

Repairs Policy

1. Introduction

We are working to create 'homes and neighbourhoods we can all be proud of.'

Our objectives are:

- Meeting your housing needs
- Supporting you to be more independent and our communities to be more sustainable
- Ensuring that our business is well run, responsible and financially secure

This repairs policy supports our objectives by ensuring we keep our properties in repair to meet your needs whilst also looking after our property assets. Also, with good planning and prioritisation, we are able to make the best use of our resources and ensure the service is well organised and effective.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Deliver a repairs and maintenance service that keeps our properties in repair;
- Deliver a repairs and maintenance service that achieves high levels of customer care and satisfaction;
- Ensure we deliver a fair, culturally sensitive repairs service that meets your individual needs;
- Comply with all relevant legislation relating to the repair and maintenance of our properties, fixtures, fittings and any equipment or appliances that we supply for your use;
- Achieve value for money by:
 - Aiming to complete repairs right first time
 - Making the best use of our resources
 - Continually improving our responsive repairs service to make it more efficient and effective
 - Carrying out regular planned and cyclical maintenance; and
- Ensure you and other relevant people have the opportunity to be involved and consulted in the way we deliver and improve our repairs service.
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3. Scope

This policy sets out how we will keep your home and our assets in repair and provide a service that offers value for money. It also explains your repair responsibilities and our repair responsibilities.

This policy relates to tenants of Bolton at Home. Leaseholders should check their lease for information on repairing responsibilities.

4. Policy

1. Definitions

You

The tenant(s) of the property. If two or more people are joint tenants, 'you' means each individual tenant and/or all tenants together.

We, us

Bolton at Home Limited, your landlord.

Property

The home and any private yard, garden, garage or attached outhouse.

Communal area

A part of a building or estate that may be used by any tenant, occupant or visitor, usually relating to a block of flats or maisonettes.

Responsive repairs

We carry out responsive repairs that are covered under our policy following a request by you, or someone acting on behalf of you, to repair or replace something already in the property that is not working.

Emergency repairs

These are responsive repairs that could result in an immediate risk to the property or health and safety of people, for example uncontrollable leak or exposed wiring.

Urgent repairs

These are responsive repairs that need to be dealt with quickly but don't present an immediate risk to property or people.

Routine repairs

These are responsive repairs that don't need to be dealt with quickly but cannot be left until we start a planned programme.

Planned maintenance

We may carry out planned maintenance when something needs replacing, for example, brickwork, fire doors and external doors. We identify these either when we carry out a responsive repair or as part of checks to ensure we are meeting our legal obligations.

Planned capital investment improvements

We carry out planned works when our properties or estates need major improvement, for example improvements to the exterior of properties, replacement of heating systems and electrical rewiring. We have a limited budget for these improvements so we prioritise them according to our Asset Management Strategy.

Cyclical (repeated) repairs

We carry out cyclical repairs when repeated maintenance is required either for health and safety purposes or to keep properties in repair. For example, lift servicing, gas servicing, electric periodic testing and gutter cleaning.

2. Reporting your repair

We provide a number of ways to report a repair, these are:

- Telephone: call us on 01204 328000.
- Face to face: at Bolton at Home Reception, 98 Waters Meeting Road, Bolton BL1 8SW. Our opening times are on our website.
- Website: Use our online reporting form or our web chat facility www.boltonathome.org.uk
- Email: info@boltonathome.org.uk
- Letter: Bolton at Home, 98 Waters Meeting Road, Bolton BL1 8SW.
- Facebook: by sending a message via our Bolton at Home Facebook page.
- UCANs: use the facilities at your local UCAN centre. Opening times are on our website.

You must report all emergency repairs by telephone or face to face. Please do not report emergency repairs in any other way. Emergency repairs can be reported any time of day throughout the whole year.

3. Completing your repair

When you report your repair, we will give it a priority according to how urgent it is. Timescales and priorities are listed in Appendix A.

We will usually give you an appointment when you report the repair. If we can't give you an appointment straight away, we will contact you as soon as we have an available appointment. We won't give you an appointment for some external works but we will give you a timescale for completion. Appointment slots are listed in Appendix A.

We will always try to complete your repair on the first visit, however sometimes this may not be possible. In these cases, we will ensure the property is safe and secure and arrange another appointment to complete the repair at your convenience.

Sometimes, we may need longer than usual to complete your repair, for example we may need to order parts or we may have an unusually large number of repair requests. If this happens, we will let you know the reason for the delay and when you can expect us to contact you to arrange to complete the repair.

We, and our contractors, will always have identification badges to confirm our identity when we visit your property.

We may refuse to carry out a repair if you are abusive or aggressive to our staff. If the property is unhygienic, the area is too cluttered or the operative feels it is unsafe for them to carry out your repair, we may not be able to complete the work until you have resolved the issue.

If we need to carry out major repairs, you may need to move into temporary accommodation whilst we complete the work. We will arrange this with you and give you reasonable notice, except in an emergency.

4. Repairing responsibilities

We have a joint responsibility with you to maintain our properties. You must keep to the conditions set out in your tenancy agreement relating to repairs and maintenance and carry out the responsibilities set out in Appendix B.

5. Special circumstances

We recognise that you have individual needs and may need repairs completing more quickly than normal due to special circumstances. If you tell us about something that makes the repair more urgent, we will consider your request and may increase the priority of your repair and respond faster than normal. If the repair is your responsibility but you can't complete it because of special circumstances and you don't have a family member or friend to help, we may complete the repair.

6. Damp and condensation

We have a Damp and Condensation Policy to ensure we take the correct remedial action for damp and condensation. This may include repairs, detailed guidance, advice or support. We may refer you to other organisations for support if we feel this would benefit you.

7. Disrepair

If you make a disrepair claim, we will deal with this in line with the Housing Disrepair Protocol as part of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

8. Gas & electric servicing and maintenance

We carry out an annual gas and electric safety check of appliances and pipes that we have installed in our occupied properties. You **MUST** give us access to your home to carry out this check because it is essential for your

health and safety and we have to do this by law. If you don't we may take legal action against you and charge you for any associated costs.

If you have fitted your own fire, you are responsible for any repairs. We will, however carry out a regular safety check. You will need to provide us with your manufacturer's instructions, as we will need to remove it to inspect your chimney, carry out a visual safety check of the appliance and refit it when we have finished the check. If we don't have the manufacturer's instructions, we will disconnect the fire.

We do not give permission to install wood burners. If you install a wood burner, we will remove it, for safety reasons.

9. Empty properties

When you move into one of our properties, we will ensure that it meets our Lettable Standard, which can be found on our website, and will be clean safe and secure.

10. Chargeable repairs

We may charge you for a repair when:

- The repair is your responsibility as stated within this policy or your Tenancy Agreement; or
- We decide that the repair has not been caused by fair wear and tear;
- The repair is needed because you have removed something or damage has been caused by you, other people living in the property, your visitors or your pets; or
- You gave us false information when you reported the repair; or
- You repeatedly deny us access to the property to complete a repair; or
- You delay reporting a repair and it has caused further damage to the property as a result; or
- The repair is needed because you have altered the property without our permission.

11. Permissions and improvements

You have the right to request permission to carry out improvements or alterations to your property if you are an Assured tenant. Starter tenants do not have this right. Please check your Tenancy Agreement for details. You **MUST** obtain our written permission before you start the work and a qualified tradesperson must carry out the work. You are responsible for the repair and maintenance of any improvements or alterations that you have made to the property.

We will not give permission for any gas fire, solid fuel or wood burner for safety reasons.

12. Right to Buy/Right to Acquire

When we accept your Right to Buy/Right to Acquire application we will:

- Maintain all necessary services to and within the property, for example water, heating, electricity and gas to ensure that they are available and safe.
- Make sure the property is wind, watertight and secure.

We will exclude your property from any improvement work. If you have already reported any other repairs to us that don't meet the above criteria, we will cancel them.

13. Complaints, Compensation and Redress

If we have done something wrong, you may want to make a complaint. You also may ask us for compensation or something else to put things right. We have a Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy and a Compensation and Redress Policy, which can be found on our website, that state how we will deal with these. This covers your legal rights and our discretionary awards scheme.

14. Insurance

We have buildings insurance in place for our properties; however, this does not cover your belongings so we advise you to take out your own contents insurance. You can find details of our affordable Tenants Contents Insurance scheme on our website.

15. Equality analysis

An Equality Analysis was completed on 12/11/19 with members of our Operations Committee and there were no equality actions identified.

16. Responsibility

The Director of Technical Services is responsible for making sure the policy is successful. Staff within services areas have individual and collective responsibility to carry out this policy.

17. Consultation

We have involved all relevant services in the review of this policy. We have also held staff focus groups and consulted with our Trade Unions.

We have consulted with our customers on our policy through an online survey that has been widely promoted through staff and social media.

We have considered feedback from customers from complaints and surveys as part of our review of this policy and this has influenced some of the changes we have made.

18. GDPR

We have completed a Data Protection Impact Assessment Screening Checklist and decided that a Data Protection Impact Assessment is not necessary, as this policy does not involve processing of customer data.

19. BH related policies and strategies

- Asset Management Strategy
- Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy
- Compensation and Redress Policy
- Damp and Condensation Policy
- Lettable Standard

20. Monitoring, review and evaluation

We are committed to continually improving our repair service to make it more efficient and effective and to increase customer satisfaction. Our Operations Committee monitors performance relating to our repairs service and can escalate matters to Group Board if they:

- have concerns that issues aren't being addressed; or
- want to request a specific intervention from Group Board, for example allocate more resources

Our Scrutiny Group, made up of our customers, carries out service reviews and can make recommendations for changes to service delivery.

We carry out regular surveys to obtain your views on the repairs service. We use your survey feedback and your complaints to monitor and improve the quality of the service. You can also make comments and suggestions about our repairs service. Please see our Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Policy for details. We will give you regular updates on changes made because of your feedback through our website.

We will review this policy every three years and update it annually with any legislative changes.

Date approved	16 January 2020
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Appendix A

Timescales and priorities

When you report a repair, we will give it a priority and timescale according to how urgent it is. Our timescales are:

- **Emergency/Out of hours**

This service is available 24 hours, 365 days of the year.

We will respond within 2 hours for 'life and limb' emergencies such as an uncontrollable leak or exposed wiring.

We will respond within 24 hours for risk to property or welfare, for example no electricity or water or no working toilet in the property.

If your heating stops working and we can't complete the repair straight away we will supply you with temporary heating.

IF YOU SUSPECT A GAS LEAK, YOU MUST CALL THE NATIONAL GAS EMERGENCY NUMBER IMMEDIATELY ON 0800 111 999.

- **Urgent** – We will respond within 7 calendar days.

- **Routine**– We will respond within 21 calendar days.

- **Planned Repairs and Maintenance and Planned Capital**

Investment Improvements – We will contact you before the work takes place, to let you know when we are carrying it out.

Appointment slots

- **AM** - 8am – 1pm
- **PM** - 12 noon – 4.30pm
- **All day** – 8am – 4.30pm
- **Avoiding school run** - 9.30am – 2.30pm
- **Evening** - 4.30pm – 8pm

Appendix B

Repair responsibilities

General

In addition to your obligations stated in your tenancy agreement, you are responsible for:

- Giving us, or our contractors, access to inspect the condition of the property and complete repairs, maintenance and other works. We will usually give you at least 24 hours' notice unless there is an emergency. If we need to access your property immediately due to an emergency we will try to contact you but if we can't we may need to force entry. We will ensure your property is secure afterwards and complete any necessary repairs;
- Reporting any repairs immediately, including repairs in communal areas. You are responsible for any repairs that have caused damage because you delayed reporting them;
- Treating us, and our contractors, with respect and allowing us to carry out the repair in a safe environment. This includes not smoking whilst we are in the property and where possible refrain from smoking 20 minutes before your appointment;
- Ensure pets and other people are removed from the work area;
- Keeping the interior of the property, gardens, pathways and communal areas in good, clean condition. You are responsible for any repairs that are needed because of your damage or neglect;
- Taking reasonable precautions to protect the property from damage from fire, frost or water;
- Ensuring that you don't cause blockages to pipes, drains or gullies for example by disposing of cooking oils down sinks and sanitary products, nappies and baby wipes down toilets;
- Turning the water supply off if you can't turn a tap off;
- Moving your belongings where we need access to complete your repair, for example furniture, appliances and floor coverings; and
- Repairs and maintenance to any alteration or improvement that you have carried out yourself with or without our permission.

Bathrooms

We are responsible for toilets, baths, basins and showers we have fitted.

You are responsible for fittings such as plugs and chains, toilet seats, shower rails, shower curtains, toilet roll holders and towel rails. You are also responsible for unblocking toilets, sinks, basins, baths and shower trays.

Communal areas

We are responsible for communal repairs such as stairs, aerials, lifts, bin storage, drying areas, fencing and gates.

Decorating

We are responsible for communal decoration.

You are responsible for internal decoration.

Disabled adaptations

We are responsible for disabled adaptations fitted by us.

Doors

We are responsible for fire doors and external doors, locks, frames and furniture. You are responsible for door numbers and knockers. You must not carry out any repairs to fire doors.

We are also responsible for internal doorframes and internal doors to kitchens and bathrooms. You are responsible for all other internal doors.

You are responsible for lost keys and fobs. We may charge you if we have to force entry because you are locked out.

Drains, water services, external pipes, gutters, gullies and rainwater goods

We are responsible for repairs to water and drainage services, external pipes, gutters, gullies and rainwater goods. We carry out gutter cleaning on a cyclical (repeated) programme. We are only responsible for water services within the boundary of the property.

You are responsible for keeping drains and gullies free from blockages.

Electrics

We are responsible for electrics. We will replace bulbs in kitchens and bathrooms.

The electric supplier is responsible for the electric meter.

You are responsible for appliances and fittings you have installed yourself, including checking and replacing fuses. You are also responsible for replacing bulbs, apart from in kitchens and bathrooms. You are responsible for resetting trip switches.

Fixtures and fittings

You are responsible for any fixtures and fittings such as coat hooks and curtain rails.

Fences, walls and gates

We only replace fencing, walls and gates as part of a planned programme. We will keep in repair those that we have installed from April 2009 onwards. We will also keep in repair communal fencing, walls and gates.

You are responsible for repairing any fencing, walls or gates that you have installed or that we installed before April 2009. If there is a health and safety

risk and you are unable to repair it yourself, we will either repair or remove it, whichever is most cost effective and we may charge you for this. You must not remove, replace, build or renew any fencing, walls or gates without our permission.

You are responsible for the general maintenance of fences and gates, for example painting, oiling and easing.

Foundations and floors

We are responsible for foundations and floors.

You are responsible for floor coverings, including removing them if we need access to complete a repair and any door alterations needed after carpet fitting.

Gas

We are responsible for gas services (pipework after the gas meter).

The gas supplier is responsible for the gas meter.

You are responsible for appliances you have installed yourself. For gas, fires please see heating hot water and fires.

Heating and hot water, fires

We are responsible for central heating and hot water systems. We are responsible for fires that we have installed.

If you have fitted your own fire, you are responsible for any repairs. We will, however carry out a regular safety check. You will need to provide us with your manufacturer's instructions, as we will need to remove the fire to inspect your chimney, carry out a visual safety check of the appliance and refit it when we have finished the check. If we don't have the manufacturer's instructions, we will disconnect the fire. Where a gas fire is beyond repair. We will brick up the fireplace and supply wiring so you can fit your own electric fire.

We do not give permission to install wood burners. If you install a wood burner, we will remove it, for safety reasons and we may charge you for this.

Kitchens

We are responsible for kitchen units, sinks, worktops and associated pipe work. You are responsible for any domestic appliances such as washing machines, fridges and cookers. You should ensure these are fitted and maintained by a qualified person.

You are responsible for unblocking sinks.

Paths, steps and hardstandings

If we have installed a hardstanding, we will keep it in repair or replace it as required.

We are responsible for paths and steps in communal areas. We are also responsible for paths and steps that we have installed within the boundary of the property.

We will repair paths and hardstandings in line with Bolton Councils' Highway Safety Inspections Code of Practice.

You are responsible for any hardstanding, path or steps that you have installed. If there is a health and safety risk and you are unable to repair them yourself, we will either repair or remove it, whichever is most cost effective and we may charge you for this.

Roofs and chimneys

We are responsible for roofs and chimneys.

Sheds, garages and outhouses

We are responsible for sheds and garages installed by us. We are responsible for outhouses that are connected to the main property by a roof or wall.

You are responsible for unattached outhouses. If you have installed any sheds or garages, you are responsible for them. If these become unsafe and you are unable to repair or remove them yourself, we will either repair or remove them and we may charge you for this.

Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms

We are responsible for repairing or replacing smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms we have fitted. We will check these alarms and replace them or change the batteries part of the annual gas and electric safety check.

You are responsible for testing the batteries. If the battery needs changing before the annual safety check you must replace it. You must not change the backup battery in a hard-wired smoke or carbon monoxide alarm.

TV aerials

We are responsible for communal aerials.

You are responsible for any TV aerials that are only used by you and your household.

Walls, skirting boards, ceilings and plastering

We are responsible for internal and external walls, skirting boards, ceilings and plastering.

You are responsible for plastering small holes and cracks.

Windows

We are responsible for external windows, including fittings.

You are responsible for re-glazing. We will make the window secure, however we may charge you for this.