



Property Service Standards

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1. Purpose

To set out the Repair, Maintenance and Recharge policy set by Highstone Housing Association (HHA) to ensure we meet the needs of our tenants and that we are compliant with our legal duties, tenancy agreements and codes of practice. The policy describes our arrangements for ensuring that all our properties are well maintained and kept in good and safe repair to maximise the long term life of each property.

2. References

Tenants Handbook, Health and Safety policy, Customer Service Charter, Financial Viability policy.

3. Scope

The Property Service Standard details how HHA will deal with Reactive Repairs, Planned Maintenance and Recharges.

4. Objectives

- To provide a warm, comfortable, healthy environment and home, which is in a good state of repair for all our tenants
- To provide a responsive, fair, equitable, efficient and effective service, for all tenants, achieving high standards of customer care
- To efficiently utilise HHA's assets and prolong the useful life of stock ensuring value for money by adhering to the time, cost and quality principles laid down in the financial viability policy
- To ensure all tenants are given clear information about their responsibilities and obligations and those of HHA
- To establish and maintain a comprehensive programme of cyclical and planned maintenance, which reflects HHA current business plan

5. Reactive Repairs

5.1. Definition

This covers all routine repairs which occur in an unplanned and intermittent way e.g. burst pipes, broken windows, fused sockets, missing roof tiles, broken fixtures and fittings installed by HHA, etc. These repairs are usually requested by tenants or staff

5.2. Categories and Response Times

Emergency Repairs – attention immediately: These repairs relate to damage which could affect the health, safety or security of the tenants or the building if the repair is not attended to immediately.

These include:

- Burst water pipes
- Burst water tank or back boiler
- No electrical power
- No lights
- A blocked toilet where you have only one toilet

- Blocked drain from toilet
- Water leaking through roof or ceiling
- Total failure of heating system (winter months only)
- Boarding up windows or doors to make your home secure
- No cold water

Urgent Repairs - attention within 24 hours: These are repairs that are not an emergency, but cannot wait to be dealt with as routine repairs.

General Repairs – attention within 28 days: All other repairs come into this category.

HHA will be responsible for determining the categorisation of a repair, and whose decision will be final; the Tenants Handbook provides a breakdown of repair types. Delay may occur in circumstances outside the control of HHA, such as extreme weather or non-availability of materials.

Tenants will be kept informed of the progress of any reported repair request, including: how it has been categorised, when site visits will take place, any changes to plan and the likelihood of any recharge should this become necessary.

HHA will maintain a list of approved contractors and all work will be categorised and allocated taking into account: value for money, expertise, capacity, location and recalled work orders.

5.3. Reporting a Repair

Tenants or their carers will be asked to provide the following information when reporting a repair to facilitate correct categorisation and response:

- Exact nature of the problem
- Any action taken to remedy the problem e.g. checked thermostat, control panels etc.
- Importance of the repair i.e. does it warrant an emergency call out?
- Details of access arrangements for the repair contractors

The tenant or their carer should keep their own record of when the repair was reported, to whom and whether it was agreed that the repair should be treated as an emergency.

5.4. Pre Inspection

When necessary, we will inspect a repair to establish the extent of, or the responsibility for the work required, before any orders are issued. Where this is necessary, the target response time will start from when the inspection is completed.

5.5. Post Inspection

HHA will post inspect every repair costing in excess of £1000 and a random selection of all other repairs. This will help us to monitor quality and effectiveness.

5.6. Rechargeable Repairs

HHA will recharge the cost of a repair to the tenant where the work is required due to negligence or vandalism by the tenant, a member of their household or a visitor to their property or the wider property. The Rechargeable Repairs procedure is covered in more detail in section 12.

6. Major Reactive Repairs

6.1. Definition

These can be a result of:

- the sudden failure of a building component e.g. partial or full loss of a roof due to storm damage
- serious damage due to flood or fire
- a planned maintenance project which subsequently reveals the need for additional unforeseen works
- an inspection by a statutory agency who requires certain improvements to be carried out within a short period of time, e.g. fire prevention measures

All such repairs will be managed and categorised by HHA.

7. Repair Call Logging and Record Keeping

The Tenants Handbook describes the process for reporting a repair request. HHA will use integrated specialist software to log, manage and monitor all repairs. Both the Housing Officer and Contactors will use a hand held device as part of the repair management process to capture accurate information on site, including photographs, which may need to be taken to provide additional information to facilitate managing the repair.

HHA will keep the following computerised records:

- A property register to record all details of individual properties with or without a tenancy
- All repair requests, works instructed and associated costs.
- All planned maintenance and repair programmed activity.

8. Monitoring Performance

HHA will gather key performance indicator information looking at: number and type of repairs, categorisation and response times, cost of repairs and right first time, following the time, cost and quality principles. Tenants will be invited to provide feedback following a repair and as part of the annual Tenants Satisfaction Survey.

This data will be reported to the Board each quarter and used to help improve services to tenants and the efficiency of HHA services and their contractors.

9. Planned Maintenance

9.1. Cyclical Maintenance

Certain types of work requires attention on a cyclical basis such as gas safety checks servicing, electrical equipment testing, grass cutting, grounds maintenance, lift servicing, specialist equipment servicing, fire alarm and fire prevention equipment maintenance, water hygiene maintenance, communal area decoration and external painting.

9.2. Planned Maintenance

This refers to the replacement of major elements of a building which have come to the end of their useful life, such as external doors and windows, roofs, heating systems, kitchens and bathroom suites. These will be planned projects identified through the business planning process.

Planned maintenance is necessary to ensure properties are fit for purpose and continue to meet the needs and expectations of tenants and stakeholders.

HHA will notify tenants when cyclical and planned maintenance work is due to be carried out, keeping tenants informed at all stages.

10. Tenant's Responsibility

A detailed description of tenants' responsibilities is given in the Tenants Handbook and the Tenancy Agreement.

The tenant agrees to repair or replace items damaged or lost through neglect, accidental or wilful damage on the part of the tenant or any member of the tenants' household or a visitor to their property, including the wider property.

HHA will recharge tenants for work which is their responsibility and is undertaken by HHA. Tenants will need to seek permission from HHA should they wish to carry out any repairs using their own contractor

11. HHA's Responsibility

HHA has an obligation to ensure that its properties are kept fit for habitation; a detailed description can be found in the Tenants Handbook and in the tenancy agreement.

HHA will give the tenant 24 hours' notice in writing of access required for inspection or routine maintenance. The tenant, or their nominated representative, is required to be present when a contractor attends their property.

HHA will maintain comprehensive building insurance, but is not responsible for arranging contents insurance cover, this is firmly the responsibility of the tenant. HHA, will however, provide assistance to any tenant as requested, to select appropriate cover.

12. Recharges

1. *Definition*

Recharges arise when HHA undertakes a repair but charges the cost to the tenant; costs may be incurred during the tenancy or when a tenancy ends (pre-termination inspection).

2. *Process*

Where the repair is of an emergency, health and safety, security or structural nature, HHA will complete the repair and inform the tenant of the work carried out and the cost. HHA will recover costs using a consistent, fair and open approach. Except in certain circumstances, HHA will charge tenants the full cost of repair. The tenant will always receive a copy of the repair order and charges, and where required and appropriate the Housing Officer will present this in person to ensure vulnerable adults are supported effectively.

3. Void Charges Pre and Post Termination

In accordance with the Voids and Nominations agreement, when a tenant gives notice or HHA serves notice on the tenant, the Housing Officer will arrange to inspect the property to identify potential rechargeable works prior to the tenancy ending. A void inspection form will be completed itemising a list of recharge items; the tenant will be invited to sign the list. The items will be costed prior to the remedial works and a copy of the costs provided to the tenant.

Photographs of the rechargeable items will be taken to provide further evidence to support the recharge.

Once the outgoing tenant has returned the keys, the Housing Officer will arrange a post-termination inspection. Should additional recharge items be discovered, these will be recorded on the void inspection sheet and further photographic evidence will be obtained. The Local Authority (LA) Commissioner will be informed at all stages.

The former tenant will be issued with an invoice and details of the recharge and invited to settle the account within 14 days. If no contact or payment is made within 14 days, the Housing Officer will contact the tenant and report and record progress and agreed next steps.

If a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached, HHA will invoice the LA Commissioner for the full amount. The former tenant will be advised that the debt has been referred to the LA Commissioner. The Voids and Nominations Agreement section 4.0 provides further information on this matter.

2. Adaptations

Social Services (Adaptations Team), are responsible for identifying, funding and meeting the needs of tenants who require adaptations to cope with a disability e.g. grab rails. Where asked to do so, HHA will provide appropriate assistance to help deliver such requirements where the cost is met by either Social Services or the tenant.

3. Complaints

If a tenant is unhappy with any aspect of the reactive repair service, they will be advised of HHA's Customer Service Charter.

4. Review

The board will ensure this policy is reviewed at least every three years, and sooner as performance or legislation dictates.