



North Devon Homes

Responsive Repairs Policy

Contents	Page
1 Purpose	1
2 Principles	1
3 Review	1
4 Responsibility	2
5 Scope	2
6 Policy Statement	
6.1 Landlord Responsibilities	2
6.2 Customer Responsibilities	5
6.3 Right to Repair	6
6.4 Reasonable Adjustments	6
6.5 Performance Measures	7
6.6 Contractors' Code of Conduct	7
6.7 Right to Buy or Acquire Repairs	7
6.8 Use and Occupation	8
7 Consultation	8
8 Equality Impact Assessment	8

1. Purpose

This policy has been produced to ensure an effective and efficient delivery of the responsive repairs services that meets customers' needs, helps to preserve North Devon Homes' ('NDH') housing stock for future customers and provides value for money services.

NDH's aim is to improve our housing through building quality, affordable homes; providing a high standard of safety and security; combined with the delivery of a modern and efficient repairs and maintenance service, all contributing to overall customer satisfaction.

2. 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 will be reviewed whenever industry standards, legislation or guidelines change.
- It will promote consistency in the approach to the repairs and maintenance services.
- It will be used to provide a framework to inform and train staff, customers, and board members on how response repairs are managed in the company.
- It will be realistic, achievable and provide value for money.
- It will support the corporate vision, values, objectives and service standards.

3. Review

We will review this policy at least once every three years or immediately following any relevant change to government policy, regulation, or legislation. This will ensure that it continues to operate within best practice, achieve measurable results, and achieve continuous service improvement.

The Head of Asset Management will be responsible for ensuring that policy reviews are undertaken, and that appropriate consultation takes place.

4. Responsibility

The Executive Team will approve this policy under delegated authority from the Board. The Head of Asset Management will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is communicated and implemented.

Detailed procedures will be developed and maintained by the Response Repairs Manager in line with this policy to provide further guidance during delivery of the policy.

The Head of Asset Management is responsible for ensuring that staff training is provided, and that staff understand the wider issues surrounding this policy, its applications and the procedure.

5. Scope

- 5.1 This policy has been produced to ensure an effective and efficient delivery of NDH responsive repairs services for all properties for which we have repair responsibilities.
- 5.2 To provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, customers, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time.
- 5.3 To meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.

6. Policy Statement

- 6.1 Under S11 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985, our Landlord Responsibilities are :

To keep in repair the structure and exterior of the dwelling-house (including drains, gutters and external pipes). To keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling-house for the supply of water, gas and electricity and for sanitation (including basins, sinks, baths and sanitary conveniences, but not other fixtures, fittings and appliances for making use of the supply of water, gas or electricity).

To keep in repair and proper working order the installations in the dwelling-house for space heating and heating water.

Under the Housing Act 2004 - Health & Safety Standards for rented homes - our obligations are to identify if Category 1 and 2 hazards exist within our homes and the Act allows for remedy and enforcement action if needed.

Consideration for the assessment include:

- The chance of harm
- How serious it would be
- Any extra risk to children or older people.

The associated guidance also defines a vulnerable group as “a particular group of people based upon age who could live in the dwelling for whom the risk of a hazard is greater than for most people.”

The Care Act 2014

This Act sets out the responsibilities of Local Authorities to assess and meet individual care needs. A component of this is ensuring the suitability of accommodation. This is where we can support North Devon Council in providing an adaptation service for wet rooms and bathrooms and include minor adaptation for items such as grab rails and lever taps as part of our repairs offer.

To meet the expectations of the Regulatory Standards, In respect to the Safety and Quality Standard.:

Specifically, expectations

4.1 *'Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.'*

2.3.1 *'Registered providers must enable repairs and maintenance issues to be reported easily.'*

2.3.2 *'Registered providers must set timescales for the completion of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements, clearly communicate them to tenants and take appropriate steps to deliver to them.'*

2.3.3 *Registered providers must keep tenants informed about repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to their homes with clear and timely communication.*

2.3.4 Registered providers must understand and fulfil their maintenance responsibilities in respect of communal areas.

2.3.5 Registered providers must ensure that the delivery of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to homes and communal areas is informed by the needs of tenants and provides value for money, in addition to the requirement at 2.1.2.

Registered providers must also co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is available to tenants where appropriate and clearly communicate how they will assist tenants seeking adaptations.

A response repair is defined as an item of minor or routine maintenance undertaken in response to a request from a customer. They are carried out on an ad-hoc basis as the need arises and cannot be deferred for inclusion in planned or cyclical maintenance programmes.

We will diagnose repairs as they are reported to us at any time of day or night and prioritise these according to the following categories:

Responsive maintenance categories

- **Emergency** - up to 4 or 24 hours response (including out of hours) a repair that requires making safe / repairing where there is immediate risk to life and / or a danger / risk to the property. An example would be a severe leak.
- **Urgent** - 5 working days and relates to repairs that require a quick response due to the level of inconvenience they might cause if left for longer but are not emergencies. Examples are showers not working if the only means of bathing, no hot water etc.
- **Routine** - 20 working days is a repair that does not pose immediate risk to person or property and can be carried out by appointment. Examples include a dripping tap, internal door not closing properly etc.

Each repair will be assessed against all criteria including health and safety, vulnerability and security.

Repair requests that fall outside the remit of response repairs, for instance they require substantial remedial works that will take more than 20 working days to complete, specialist materials are required, or a proprietary access platform or equipment is required, will be treated as a Minor Works repair which will have a 90 calendar day timescale. These are not considered response repairs and so will not be monitored under the 'ontime' response repairs reporting figures.

NDH will accept repair requests at any time by a variety of means including:

- Telephone (Customer Care Team, H2H Desk and emergency out of hours numbers)
- In writing
- In person
- E-mail
- Via the NDH website

Repair requests will be raised via our repairs database and either a Works Order will be raised and issued to the appropriate contractor, or an Inspection Request will be raised for a surveyor to attend and assess and diagnose the repair as appropriate.

We will only carry out repairs that fall under our responsibility, details of which are provided in the Customers Handbook.

We will not carry out repairs for leaseholders or shared ownership, unless the terms of the lease expressly show that it is our responsibility; such as with the fabric of the external building or communal areas. New shared ownership agreements also pass some repair responsibilities to the Landlord.

Repairs will be sympathetic to the original construction, geographic location and support a fabric first approach to upgrades.

NDH has a procedure on missed appointments to clearly set out expectations for contractors when making appointments with customers. This is set out in our no access procedure.

Where a customer misses a contractor appointment, NDH may send a warning letter to alert the customer that for each further appointment missed a charge may be incurred equal to the charge that NDH receives from the contractor as defined.

Recharges for work not considered our responsibility or beyond normal wear and tear e.g. neglect, misuse or vandalism will be applied in accordance with the Recharge Policy. Where possible the Customer will be advised in advance of the anticipated cost of the recharge.

6.2 Customer Responsibilities:

Customers are responsible for keeping the inside of their home clean and in good condition. Customers are responsible for carrying out minor repairs.

Customers may be charged for repairs or damage that do not count as fair wear and tear, e.g. damage due to misuse, accidental damage such as a

cracked hand basin due to a dropped item, a smashed window or excessive damage caused through inappropriate use.

Customers are expected to help to reduce damage caused to the property for example if a leak occurs, customers should be able to turn off the water supply and work to mop up the water to reduce any damage.

Customers are responsible for reporting repairs in a timely manner. NDH may recharge for excessive damage if this could have been prevented by reporting the repair within a reasonable timescale and / or taking reasonable steps to avoid further damage whilst a repair is being actioned.

Customers are also encouraged to take out contents' insurance for their home as damage to personal effects remains their responsibility e.g. in the event of a burst water pipe, flood, or fire etc.

6.3 Right to Repair

NDH operates a 'Right to Repair' scheme as set out under the terms of the Housing Act 2004.

The Right to Repair Scheme enables customers to have urgent, minor repairs which affect health or safety completed quickly at no cost to them. Customers do have to notify North Devon Homes of the repair in the first instance (preferably written notice) and can only seek their own remedy if NDH is unable to complete the repair within a reasonable timescale. The Scheme also provides for customers to be compensated where such repairs have not been completed within a prescribed period. Details of the suggested list of repairs can be found in the Customers Handbook and compensation details in the Compensation policy

6.4 Reasonable Adjustments

NDH will consider reasonable adjustments for customers that have additional needs and have communicated these with us.

A reasonable adjustment is where we will change our service provision to as far as is reasonably practicable, remove any disadvantage faced by those with a protected characteristic or a vulnerability. These adjustments will be anticipated as well as reactive.

Reasonable adjustments may include consideration for a priority of a works ticket to prioritise a heating repair for an elderly customer, or to change a light bulb for a disabled customer that does not have support in place. NDH will also consider the installation of additional security measures where for

example, there has been domestic violence or children with behavioral issues. NDH will consider installing minor adaptations such as handrails, grab rails and lever taps where these are required.

6.5 Performance Measures

NDH will monitor the performance of the repairs service with a view to benchmarking across the housing sector to test that it is meeting standards with regards to quality and value for money. Performance Indicators recorded will comply with sector-wide standards so that we are able to compare ourselves.

Examples of current repairs measures are:

- percentage of repairs completed within the target date for all repair priorities i.e. emergency, urgent and routine repairs.
- Levels of customer satisfaction with the repairs service.
- Number of repairs that are successfully completed on the first visit on all repairs.
- Satisfaction with how the repair enquiry was handled.

NDH will also audit a percentage of repair work (ordinarily around 10% of works completed) using a Works Auditor. These will include:

- all works exceeding £500
- works for customers who have raised a complaint.
- unusual works or bespoke works
- a random sample across all works

6.6 Contractors' Code of Conduct

All contractors working in customers' homes will be required to accept and adhere to the terms of NDH's Contractors Code of Conduct, a copy of which is available in the Handbook and on our website.

6.7 Right to Buy or Acquire Repairs

The Company's properties are subject to potential Right to Buy / Right to Acquire (RTB/RTA) applications. NDH is obliged to be clear about the types of repairs that are essential to properties that are subject to these provisions, details of which are provided in the Repairs Handbook.

6.8 Use and Occupation

Where a property is under a 'Use and Occupation' Agreement i.e. there is no contract with the occupant, NDH will only carry out emergency repairs. The occupant will be informed of this.

7. Consultation

NDH will consult customers, the Customer Board Partnership and other groups in relation to the repairs service. This could include mystery shopping, reviewing our publications and communications with customers and helping us to shape our repairs offer.

Some of the consultation will be through established customer groups, but we will also endeavor to widen out the numbers of customers engaged through the use of social media, surveys and focus groups.

Date	Consultation methodology Responsive Repairs Group	Challenge / impact / result
July 2019	Scrutiny Panel	Customer review of policy
August 2019	Fresh Ideas Focus Group	Development of key points into policy guidance for customers and feedback into policy.
October 2019	Customer Board Partnership meeting	To finalise Policy and discuss age limit for responsible person at home overseeing repair

8. Equality Impact Assessment

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently to all customers of NDH and in compliance with the Single Equality Act 2010 which recognizes the "protected characteristics" as; gender, transgender, race, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, sexuality, age, religion and belief.

To this end an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy (see below).

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 can access the policy.

Language Line provides all corporate translation services, and they may be contacted on 0800 169 2879.

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

Section 1: Contact details

Please complete your details and contact information in the spaces provided:

EIA Author:	Claire Fallow
Job title:	Head of Asset Management
Department:	Asset Management
Submission date:	06/06/2024

Section 2: About the policy

Please describe what you are impact assessing and who it applies to:

Title:	Response Repairs Policy		
Aims / description / purpose:			
People it applies to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Customers	<input type="checkbox"/> Contractors

Section 3: Gathering data and evidence

Have you identified relevant evidence (qualitative and quantitative) to establish whether this policy could potentially affect some equality groups more than others?

Have you analysed equality data for each of the groups identified in Section 2?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you identified / researched anecdotal or alternative evidence?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you attached the evidence to this impact assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Section 4: Assessing the impact

Based on your evidence, which equality groups might this policy affect more or less than others (if any)?

Age	x	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	x	Caring responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fuel and food poverty	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Young People who may be vulnerable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Single parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	x	Drug and alcohol dependency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion and belief (including no belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender / sex equality	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural Isolation	<input type="checkbox"/>

Using examples from the evidence you have collected, please describe the impact (positive, negative or neutral) on the equality groups you have identified above and highlight any different needs required for this protected characteristic.

Note: if you are reviewing a policy/ guidance please reflect on the scope, language used and its application - does it fully promote equality and inclusion?

Section 5: Addressing any impact: action planning

Please describe any actions or mitigation required as a result of this assessment – include the timescale for each and who is responsible:

Action / Mitigation	Timescale	Responsibility
Consideration will be given to a customer's vulnerability or circumstances when agreeing to certain works that may be rechargeable, or timeframes to complete works. For example, if additional security is required at a property we may complete fencing that would usually be a customer responsibility. We may also give a repair job a higher priority than our services standards set out if we feel that the customer would be disadvantaged by not having the repair completed in a shorter time period.	Ongoing	Response Repairs Manager

Section 6: Involvement and Consultation

What involvement/consultation activity has been undertaken or is planned in relation to this policy?

Involvement / consultation activity	Results / Feedback
Scrutiny Panel review of policy (2019)	Development of key points into policy guidance for customers and feedback into policy
Customer Board Partnership meeting October 2019	To finalise Policy and discuss age limit for responsible person at home overseeing repair

Section 7: Approval and Publishing

Signature of EIA author:

Date:

Next review date:	Responsible Officer
Every three years April 2027	Head of Asset Management
Author	Related Documents
Position: Head of Asset Management Tel: 01271 312500	

