



Repairs Policy

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1. Policy Background

- 1.1. This policy sets out the Council's approach to the delivery of the day-to-day responsive repairs service to our owned and managed housing stock. Our repairs service is one of the most important functions we deliver and is linked to our planned and cyclical maintenance,

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empty homes refurbishment, and servicing programmes, all of which have the key objective to provide and maintain safe, energy efficient and high-quality homes for our residents.

- 1.2. This policy will be subject to public consultation and will be reviewed to take account of any legal or regulatory changes.

2. Policy aims and scope

Aims:

- 2.1. The Council aims to provide a flexible, value for money and customer-oriented repairs service which is accessible to all, and gives priority to the safety, comfort and convenience of residents

Scope:

- 2.2. This policy applies to:
- Council tenants
 - Leaseholders of Council properties
 - Residents who have been placed in temporary accommodation in Council-owned properties

3. Key Principles

- 3.1. The Council will ensure its repairs service reflects the following principles:
- Comply with all relevant regulatory requirements and meet our contractual and legal obligations as set out in council tenancy agreements and council leases
 - Carry out repairs 'right first time' in one visit where possible, at the agreed time and at the convenience of the resident
 - Maintain high quality, energy efficient homes in a good state of repair that provide a safe and secure environment
 - To ensure the principles of health and safety and the Equality Act 2010 are central to working procedures and practices
 - To maximise economic benefits where possible by creating local employment and training opportunities in maintenance related work, and by purchasing goods and services locally
 - To measure and monitor customer satisfaction, listening to residents through effective resident engagement, involvement and co-production, consulting residents and groups, and making use of the information received to continuously improve the repairs service
 - Decarbonisation, taking positive action to address the climate emergency by protecting the environment and supporting the commitment to zero carbon homes by 2050

4. Relevant Legislation and Regulatory Compliance

- 4.1. The Council will ensure that properties are repaired in accordance with best practice and relevant policy and legislation.

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4.2. This policy is governed by a large number of regulations and statutory law. They set out the duties that need to be undertaken to provide a repairs and maintenance service. They include (but are not limited to):

- Construction, Design Management 2015 (as amended)
- Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Public Health Act 1963
- Housing Act 2004
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Decent Homes Standard
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities Regulations
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)
- Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 2018 (as amended)
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Safety and Quality Standard (2024)

5. Reporting Repairs

- 5.1. It is imperative that the options available for reporting repairs are well communicated to tenants and leaseholders, and that a range of options are available to ensure that they meet the diverse needs of residents. This includes residents who are digitally excluded.
- 5.2. Residents can report a repair or make enquiries regarding an outstanding repair or planned works by contacting the Repairs Contact Centre (RCC), by email or by reporting non-emergency works online.
- 5.3. Residents can report repairs by telephone by calling the Repairs Contact Centre (RCC):
- Freephone on 0800 952 5555
 - Mobile on 0208 430 2000.
- 5.4. Residents can also report repairs online:
- By email to Housing Repairs: HSG-Repair.Request@newham.gov.uk

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- Via the Newham Council website at: www.newham.gov.uk/repairs

5.5. The Council has established a dedicated service to respond quickly and effectively to reports of damp and mould. Residents can report damp and mould online:

- Via the online portal at <https://www.newham.gov.uk/housing-homes-homelessness/damp-condensation-mould>
- By email at: dampandmouldtaskforce@newham.gov.uk

5.6. They can also report damp and mould issues by calling the Repairs Contact Centre.

5.7. For emergencies relating to gas, electric and water:

- Gas leaks should be reported via the National Gas Emergency line (0800 111 999)
- Where electricity is cut off, residents should phone their electricity supplier
- Serious water leaks and/or flooding should be reported to the London Fire Brigade (999)
- Where water is cut off, residents should phone Thames Water (0845 9200 800)

6. Appointments

6.1. The Repairs Contact Centre (RCC) will offer appointments for all non-emergency repairs in each of the categories set out in 13.1 below, except for those relating to communal areas. Appointments will generally be made at the first point of contact with the RCC and for a time and date convenient for you. For repairs, and pre and post inspections that may be required, the following appointment time slots will be offered:

- Weekday mornings - 8am – 12 noon
- Weekday afternoons - 12 noon – 4.30pm
- There is also the option for appointments which avoid the school run

6.2. Residents will be informed about progress with their repairs where required through various channels including telephone, text messaging and email.

6.3. 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.

6.4. RCC expects the resident to have the following information available at the point of making the call. If the information is not available, the resident may be asked to call back at a later time.

- As much detail of the problem as possible including; repair type, nature of problem, location, severity etc.
- When you would like the repair to be completed based on your availability to provide access (where necessary)
- Any restrictions on times when we could attend (i.e. school runs)
- Any other access issues

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- Up to date contact details including mobile phone numbers and email addresses
 - Information on any occupant with special needs and/or vulnerabilities which we need to record and make consideration for
- 6.5. This is to ensure we understand the work required and allocate the right priority response, and to ensure the right trade operative is allocated to complete the repair on the first visit with the right materials at a time of your convenience.
- 6.6. Where work cannot be completed on the first visit and follow-on works are required, we will ensure that the resident is provided with a future appointment date within 24 hours of the original appointment.
- 6.7. Where this is not possible, for example due to uncertain materials ordering timescales, the Council will keep the resident regularly updated of progress via phone, email or text, and when we have a confirmed date of delivery, contact you to arrange a new appointment.
- 6.8. If the resident fails to provide access for a pre-arranged appointment, the Council will try all contact numbers recorded against the address. If we cannot make contact with the resident, a 'No Access' missed appointment card will be posted at the address, and a note will be made in the Council's records.
- 6.9. Following the issuing of a missed appointment card, the resident has seven days to respond and arrange a new appointment. If the resident fails to contact the Council within seven days, we will again try to make contact through all available communication channels, mobile, phone, text and email.
- 6.10. The repair or inspection will be cancelled after seven days of the second communication, if the tenant has not rearranged the appointment. If the tenant makes contact after this time the repair, or inspection, will be treated as a new request.

7. Repairs Quality Control

- 7.1. The Council understands the importance of treating all our tenants and residents with dignity and understanding in all communications, and respecting their homes and belongings while we carry out necessary works.
- 7.2. When you contact us requesting a repair our RCC call handlers will:
- Be polite and courteous
 - Take the time to fully understand the repairs issue and when these fall within our responsibilities, ensure this is recorded correctly and communicated clearly to the responsive operational team
 - Book an appointment at a time that works for the resident
 - Check whether any special arrangements are required, such as considerations around pets or children, and make suitable records to ensure the operational team has the information available and follows the requirements

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- Identify and record any special needs and/or vulnerabilities which need to be taken into consideration when delivering the repairs service
- Respect your privacy and confidential information

7.3. The person inspecting your property or carrying out the repairs will:

- Always treat you and your home with respect and be polite and courteous to you.
- Ensure any special needs and/or vulnerability considerations identified and recorded are incorporated into how we deliver the service
- Wear corporate Newham Council branded clothing and carry corporate identity card for added resident security
- Deliver the service using sign written vehicles creating a visible presence on our estates and increasing security of our residents
- Where nominated specialist trade sub-contractors are undertaking works on our behalf, they will carry an identity card which they will provide before entering your home. Residents should not let anyone into their home or building who claims to be from the council but does not have an identity card.
- Explain the nature of the work to be carried out, how it will be carried out and explain the safety issues involved
- Not enter a resident's home if there are unsupervised children of less than 18 years of age
- Work tidily, using clean dust sheets on all occasions, and clear away all rubbish and materials at the end of each working day

7.4. Once a repair has been completed, we will;

- Provide a repairs satisfaction feedback opportunity. We will do this by contacting the resident on completion of the repair by text, and/or via email or telephone where necessary
- Provide a clear escalation process should the resident be unsatisfied with the repair and wish to make a complaint
- Ensure complaints are acknowledged within five working days and are responded to in no more than 10 days of the complaint being acknowledged, in line with the Council's [Housing Complaints Policy](#).
- Undertake post inspections for a selection of cases, both desk-top and on-site, to ensure works are completed to the required specification and quality

8. Managing Repairs Performance

- 8.1. The Council is committed to providing a flexible, value for money and customer-oriented repairs service which is accessible to all, and gives priority to the safety, comfort and convenience of residents

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- 8.2. We will manage and measure the quality of the work we carry out, and how satisfied the tenant is with the repairs journey from first contact with the RCC to completion of the job and the various contacts and stages in between.
- 8.3. We will also monitor the performance of any contractors and subcontractors in order to ensure that residents receive the same standard of service.

Quality of Work

- 8.4. The quality of work undertaken is managed through inspections by the operational management team checking both the standard of the finished work and the quality of the materials and fittings used. Inspections will include desk-top surveys of completion details on a job including pre and post works photos. All operatives are required to take and store pre and post work photos of all jobs without exception. The supervisory management team will also carry out on-site inspections during and on completion of work, at a frequency suitable to the work type and cost.
- 8.5. Value for money assessments are completed after each repair by commercial management reviews which assess the use of resources and the overall cost of a repair.

Resident Satisfaction

- 8.6. Customer experience questionnaires are used in all cases. The information from questionnaires is compiled into monthly trend reports which are reported and published.
- 8.7. We also measure and monitor customer satisfaction through other opportunities, listening to residents through effective resident engagement at events including Local Resident Forums, Estate Walkabouts, Tenant Group Meetings, and Fun Days. Through involvement and co-production, consulting residents and groups, and making use of the information received, we try to continuously improve the repairs service.

9. Repairs Responsibilities

- 9.1. Repair obligations and responsibilities are outlined in tenancy, lease and license agreements. Tenants are responsible for keeping their home in good order and informing the Council when issues arise which may require a repair.
- 9.2. As the landlord we are responsible for keeping the structure and outside of the property in a good state of repair, including:
- External walls, external doors, external window frames and sills
 - Window handles, hinges, locking devices and restrictors
 - Drains, gutters, external pipes
 - Access paths and steps to individual properties, and paving around the perimeter of the building where installed
 - The roof and chimney

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- The internal structure and fixed components e.g. kitchens and bathrooms etc.
- External decoration
- Outbuildings which form part of the original structure, or have been provided previously by the landlord
- Repair and improvement to communal areas
- Installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity, and sanitation. The service up to and including the gas and electrical meter is the responsibility of the service provider, unless the mains supply outside the home is owned by the landlord
- Installations for room and water heating fitted by the landlord
- Lifts and shared lighting serving the building or estate, where these are not adopted by the council or in other private ownership
- Fences and gates installed by the Council, where they form a boundary between a Council property and public land. This includes borders between Council properties and streets, footpaths, alleyways, and public open spaces.

- 9.3. Where a fence is between a council tenant and an owner occupier or private tenant, responsibility for maintenance is determined by legal ownership of the boundary structure. The council tenant and neighbouring owner are responsible for establishing ownership where this is unclear, including by reference to property deeds where necessary.
- 9.4. Disputes with neighbouring owners will be treated as civil matters between neighbours. The Council may inspect boundary structures and advise tenants of their responsibilities and will set minimum standards where required.
- 9.5. The Council acknowledges that some tenants may have vulnerabilities that affect their ability to fulfil responsibilities for boundary fencing. In such circumstances, reasonable adjustments may be made, and the Council may exercise discretion to work outside the standard scope of this policy. All decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into account individual circumstances and obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 9.6. Most repairs to the outside of the building and the communal areas are our responsibility as outlined above. However, there are some repairs for which tenants are responsible. The following table sets out the responsibilities of both the Tenant and the Council:

Windows	Council	Tenant
Internal timber, UPVC or tile window sills (unless affected by rot or woodworm)		X
Skirting boards and picture rails (unless affected by rot or woodworm)		X
Window vents	X	
Window handles, hinges, locking devices and restrictors	X	
Doors		
Internal doors, ironmongery, and threshold strips (unless affected by rot or woodworm)		X
Floors		

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Concrete floors (not including floor tiles)	X	
Vinyl floor tiles where we fitted them (we will only do full replacement in bathrooms, toilets and kitchens)	X	
Floorboards and joists	X	
Loose floor coverings and fitted carpets		X
Ceilings		
Major plasterwork	X	
Minor repairs to plasterwork, such as cracks and small holes (less than 6 inches or 150mm square)		X
Fireplaces		
Fireplaces	X	
Sweeping chimneys		X
Staircases		
Staircase, banisters and handrails	X	
Bathroom		
Bath panels (unless we damaged them while doing other repairs, but replacements may not match existing panels)		X
Wooden airing cupboard panels, frames, door and shelving (unless affected by woodworm or rot)		X
Internal pipework boxing, but only if we originally fitted it		X
Kitchen		
Kitchen cupboards (we will replace cupboards that are beyond repair but not necessarily to match existing units)	X	
Cupboard drawers		X
Cupboard door catches, handles and hinges		X
Worktops (we will replace worktops that are beyond repair due to normal wear and tear but not necessarily to match existing)	X	
Hallways		
Hat and coat rails		X
Light switches	X	
Plumbing		
Water service pipes, overflow pipes and water tanks	X	
Blocked sink, bath and hand basin waste pipes	X	
Blocked toilet the first time only, unless the drain is faulty	X	
Taps, stop cocks and wheel valves	X	
Sink unit	X	
Wash hand basin	X	
Toilet flushing systems	X	
Toilet seats		X
Bath or shower tray	X	
Plugs and chains	X	

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Shower, if we own it	X	
Seal between the bath or sink unit and tiles	X	
Bleeding of radiators		X
Alarms		
Smoke alarms (when we fitted them but not including the battery)	X	
Carbon monoxide alarms	X	
Internal Decoration		
Internal decoration		X
Home Security		
Extra door and window locks		X
Security door chains and spyholes		X
Home Energy Efficiency		
Draught proofing to windows (unless it is part of the frame design)		X
Draught proofing to external doors (unless it is part of the frame design)		X
Separate hot-water cylinder jackets (after we have supplied the first one)		X
Low-energy light bulbs		X
Fences and gates		
Fences that form a boundary between a council property and public land	X	
Fences between neighbouring properties		X

- 9.7. We will also carry out some extra work activities for tenants with special needs and/or vulnerabilities.
- 9.8. Tenants may be recharged for emergency repair work where it is found to have been the fault of the tenant.

10. Knowledge and Information Management

- 10.1. Creating, storing, using and sharing good repairs records is essential to the Council providing an efficient and effective maintenance service, by ensuring that decisions and actions are taken based on good quality information. Recording clear information which is readily available to any member of staff who becomes responsible for a particular matter, easing handovers between staff is key to good knowledge and information management.
- 10.2. Communication with residents is improved when staff are able to access all of the relevant up to date information and get a good understanding of the issue, and what action has been taken (or not taken) and why.
- 10.3. Records made by the Council must, as far as possible, tell the full story of what happened, when, and why. A record should:
- Make clear who created it, and when
 - Be created as close as possible to the time of any events it is documenting
 - Be clear, specific, and unambiguous, and not include jargon or abbreviations
 - Include all relevant information, but not irrelevant opinion or speculation

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- Clearly state any decision made, and the reasons for it. This includes any decision to take no further action
- If an action was taken, be clear about who did what, and when, or
- For planned actions, state who will do what and by when.

10.4. From the tenant's first point of contact with the Repairs Contact Centre (RCC) and the generation of a works order through to completion and the collation of customer satisfaction data, information is held within our order management system.

10.5. Any information created on the order management system is then stored and maintained appropriately, in accordance with data protection requirements.

Appointments

10.6. All non-emergency orders are appointed at the first contact with RCC, the date advised to the resident during the call and also sent to them via text message. The appointments are recorded.

10.7. Every action by the manager, planner, support services or operative is recorded for future reference.

Moved Appointments

10.8. If we are required to move an appointment this must be done in consultation with, and at the convenience of the resident and recorded, with the reasons for the change included.

No Access

10.9. Cases where the resident fails to provide access will be recorded, as well as being communicated to the resident as set out at 6.8-6.10 above.

Follow-on works

10.10. Cases where work cannot be completed on the first visit and follow-on works are required will be recorded and an appointment offered as set out in 6.6-6.7 above.

Resident Satisfaction

10.11. The information from resident satisfaction questionnaires is recorded, stored and collated, providing the Council with performance data and the opportunity to monitor and action your feedback.

Vulnerabilities

10.12. The term 'vulnerabilities' has no standard definition, but for the purposes of this Repairs Policy, they are understood as characteristics that a resident possesses, either permanently or temporarily, that may mean they need care or support to complete repairs and maintenance transactions. These can include recognised physical disabilities or mental health issues.

10.13. These characteristics may also mean that reasonable adjustments are appropriate in how we deliver our repairs service to actively prevent harm or distress.

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- 10.14. A resident's vulnerabilities will be appropriately recorded, with due recognition of GDPR requirements, and the recorded vulnerabilities will form part of the consideration and decision making when designing and scoping the delivery of the repairs service to the resident.
- 10.15. All repairs staff will be trained on the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, particularly with relevance to the importance of knowledge and information management as a tool for compliance.

Governance and Oversight

- 10.16. The data stored on the Council's order management system is used to measure performance against monthly key performance indicators (KPIs) and also informs planning for service improvements.

11. Leasehold Properties

- 11.1. Leaseholders should refer to their lease for details of their repairs and maintenance responsibilities.
- 11.2. The Council is the freeholder of the block and estate for leasehold properties and is responsible for keeping the structure of the building, the common parts of the block and any external communal areas in a good state of repair as outlined in 9.2 above.
- 11.3. Leaseholders are responsible for the repair and maintenance of everything inside their home, while we are responsible for the structure, exterior and communal parts of the building, including:
- Lifts
 - Communal television aerials
 - Door entry systems
 - Electronic barriers and gates
 - Roofs
 - Main entrance door of a block
- 11.4. In terms of windows: for communal areas, the Council are responsible for all window related repairs. In the leaseholder's home, the Council are responsible for the outside sill, handles, latches/locks and hinges, sash cords and weights and window springs. The leaseholder is responsible for beading and sealant, glazing (glass) and inside window sills.
- 11.5. The Council is responsible for the maintenance of communal pipework and utilities servicing the block or estate which may run through a leaseholder's property, such as above ground drainage, communal ventilation systems, water pipes or cabling. Such items are often in ducts provided with access panels. Where internal improvements are carried out by the leaseholder, it is essential that free access to such panels is maintained.
- 11.6. From time to time the council may need to carry out works to communal pipework or utilities running through the leaseholder's property or when trying to trace and resolve a suspected

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water leak from pipework in the leaseholder's property which is affecting neighbouring properties.

- 11.7. Under the terms of the lease agreement, access to the property must be provided (including the garden) when the council provides you with reasonable notice of its need for access to carry out repairs or maintenance works. The council will always attempt to give leaseholders sufficient notice of its need to gain access to carry out works. However, in emergency situations when the leaseholder cannot be contacted, the council has the right under the lease agreement to force entry to the property to make an emergency situation safe.
- 11.8. Leaseholders living in blocks are strongly encouraged to ensure the front entrance door to their property meets current fire safety regulations. Failure to do so may compromise the fire safety of the block in which the property forms part and the Fire Brigade may take action to force the leaseholder to comply with the regulations.
- 11.9. Leaseholders are responsible for repairing any damage to property belonging to the council or other third parties as a result of neglect or carelessness caused by them, a member of their family, tenant or visitor.
- 11.10. Should the council have to complete any repair works to rectify damage caused that is the fault of a leaseholder or a member of their household, tenant or visitors the council will recharge the leaseholder for its costs associated with these works.

12. Right to Repair

- 12.1. The Right to Repair scheme gives tenants the right to have a small emergency or urgent repair done quickly and to be paid compensation if the Council fails to do so. To qualify for this, a repair must be a 'Qualifying Repair'. This means a repair:
- Is classed as an emergency or urgent repair
 - Has an estimated value of less than £250
 - We are responsible for the repair
- 12.2. The Right to Repair does not apply if:
- The tenant chooses to have the repair completed by appointment outside the target date
 - The repair has an estimated value of £250 or more
 - The tenant has not provided access for inspection or for the repair to be carried out, having been given a reasonable opportunity to do so
 - The tenant or a member of their household or a visitor caused the damage
- 12.3. If any of the repairs listed below are not completed within the set time, tenants are entitled to £10 compensation immediately plus a further £2 per day for every working day the repair remains outstanding, up to a maximum of £50.

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Type of repair	Time for make safe or repair (working days)
Total loss or electric power	1 day
Partial loss of electricity	3 days
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1 day
Total Loss of water supply	1 day
Partial Loss of water supply	3 days
Total or partial loss of gas supply	1 day
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1 day
Heating or hot water not working between 31 October and 3 May	1 day
Blocked/leaking foul drain, soil stack or toilet	1 day
Toilet not flushing (if there is only one toilet in the property)	1 day
Blocked sink, bath or basin	3 days
Tap cannot be turned	3 days
Leak from water pipe, tank or cistern	1 day
Leaking roof	7 days
Insecure external window, door or lock	1 day
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3 days
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread	1 days

- 12.4. Under the 'right to repair' legislation, tenants have the right to ask the Council to have a second contractor to undertake the works if the Council fails to carry them out according to the timescales set out above.
- 12.5. If the repairs are not carried out within the time limit allowed for the second contractor, the resident may be entitled to compensation.
- 12.6. In some situations where a repair is more complex or the Councils requires an inspection visit, the time taken to complete the repair can be increased.

13. Repair Priority Times

- 13.1. When prioritising repairs, specific resident related issues will be considered as appropriate; where special reasons warrant, priority times will be altered accordingly. The following categories are used to prioritise repairs:

Priority Category	
Emergency	RMS will attend within 4 hours and complete the repair within 24 hours. These are repairs that need to be carried out to avoid serious danger to

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	the health and safety of the occupants or where a failure to carry out the repair could cause extensive damage to buildings and property.
Urgent	RMS will respond and complete the repair within 3 working or 7 working days depending on the nature of the work required. These are repairs that may affect the comfort of residents and may cause damage to the property if not carried out urgently.
Routine	RMS will respond within 20 working days. These are repairs which are not urgent, although they may cause inconvenience to residents.
Planned	RMS will respond within 42 working days. This category is for work which does not need to be carried out straight away, but which is required for the long term good of the property. This work will be specified, grouped together and carried out as part of a programme of works.

13.2. In some instances Council representatives may need to inspect the defect to establish the precise nature of the repair work required, or take measurements or to site scaffolding. In such cases the Council will usually undertake the inspection within 7 days.

14. Emergency Out-of-Hours Repairs

14.1. The Council operates an emergency repairs service outside of normal working hours, which is available 365 days per year. This emergency repairs service is also provided 24 hours a day at weekends and during public holidays.

14.2. The types of problems residents should report as emergency repairs are:

- Dangerous electrical faults
- Heating failures for sick or elderly residents
- Major water leaks

14.3. The Council aims to get to the fault or leak within 4 hours to make it safe. We will tell the Repairs Contact Centre (RCC) what work we have done. We will then arrange an appointment to complete any more work that needs doing at a later date during usual working hours.

14.4. Emergencies relating to gas, electric and water should be reported to the appropriate supplier as set out at 5.7 above. This includes gas leaks, cut off electricity, serious water leaks and/or flooding and water cut off.

15. Damp and Mould

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- 15.1. Damp and mould causes serious concern because of its serious health and wellbeing impacts, and is a particular issue for residents living in our Council owned/leased properties.
- 15.2. The Council has established a dedicated Damp and Mould Taskforce to respond quickly and effectively to damp and mould issues, with the aim of intervening early to prevent issues developing into major health and safety risks.
- 15.3. The Damp and Mould Taskforce and Responsive Repairs teams will work together to ensure that a thorough assessment is undertaken to identify the cause of damp and mould, with all options being considered including disrepair. The way in which tenants occupy the property should never be the default explanation and all other causes will be explored fully first.
- 15.4. The Council will ensure that an effective response to damp and mould is provided to tenants regardless of the route through which we are made aware. This includes making referrals between Council teams where necessary.
- 15.5. The Council will acknowledge service requests made in relation to damp and mould within 48 hours of receiving the request. An inspection will be scheduled within two weeks of the initial contact, unless the tenant requests an appointment after that time. The timing of works will depend on the complexity of the issue and the scale of the works to be completed.
- 15.6. All residents who report issues with damp and mould will be treated with respect, empathy and with an appreciation of the seriousness of the problem.
- 15.7. Cases of damp and mould will be comprehensively and accurately recorded on our systems as with other repairs, as set out in section 10, above.
- 15.8. Residents will be kept up to date with progress and be consulted on how and when the works will take place. If they require additional support, for example the removal of furniture, this will be provided.
- 15.9. Where appropriate, the Council will provide information about reducing condensation to residents in a sensitive way that avoids blaming and stigmatising tenants
- 15.10. The Council will take a proactive approach to identifying and resolving cases of damp and mould in Council owned properties. Where damp and mould is identified as part of other repair works being undertaken, this will be recorded and action taken to resolve it.
- 15.11. The Council will make fresh contact with closed cases within 6 months with a follow-up inspection where required to ensure the damp and mould issue has not returned.

16. Home Improvements and Modernisation

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16.1. A secure tenant has a legal right to make alterations and improvements to their home provided they obtain written permission from Housing Services before they carry out any works. You may also have to get permission from the council's Planning and Building Control departments before Housing Services can consider your request.

16.2. Typical works which tenants and leaseholders need permission for include:

- Installing laminate flooring
- Altering the layout of the property
- Refitting kitchens and/or bathrooms
- Installing or renewing central heating
- Adding conservatories and/or sheds
- **Altering or adding fencing between a Council property and neighbouring property**
- Installing security grilles on front doors and windows
- Installing or changing satellite dishes
- Dropping curbs for vehicle access
- Introducing hard surfacing for car parking
- Rewiring
- Removing chimney breasts.

16.3. The council will not unreasonably withhold consent when you make a request to carry out alterations or improvements to your home. However, the following points must be given careful consideration:

- If you commission alteration or improvement works involving gas installations these must be undertaken by a registered Gas Safe contractor and work to electrical installations by a Competent Person registered and assessed by a UKAS accredited Certification Body. You must provide the council with the original certificate(s) issued by the contractor(s) on completion of their work.
- You should not cover over existing access panels, hatches, ducts or ducting present in your home as part of any alteration or improvement without providing free access to them so they can continue to be used for inspections, repairs or servicing activities.
- Where any proposed alterations involve penetrating through fire compartments, these must be suitably 'fire-stopped' to prevent the spread of smoke/fire. An alteration which reduces the structural fire protection of your home has a detrimental impact on the overall fire safety of your home and those living around you. An example of such an alteration may be the creation of an open plan living space. Such alterations will be carefully considered by the council prior to any such alteration being permitted.
- You will be responsible for any costs associated with asbestos testing, identification or removal works needed as part of your alteration or improvement project.
- The council is not liable for any loss or damage of any improvements or alterations carried out by a tenant with or without the permission of the council to proceed with the works.
- You will be responsible for any repairs, maintenance or replacement of the improvement or alteration that may be necessary. To complete a repair, the council may have to remove

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or damage your improvement to gain access to an area behind your alteration. The council will not be liable for replacing your improvement or alteration as a result of this work

- 16.4. At the end of the tenancy if unauthorised improvements are identified in your home you may be liable for the costs to the council of works needed to reinstate the property to its original condition.
- 16.5. For more information and guidance please refer to your Tenancy Conditions and always speak to your local Area Housing Office before starting any alteration or improvement works.
- 16.6. In cases where a tenant requires aids and adaptations to be made to their home in order to meet changing needs, a referral will be made to the Council's occupational therapist, who will visit to assess the tenant(s)'s needs. A surveyor visit will also be scheduled.

17. Policy Author

Name	Role	Service area and directorate
Emma Brunskill-Powell	Housing Strategy Manager	Housing Strategy and Partnerships

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