

at home with...



Repairs and Maintenance Policy

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1. Roles and responsibilities

- 1.1 The Board approves the policy and the overall budget for repairs, maintenance and improvements as part of the annual budget setting process.
- 1.2 The implementation of this policy together with the management of the repairs and maintenance service is delegated to the Director of Finance, Governance and Asset (Planned and cyclical works) and the Responsible Officer and Operations manager (Reactive and void work) referred to in this policy as the Responsible Officer.
- 1.3 Authorisation of expenditure on individual repairs or maintenance items, within overall annual budgets, is delegated to individual colleagues. The current levels of delegated authority are detailed in our Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Fife Housing Group (FHG) (the Group) recognises that meeting tenant and other customer expectations of a high standard of service delivery is essential. We acknowledge that the provision of a value for money repair service that is both responsive and of the highest technical competence is one of our tenant and other customer expectations and as such is one of our core priorities. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the corresponding procedures and other policies referred to within this document.

- 2.1 **Definitions** - For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Repair - The process of rectifying a component or installation in an FHG owned and/or managed property for which it is responsible, when it is faulty or in a state of disrepair.

Maintenance – The upkeep of components or installations in our properties owned and/or managed for which we are responsible.

Tenants– A tenant of an FHG property (including Fife Housing Association (FHA) or its wholly-owned subsidiary PACT).

Customer – Resident Voices, Stakeholders and partners.

3. Aims and objectives

- 3.1 Aims:
 - To effectively manage the repairs and maintenance obligations of FHG, for its tenants and other customers;
 - To comply with all relevant government requirements; and
 - To ensure that all tenants live in a safe and habitable environment at all times.
- 3.2 Objectives:

- To run an effective and reliable responsive repairs service;
- To continuously improve performance;
- To give the highest levels of tenant satisfaction;
- To provide a service that gives value for money;
- To engage openly and responsively with tenants and other customers about repairs to their homes;
- To provide technical expertise via FHG internal colleagues, consultants and contractors;
- To maintain up to date information about Fife Housing Group (FHG) tenant and other customer homes;
- Ensure clear information regarding repair responsibilities is provided to all tenants and other customers so they are clear on the division of responsibility for repairs and maintenance between them and FHG;
- Give consideration when categorising our repairs service to vulnerable tenants ;
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive and systematic programme of cyclical work, planned maintenance, major repair and property improvement; and
- Provide opportunities for tenants and other customers to be involved in the development and improvement of our repair and maintenance service.

4. Policy statement

- 4.1 The Group and its external suppliers and consultants are committed to providing a high quality service.

The policy recognises that a successful repairs and maintenance service considers its tenants and other customers, its resources, its statutory obligations and external affecting factors. As a landlord we have responsibility to protect the value of our housing stock and to ensure that the service standards and obligations made to tenants in respect of their homes are honoured. FHG will work together with tenants and other customers to ensure the high quality of its homes, through the meeting of mutual responsibilities.

5. Legislation and regulation

- 5.1 The following publications have been used to ensure performance standards and good practice are followed and statutory requirements are complied with throughout the Policy:

- The Scottish Housing Regulator Guidance Notes;
- Performance Standards for Registered Social Landlords in Scotland;
- Raising Standards in Maintenance;
- Scottish Housing Quality Standard;
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014;
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998;
- The Equality Act 2010;

- General Data Protection Regulations 2018;
- Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011;
- Construction Design & Management Regulations 2015 and
- Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing.

6. Landlord and tenant responsibilities

6.1 Landlord responsibilities

The Group is responsible for maintaining the structure and exterior of the property and for ensuring that it is fit for habitation.

This includes:

- The maintenance of all installations provided for space heating, water heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity;
- Maintaining drains, gutters and external pipes (excluding blockages caused by tenant negligence);
- The external envelope i.e. walls, floors, ceilings, staircases, doors and door frames (excluding decoration);
- Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues (excluding sweeping);
- Pathways, steps or other means of access/egress up to front and rear doors;
- Boundary walls and fences if damage significantly affects the use of common parts of the property or if it poses danger to any user;
- Drying poles and rotary driers.;
- Communal television aerials installed by the Group; and
- Provide an emergency out-of-hours service for emergency repairs only.

6.2 Tenant responsibilities

We will ensure that the responsibilities of tenants for specific repairs and the care and maintenance of our properties are clearly explained in our Tenancy Agreement and Tenant Handbook and that tenants are reminded of their responsibilities from time-to-time through publications on the FHG website, social media and newsletters.

7. Classification of repairs

7.1 Reactive repairs are day to day repairs that are required within a relatively short timescale and are to ensure the health, safety and security of the tenant and to prevent deterioration of the property. These obligations are defined by statute or set out in the Tenancy Agreement.

Reactive repairs are most often reported by tenants but can be instigated by any colleague from within FHG. Reactive repairs include 'void repairs' which are carried out to properties between tenancies to bring them up to specified standards to ensure that they are safe to be re-let. Repairs to FHG properties are primarily carried out by

colleagues, however, we do from time-to-time engage external contractors to carry out repairs on behalf of FHG. All repairs are carried out within a defined specification. FHG has a defined 'lettable standard' in this regard which can be found at Appendix 1.

7.2 Pre-inspections

Some repairs will require a pre-inspection before they can be arranged, to establish the extent of the works. These will be where the scope of the job is not known or if the diagnosis given by the tenant is not detailed enough. Such inspections may be carried out by a surveyor or a nominated contractor. Colleagues will always advise where this is to be the case. Repairs will then be issued in the appropriate timescales or programmed into planned work where appropriate.

7.3 No access

Where requested, tenants must allow access to repairs. Where access cannot be gained for a standard appointment, the repair will be cancelled.. Where the repair is an emergency or a health and safety matter then we will continue to make contact. We will try up to two times to re-arrange all appointment missed for a requested repair before the repair is cancelled. If not repairing poses a serious safety risk to tenants, the general public or to the building, we will take appropriate steps to gain access, which could include action in the Courts and which could lead to costs being recharged to the tenant.

7.4 Repair responsibilities

Some repairs are the responsibility of the tenant and not FHG; such repairs are defined within the tenant handbook and our Rechargeable Repair procedure, as well as the Tenancy Agreement. Tenants are responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement of the categories set out in their Tenancy Agreement. Tenants will also be responsible for the repair or replacement of any damaged items in a property as outlined in the Recharge Procedure.

7.5 Alterations and Improvements

FHG recognises that tenants may wish to carry out alterations and is committed to consenting to these where it is reasonable to do so.

It is a term of every Scottish Secure Tenancy that the tenant is not to carry out work, other than interior decoration, without the consent in writing of the landlord. Tenants should, therefore, seek permission, in writing, prior to carrying out any alteration.

We will seek to respond positively to requests from GP's and/or the Occupational Therapist Service to undertake specialised medical adaptations for tenants with specific disabilities or housing needs. In all cases the decision to proceed with required works will be subject to securing grant aid from the Scottish Government, the physical

constraints of the existing building and surrounding curtilage and an assessment of alternative housing solutions that might better meet the needs of the household affected.

In specific defined circumstances, a tenant who has carried out an alteration or improvement may, when giving notice that they wish to terminate their tenancy, apply for a compensatory payment where the work carried out is to be left. Details are in the Tenant Handbook under “Right to Compensation”.

7.6 Cyclical work

7.6.1 Painting

This category covers the external painting of windows and doors, the internal painting of communal areas in blocks of flats and the repair and painting of external rainwater gutters and downpipes. This work is carried out under a planned programme. Factored owners pay their proportion share of the mutual costs at their block.

7.6.2 Gutter cleaning

Gutter cleaning will be carried out on a regular planned programme. Where there are more urgent issues where there is significant leaking from gutter, particularly during cold weather these will be priorities and categorised as routine/urgent repairs.

7.7 Planned maintenance

This category covers the replacement of larger items within the home which are deemed to be at the end of their useful life, where the replacement can be predicted and planned for. Such items will include, for example, windows, electrical wiring and consumer units, kitchens, heating systems, boilers, roofs and bathroom suites. These items are picked up during routine inspections and as part of our wider stock condition surveys carried out to ensure compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

7.8 Major repairs

This category covers major works that are required to bring a property up to an acceptable standard, due to an unforeseen failure. For example, a rendering fault initially diagnosed as a routine repair covering a small area has then been determined, following investigation that the entire wall required re-rendering. Depending on the extent and estimated cost of the work, this repair will be made safe but will take longer than the normal routine repair timescale.

7.9 Gas servicing

To comply with our legal obligations as a landlord we will ensure that the annual inspection of all gas appliances and associated gas pipe work installed in our properties

is carried out. It is important that tenants allow access for this work. If following two abortive visits by our contractor attempting to gain access and a final written request by the Group which is not acted upon by the tenant, the Group will force entry to the premises in order to service gas appliances. If this happens, all associated costs will be recharged to the tenant. Further details are contained within our Gas Safety Policy.

7.10 Electrical and solid fuel heating systems

FHG will arrange for an annual inspection of all solid fuel appliances and electrical heating systems in our properties. Following two abortive visits by the contractor attempting to gain access and a final written request by FHG thereafter which is not responded to by the tenant within the period requested, we will force-entry to the premises in order to service. All associated costs connected with the forced-entry will be recharged to the tenant.

We will carry out an electrical periodic inspection every five years, with any small repairs carried out at the inspection. If any major works are required they will be added to our planned programme.

Where tenants intend to install 'hard-wired' electrical appliances, they must seek written approval prior to doing the work. All such work must be done by qualified electrical contractors and consent will only be granted on this condition. A minor works electrical certificate is required before the Group sign off this alteration.

7.11 Asbestos management

We have a duty of care under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 and 2012 to undertake and complete an Asbestos Management Plan for our housing properties. Our Plan is in place and has been implemented to cover all of our operations. We have an Asbestos Policy which can be found on our policy drive or by requesting it from the Responsible Officer.

7.12 Legionella monitoring

FHG is committed to operating procedures to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Accredited Code of Practice in accordance with the approved Legionella Policy held on our Policy drive or by request from the Responsible Officer.

8. Response times

- 8.1 FHG aims to ensure that tenants are able to report repairs easily and that action to remedy a fault is taken as quickly as possible. Response target times are published in the Tenants' Handbook. Performance against these targets is publicised in our Annual Report and three times throughout the year in our newsletter.

Our response times in respect of day-to-day repairs is as follows:

Category of repair	Target Response Time
Out-of-hours emergencies	4 hours
Emergency	4 hours
Urgent	3 days
Routine	14 days

8.2 Ordering repairs

Tenants can report repairs in person at our office, by telephone, by email, by letter or by completing a repair notification form on our website. We are currently reviewing our tenant portal and once operational this will give another stream for tenants to log repairs.

FHG provides an 'out-of-office-hours' service for emergency repairs and details of how to contact this service are available on our office answering machine and published on our social media sites, newsletter and website.

8.3 Emergency repairs

We define an emergency as a problem which is a threat; either to life or to property, i.e. it is a problem which may pose a serious threat to the health, safety or security of the tenant and their household, or to the security or integrity of the property. Emergency repairs should be responded to and made safe within 4 hours.

During office hours we will arrange for the work required to be carried out. Outwith office hours we operate a call centre that manages our calls and they will take the repair details and contact the relevant colleague to deal with the emergency repair.

8.4 Urgent repairs

Urgent repairs are those which are of a lesser priority than emergency. Urgent repairs should be attended to within three days. Items deemed urgent may include:

- Domestic heating and hot water;
- Water-tightness of the property;
- Replacement of sanitary ware.

The above list is not exhaustive. It should be noted that, exceptionally, the personal situation of the tenant(s) may determine whether a repair is classified as emergency or urgent. This will be at the discretion of FHG.

8.5 Routine repairs

All Routine Repairs should be attended to within 14 days. If materials have to be ordered, a temporary repair will be carried out. A full repair will then be made when materials are available.

9. **Right to repair**

9.1 FHG will adhere to the duties set out within the Scottish Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 2002. The timescales are set out in this legislation and are specific for qualifying repairs. Repairs which are covered by the scheme include:

Repair	Working days to complete
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stack, or toilets where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Blocked sink, bath or drain	1
Loss of electric power	1
Loss of water supply	1
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Unsafe access path or step	1
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks or cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Loss or partial loss of space or water heating where there is no alternative heating available	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the property	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1
Partial loss of electric supply	3
Partial loss of water supply	3
Loose or detached banister or handrail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7

9.2 A guidance note is available on our group website at www.fifehg.org.uk which explains the above table and further provides information on the Right to Compensation. Further information is available on request from the Responsible Officer and Operations Manager..

10. Rechargeable repairs

10.1 We will recover the costs of repair work where the cause of the repair is not the responsibility of FHG. Some examples of repairs that would be rechargeable to tenants are:

- Damage caused by negligence by the tenant, a member of their household or visitor;
- Making good of unauthorised alterations i.e. shower or electrical installations not to an acceptable standard;
- Forcing entry due to lost keys;
- Vandalised glazing;
- Failing to return property to FHG's lettable standard as advised at pre-end of tenancy inspections; and
- Failure to provide access for annual gas safety checks.

Full details are contained within FHG's Rechargeable Repairs Procedure.

10.2 Void (empty property) works

Tenants are required to give 28 days' notice of their intention to terminate. Once we receive this we will send a pack informing tenants of their duties and responsibilities. The next stage will be that we contact the tenant to arrange for the maintenance officer to call and inspect the property.

The Maintenance Officer will advise the outgoing tenant of their responsibility to carry out any repairs or decorating required before they leave the property. Failure to carry out this work may result in recharges to the outgoing tenant. If the outgoing tenant does not provide access, they will still be liable for any work which would be the tenant's responsibility as detailed in the tenant handbook.

Once the keys are returned to FHG the maintenance Officer will carry out a complete void inspection listing all the repair works to be carried out. After all repair works are carried out the void is returned to the Operations Advisors team to allocate

11. Pre and post-work inspections

11.1 All void properties, cyclical and planned repairs and a percentage of reactive repairs will be pre and post-inspected.

The current target for reactive repair post inspections is 10% in each category and this will be reviewed and adjusted as deemed appropriate.

11.2 A post-works inspection will be carried out when the value of an individual repair exceeds £500 excluding VAT within a tenanted property providing the tenant allows access. In addition, where a tenant requests a post inspection of any work, then this will be completed.

11.3 All major repairs and renewals will be pre and post inspected. All Occupational Therapist approved adaptations will be post-inspected.

12. Tenant engagement

- 12.1 Our In-house trade team have hand-held devices to facilitate a mobile workforce solution with jobs being allocated remotely to its operatives in the field. The tenant will be contacted by text when an appointment is made. It is then followed-up with another text the day before and another one on the day of the appointment. The tenant will be contacted by text to carry out a satisfaction survey and will be contacted by a member of our Operations Advisor Team for those comments marked below average.
- 12.2 Where a repairs has been allocated to a sub-contractor, the sub-contractor will contact the tenant direct to arrange access.
- 12.3 We will carry out a Customer Satisfaction Survey on a regular basis and the results of this and other satisfaction surveys will be reported regularly within our newsletters and website.
- 12.4 Where possible we will involve the tenant in choices, e.g. of colours or types of kitchen fitments, when planning cyclical painting, planned maintenance or property improvement works.
- 12.5 Our Scrutiny group, Resident Voices, will be involved at regular intervals to comment on the standards of our service, or on specific aspects of our policy and procedures related to repairs.

13. Owners and sharing owners

- 13.1 In the case of day-to-day repairs, depending on the estimated costs of the work, owners in a block of flats will either be asked to sign a mandate agreeing to the works going ahead and to paying their share of the costs, or will be invited to a meeting to discuss the plans.
- 13.2 For all planned maintenance or major repair work for which an owner will be required to pay a share we will:
- Carry out work only to the items specified in the owners Title Deeds (unless there is mutual agreement to extend the works); and
 - Consult and inform all owners liable for a share of the work and advise them of their payment options, including holding a proprietors meeting where the estimated total costs exceed the current limit set in the Title Deeds. This will only be where we have the majority rule.

- 13.3 Sharing owners will be responsible for arranging and paying for all their day-to-day repairs following completion of any defects liability period and for paying their share of all repairs carried out to common areas.
- 13.4 Where a sharing owner, visitor or member of the sharing owner's family have caused deliberate damage to our property they will be recharged the cost of labour and/or materials to make good the damage in addition to an administration fee as set out in our Rechargeable Repairs Procedure.

14. Performance management

- 14.1 This policy is performance managed through our ARC (Annual Return on the Charter) Dashboard. FHG Leadership Team will monitor each area relating to the policy and seek to improve performance.
- 14.2 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) asks Housing Associations to report on their performance on an annual basis using the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). This policy will be reviewed with this in mind and updated as the standards are revised by the SHR.
- 14.3 The day to day management of repairs and maintenance is overseen by the Director of Responsible Officer Operations. Regular review meetings with relevant colleagues takes place to ensure we continue to monitor and manage performance

15. Review

- 15.1 This policy is due to be reviewed every three years or earlier if required as a result of legislation changes

Lettable Standard

Fife Housing Group (FHG) welcomes you to your new home.

At Fife Housing Group we believe you have the right to know the standards you should expect to receive from your landlord. For this reason we have included a summary of our re-let intentions so that once you have moved in, we can be sure your new home is up to standard.

Overall standards

- There are two front door keys. Keys and fobs for back doors and close entry systems will be provided where appropriate;
- Windows and doors are safe, secure and open and close freely;
- The inside of the property is ready to decorate or is in an acceptable decorative order;
- The floors and any stairs are safe and where there is a staircase it has a secure banister fitted;
- All taps, water supply, mains stop cock and controls work properly; and
- All gas and electric meters are free from debt, or if not, we can arrange this for you.

Outside your home

- We will ensure that your roof is kept in an acceptable state of repair at all times;
- All drainpipes, guttering, soil pipes and manhole cover are in a safe and acceptable condition;
- We will ensure that the structure and render on walls and external surfaces are safe and free from graffiti;
- We will ensure that fencing is in an acceptable condition and is of a type that is appropriate for
- the area in which you live; and
- We will ensure that pathways and steps leading from the public pavement to external front and rear doors to your property are safe.

Cleaning and decorating

- The property including the loft space and garden area are free from rubbish or debris;
- All dangerous or damaged items left by the outgoing tenant have been removed;
- The property is free from infestations, damp or mould. We will give you advice on how to prevent condensation;
- Walls, floors, cupboard spaces, and windows are clean; and
- Woodwork such as skirting boards is clean and in acceptable condition.

The kitchen

- The kitchen units and worktops are clean and in acceptable working order;
- Storage capacity meets SHQS standard;
- There is adequate ventilation through a window or extractor fan and both are in acceptable working order; and

- There is space for a cooker, fridge and washing machine including adequate plumbing and electrical sockets for these appliances.

The bathroom

- All sanitary ware is fitted securely and free from leaks, large cracks and chips;
- The sink taps and waste pipes are clean, clear and are working properly;
- The bath taps and waste pipes are clean, clear and are working properly;
- The toilet and cistern is clean, clear and flushing properly; and
- There is adequate ventilation through a window or extractor fan and both are in acceptable working order.

Heating your home

- We will provide adequate heating and hot water via a gas, electric, solid fuel or communal heating system.

Health and safety

- Smoke detection is fitted in the property to LD2 standard;
- All systems and appliances have been checked to make sure they are working and are safe;
- A landlords gas safety certificate (where appropriate) and an electrical test certificate has been carried out; and
- Where a gas or solid fuel heating system is in place a carbon monoxide detector is fitted and in acceptable working.