey each property every five years to refresh our stock condition data which determines our future works programmes accordingly.

These details are available to customers on request and we will undertake to investigate any differences of opinion.

7.2.4 Contract Monitoring

The delivery results of Planned Maintenance refurbishments are reported on a regular basis to the LHL Board as part of the KPI process.

Through the life of the contract regular visits are made by our Surveyor and the Contractor's team to ensure that delivery is achieved to the correct quality and timescales.

We will hold periodic progress meetings which include representation by members of the tenant groups.

Tenant Inspectors will carry out quality inspections on finished works which will ensure that the satisfaction information we record is robust.

The Planned Maintenance team aim to deliver a good quality service, regularly monitored with programmes of work which are easily accessed by our customers.

7.2.5 Service Contracts

Service contracts include the range of estate management and health & safety arrangements that need to be in place to ensure the Council meets its obligations. Specifically, Tenant Services will make sure service contracts are in place for:

- Regular grounds maintenance of communal areas
- Cleaning of communal areas
- Regular inspection and servicing of plant, including fire alarm installations, emergency lighting, water storage systems, kitchen extraction systems and lift installations.

The service contracts will provide for regular visits to properties to ensure service standards and health & safety requirements to be met.

7.3 Voids

Voids is the collective name for a range of repairs and checks that are undertaken prior to a property being re-let. When a property becomes void any necessary repairs will be undertaken to ensure that Loddon Homes only let good quality houses where the property meets its specified minimum standard – the Lettable Standard (appendix 2).

Current arrangements for undertaking void works are contained within WBCs Voids Management Policy.

Voids works will be carried out by a nominated external contractor.

The Lettable Standard sets out a range of checks which will be carried out prior to the property being re-let and the minimum condition standard for a wide range of individual components and facilities including internal finishes, floors and floor coverings to kitchens and bathrooms, windows, doors, kitchens, bathrooms and external areas.

7.4 Meeting the Gas Safety & Servicing Obligations

Loddon Homes is committed to meeting its legislative requirements for ensuring all of its homes with a gas supply have a valid Landlords Gas Safety Record (LGSR) . To this end we request our nominated contractor to service and carry out a Gas Safety Check for all gas appliances and boilers within all of our homes within 12 months of the anniversary of the previous date. To ensure we achieve this we will put in place a 10 month cycle for visiting properties to carry out these works.

LHL aims to ensure that all appliances within its housing stock, irrespective of the tenure type, have an annual gas service. However, in respect of leaseholders, we can only advise of their responsibilities in respect of their leasehold commitments, legal and regulatory requirements.

Any tenants who fail to allow access to carry out the service and annual Gas Safety Check will be subject to all necessary steps in order to gain access, which may result in legal proceedings and potentially the loss of their home.

Tenant Services, on behalf of Loddon Homes, operates a 24 hour emergency repairs service which includes arrangements for the prompt repair and/or making safe of all gas appliances within tenant's homes.

LHL has an absolute commitment to the provision of a high quality gas servicing and repairs service that:

- Properly discharges its legal and regulatory requirements
- Preserves the safety of its tenants and their household and visitors
- Is delivered efficiently and effectively to high standards of customer care

We will move promptly to upgrade boilers and isolate any gas fires that fail their annual inspection. Any faulty gas appliance owned by the tenant that is discovered to be connected to the system will have a 'defective appliance' label attached and will be disconnected.

The detailed arrangements for fulfilling the Council's legal responsibilities for accessing tenanted properties to carry out the annual servicing, safety check and repair works are contained in Tenant Services' [Gas Servicing, Safety Check and Repairs Policy & Procedure](#). (see Appendix 4)

7.5 Effectively Managing Asbestos

Loddon Homes acknowledges the serious health hazards associated with exposure to materials containing asbestos. We accept our responsibility under legislation to protect our employees, contractors, tenants and any other persons who may be at risk from asbestos in the buildings that we own, lease and manage.

As of 2016 all Loddon Homes stock were constructed or refurbished post 2000 at which point asbestos was no longer used in the construction industry.

If Loddon Homes were to acquire stock constructed prior to 2000 then we would adhere to appropriate legislation and protect all persons who may be at risk from asbestos in the buildings we own.

7.6 Effectively Managing Water Hygiene

Loddon Homes will effectively manage water hygiene of its properties in accordance with the relevant legislation. We will take any necessary measures to prevent exposure to staff, tenants and others to any hazard that could arise due to poor water hygiene.

7.7 The Right to Repair

Tenants have a right to expect repairs to be completed within the set timescales and, under the terms of the Housing Act 1994, the Council's tenancy agreement provides for operation of the 'Right to Repair' scheme.

Therefore, if a qualifying repair cannot be completed within an agreed timescale, the tenant has the right to request a second contractor to complete the work. Where the second contractor also fails to complete the work within the agreed time Tenant Services will pay compensation to the tenant.

Repairs that qualify for the Right to Repair are repairs to a tenant's home which do not cost more than £250 and which if not carried out within a specified period are likely to jeopardise the health, safety or security of the tenant or their households. Further information regarding qualifying repairs can be found in the tenant handbook, including which repairs are and are not covered by right to repair.

The process for qualifying repairs can be found in the tenant handbook

7.8 Rechargeable Repairs

Sometimes, circumstances will arise when it is necessary to charge existing tenants for repair work that Tenant Services has had to carry out because they fall outside of the Council's responsibilities. In such cases, tenants will be advised that the cost of the repair is rechargeable to them and advised of the repayment options available to them, including payment in instalments.

Rechargeable repairs are those which:

- Have become necessary due to neglect, carelessness or misuse or deliberate action on the part of the tenant or any other individual knowingly allowed into the property
- Are considered to be beyond normal wear and tear
- To rectify unauthorised alterations undertaken by the tenant

If a repair has been identified as rechargeable the tenant will be notified in writing, advising of the approximate value of the recharge, except in cases where emergency repairs are necessary.

Where a tenant wishes to have the work carried out themselves they may do so by applying and gaining landlord's permission but it will have to be to an acceptable standard. Tenant Services reserves the right to undertake any work itself and may recharge the tenant for the full cost of carrying out the repair. (Not sure if this is also meant to cover tenant improvements, like erecting a conservatory, where landlord's consent is required?)

Tenant Services will ensure that there is a consistent approach to rechargeable repairs and to recovering costs.

7.9 Tenant Responsibilities

Some repairs are the responsibility of the tenant and not the Council. Repairs for which tenants are responsible will be provided within the [Tenant Handbook](#) and are those set out in the tenancy agreement. The tenant will also be

responsible for the repair or replacement of any item installed by them in a property and for any damage caused by neglect, carelessness or deliberate action on the part of the tenant, their family, friends or anyone visiting them.

7.10 Achieving Value for Money

Tenant Services is committed to ensuring its repair and maintenance services offer excellent value for money and will therefore ensure that a range of mechanisms are in place to demonstrate value.

The mechanisms used will include:

- Benchmarking against peers
- Market testing against other providers
- Reviewing internal cost and performance data
- Internal business reviews

8. Environment and Sustainability

The delivery of Planned Maintenance operations will be influenced by a range of measures which ensures a Sustainable and Environmentally conscious approach.

Scope

To demonstrate how Planned Maintenance operations are able to help customers and the environment with energy efficient contributions.

Application

Where applicable Loddon Homes will endeavour to:

Consider environmental and sustainable principles in its planned maintenance specifications

- Work electronically wherever possible and reduce paper consumption
- Work with neighbourhood teams to ensure sustainable adaptations are considered in its properties
- Require its contractors to monitor and reduce waste
- Install 'A' rated energy efficient boilers and appliances
- Install energy efficient long-life light bulbs when a rewire takes place
- Will meet the current loft insulation standards as a minimum in all new build properties and set 250mm depth as a minimum for all refurbished properties
- All building fabrics, including walls, roof, flooring and windows will meeting building regulation registration requirements

9. Leaseholders

Scope

To provide a brief summary regarding planned maintenance works affecting leaseholders.

Application

A separate Leaseholder Policy provides guidance when Planned Maintenance operations are programmed at leasehold properties.

These works would typically be for external maintenance, re-roofing, decorations or in communal areas.

The terms of the Lease only require Loddon Homes to maintain the fabric of the building whilst all internal items are the leaseholders' responsibility.

(Windows cause more discussion with leaseholders than any other part of the fabric. In most WBC leases the tenant is responsible for the glass and fitting but WBC are responsible for whole element/frame replacement. It might be worth checking the LHL lease and adding a clarification in this document)

We have a responsibility to maintain the fabric of a building where leaseholders reside. When Planned Maintenance works are required we are committed to delivering these whilst observing all statutory notices and consultation periods.

10. External Decoration

The external decorations cycle will vary with different property types in the housing stock with items such as rendered elevations, brickwork elevations, GRP doors and uPvc fascias requiring different maintenance frequencies.

Details of external decorations works can be found in the tenant handbook.

11. Procurement

Scope

All Asset Management procurement will be undertaken in accordance with the Standing orders and Policy.

Application

Planned maintenance improvements will be procured in accordance with Loddon Homes Delegated Financial Authority processes.

We undertake to continuously review value for money and explore opportunities which are commercially advantageous to the company to ensure best value whilst observing statutory and company obligations.

12. Showers

Scope

This statement explains where Loddon Homes install showers as part of the Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Application

Details of the forthcoming years improvement programme are shared with Wokingham Borough Council ~~North Devon Council~~ and Occupational Therapists so that any overlaps in referrals or Disabled Facilities Grant applications can be determined at an early stage, therefore benefiting all concerned.

There are options available to customers for the installation of showers via Tenant Improvement Grants in the form of both over bath and shower cubicle alternatives. These Grants are administered by the Neighbourhoods Team.

Where a new or replacement bath is installed on a Planned Maintenance programme, this will incorporate an over bath shower mixer and a shower curtain as part of the standard specification.

13. Resurfacing and Private Owners

On occasions there will be a requirement to resurface footpaths, car parking or adjacent access where Private Owners are present. Where these circumstances prevail a consultation process should take place with Private Owners as there will be a requirement for them to contribute to the costs.

In all circumstances the scheme should be Tendered in accordance with the Delegated Financial Authority process and in any event at least three quotes to ensure that comparative quotations are available to support the appointment of Contractors.

APPROVED

Next review date	
April 2018	
Author	Related Documents
Karen Howick Business Support Manager	The Lettable Standard – App 2

APPROVED