

Responsive Repairs Policy

Introduction

At Grand Union Housing Group (GUHG) we are committed to maintaining properties to a good state of repair, meet our legal obligations and provide a fit for purpose repairs service.

If there is any discrepancy between this policy and the tenancy agreement, the terms of the tenancy agreement will prevail.

Policy Statement

This policy sets out to provide clear information to our customers in relation to our repairs service. We define a responsive repair as minor unplanned work due to fair wear and tear. Where damage is caused by our customer, their family, their pets, or visitors to their home, we will recharge customers for the works. The repairs service aims to:

- Complete repairs on the first visit, where possible.
- Deliver high quality work, in a professional manner.
- Be cost effective and provide value for money.
- Be responsive to customer repairs needs.

Policy objectives

To provide a service which ensures all our properties are repaired and maintained to provide a safe home for our customers. To continually look to improve the repairs service by actively seeking feedback from our customers.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

GUHG will ensure that the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to the repairs service we provide. We will achieve this by treating people fairly and taking into account individual customer needs in all aspects of the repairs service.

Regulatory requirements

The Home Standard sets out expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide customers with quality accommodation, and a cost-effective repairs service.

The Regulator of Social Housing's role is to set out the consumer standards and to intervene where failure to meet the standards has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to customers. The outcomes we are required to deliver are:

Quality of accommodation - to reach at least the Decent Homes Standard and maintain homes to this standard.

Repairs and maintenance - to be cost effective, meeting customer needs, offering choice, and provide a repairs service which is right first time. Meet all legal obligations regarding customer health and safety.

Disrepair

There are a number of statutory repair obligations as a landlord. The most important of these is Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, which states that the landlord shall keep in repair:

- The structure and exterior of the dwelling.
- The installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity, and sanitation.
- The installations for the supply of space heating and water heating.
- The communal areas and installations associated with the dwelling.
- The repair will vary depending on the age, character, and prospective life of the property and its location.
- We have the right to view the condition and state of repair of the property by giving the customer 24 hours' notice.

Service delivery

Our repairs service is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year and is provided by our Internal Repair Team (IRT) and external contractors. Repairs can be reported by:

- Phone, during working hours through our Customer Contact Team
- Outside of our working hours, by phone to our Out of Hours Service provider.
- To a visiting GUHG colleague
- Online at www.guhg.co.uk
- By email to help@guhg.co.uk
- In the case of report of mould, by email to mould@guhg.co.uk
- Through our customer portal, myGUHG

When a repair is reported, we will:

- Make an appointment convenient to our customer (wherever there is an available appointment).
- Where an appointment cannot be made (at first point of contact), we will advise our customer of our timescales.
- Complete emergency repairs the same day wherever possible, otherwise within 24 hours of the emergency being reported.

Repairs fall into two categories, emergency, or routine.

An emergency repair is to make safe and remove the risk of immediate injury to people or major damage to a property. Our emergency repair priorities are:

P00 – to attend within 4 hours.

P01 – Complete emergency repairs on the same day wherever possible, otherwise within 24 hours of the emergency being reported.

A routine repair is a non-emergency repair, and our routine repair priority is:

P03 – to attend within 20 working days.

All operatives from our IRT and external contractors will be professional, polite and treat customer and respect. Expected behaviours can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Our customers must allow authorised GUHG colleagues or our contractors access to their home at all reasonable hours to inspect its condition. Complete repairs, servicing, or improvements. Where possible, we will give at least 24 hours' notice to gain access, but on occasion, we may need to gain access without notice in an emergency. In this instance, we may need to use necessary force if we believe there is a risk of personal injury or damage to the property or surrounding properties.

We recognise customers may want to make alterations and improvements to their homes. We will not refuse reasonable requests, but written permission must be obtained. We may impose conditions and where planning permission, building regulations approval is needed, this must be obtained before commencing the work. We may refuse permission if there are breaches of tenancy. We will explain the breach and what is required to resolve the matter. A new application for permission must be made once the breach is resolved. If a customer has a 'starter' tenancy, we will not agree to alterations or improvements within the first 12 months of the tenancy.

Once an application is made under the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire scheme is received, we will only carry out emergency repairs. This will ensure the property remains wind and watertight and is fit for habitation. Examples of repairs that might be carried out are as follows:

- serious water penetration
- no power
- no heating
- no bathing facilities
- not being able to use a toilet, when there is only one in the property.

Where new components are installed, there will be a warranty normally 12 months from installation. In this instance, we will refer to the installer to rectify the problem.

Consultation

GUHG will work with customers in a number of ways to continually improve the repairs service. Customer feedback is welcomed in any form.

GUHG responsibilities

GUHG is responsible for the structure of the property, some services and common parts. [Appendix 2](#) provides an overview of the items included and [Appendix 3](#) provides more details.

Which items are NOT classed or included as a repair?

- Any work that is not considered a responsive repair e.g., fitting new curtain poles, fitting a new door entry system, replacing a garage door and frame, the replacement of items that are deemed to be beyond economic repair.
- Work that should be put into a planned programme e.g., multiple window replacement, multiple storage heater replacement, fencing programmes, roofs etc.

Customer Obligations

Tenancy agreements provide obligations for the customer. [Appendix 4](#) provides an overview of the obligations that GUHG can reasonably expect from their customers.

Customers are responsible for minor repairs to their property. The minor repairs expectation is also shown in [Appendix 4](#).

Shared Ownership 2021 lease

An annual repairs allowance is applicable to Shared Ownership new build properties falling under the Affordable Homes Programme from 2021-26 and Shared Ownership homes delivered through Section 106 unless there is a change in government policy. The essence of this support is to protect shared owners living in new build homes from unexpected costs in line with regulatory requirements.

Shared owners in new build homes under the Shared Ownership 2021 lease will be supported with the cost of repairs and maintenance for up to £500 per annum for the first 10 years of the building's life. Shared owners are enabled to roll over 1 years' worth of unused repairs allowance (i.e., £500 maximum per annum).

The scope covers general repairs inside the home and will be limited to support with the cost of repair of faulty installations which are not covered by warranty or guarantee pertaining to the particular components. This does not include wear and tear or where a shared owner has failed to ensure appropriate routine servicing and maintenance arrangements (e.g., boiler servicing).

Upon sale or transfer of property within the first 10 years of the building, the outstanding repairs allowance for that year will be transferred to the new shared owner and these terms will also apply until the lapse of the 10-year period.

Other related policies/procedures

Equality Diversity and Customer Care Policy

Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy

Complaints Policy
Health and Safety Policy – Compliance
Rechargeable Repairs Procedure
Disability and Adaptations Assistance Policy

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the policy review programme.

Customer consultation:

Equality impact assessment carried out: Initial screen

Person responsible for review: Director of Property Services

Supported by: Head of Property Operations

Date reviewed: April 2023

Ratified by: Leadership Team

Date of next review: April 2025

Expected behaviours for operatives

Operatives will:

- Be polite, honest and helpful at all times.
- Introduce themselves when calling the customer by phone and show photo identification before entering a customer's home.
- Park their van considerately.
- Be polite and wear approved GUHG/other contractors PPE uniform at all times.
- Explain what work is going to be carried out and discuss with the customer how this might affect them.
- Take care of all customers' belongings whilst working in their property, for example, protecting them from damage and dust.
- Make sure that materials and tools do not cause danger to anyone in the customer's home.
- Make sure that when having to use customer's electricity we ask first but wherever possible use portable battery tools. Where this is not possible the use of electricity must be kept to a minimum. This may also apply to other services such as gas and water.
- Keep mess and rubbish to a minimum, making sure it is all removed at the end of the working day or when the job has been completed.
- Make sure that electricity, water, and gas are connected at the end of each day wherever possible.
- Limit the use of their mobile phones.
- Not smoke or play radios whilst working in a customer's home or garden.
- Not use a customer's phone or toilet without asking for permission first.
- Not make or receive personal phone calls during their work, unless it is in relation to the job they are doing.
- Not enter a customer's property with children under 18 without a responsible adult being present.
- Not accept gifts from customers.
- Not keep keys for customers' homes.

GUHG responsibilities

GUHG is responsible for the structure, services, and common parts of the property.

Examples include:

- drains, gutters and outside pipes
- roof
- external walls, doors and windows (excluding glass)
- communal aerials, communal lighting, all fire-fighting, and fire detection equipment supplied by GUHG
- the installations for supplying water, gas and electricity, and for disposing of sanitation and rubbish
- the installations and appliances for heating the property and for hot water
- fixtures and fittings GUHG has installed
- pathways and steps which provide main access to the front and back door of the property
- garages and outside store places
- lifts and other communal amenities
- painting the outside woodwork and metal work of properties including shared areas
- servicing of stair lifts, where installed by GUHG
- boundary fences/hedges that border a public footpath or access route only.

Quick reference guide – general needs, who is responsible?

GUHG is responsible for maintaining:	The customer is responsible for the repair if:
The structure and outside of the home	They, their family or visitors cause the damage
The fixtures and fittings we have provided	
Any communal areas	

Bathroom / Kitchen / Plumbing	Responsibility?	
	GUHG	Customer
Basin or sink replacement	✓	
Bath panel replacement	✓	
Blocked bath, basin, sink and shower		✓
Broken toilet seat		✓
Plug or chain replacement		✓
Pop up plug replacement	✓	
Plumbing/fitting customers own appliances. Must be undertaken to Gas Safe or NICEIC Regulations and certification provided to GUHG		✓
Sealant replacement for kitchen units and sanitary fittings	✓	
Shower curtain replacement		✓
Tap washer replacement (to stop dripping)	✓	
Unblocking of external waste pipes	✓	
Water supply and water pipes	✓	
Gas		
Bleeding radiators and adjusting pressure		✓
Chimneys	✓	
Fireplaces, fitted fires and central heating systems	✓	
Fires fitted by customer		✓
Gas pipes and appliances by GUHG	✓	
Electrical		
Electrical wiring including sockets and switches	✓	
Fluorescent tubes and starter motors	✓	
Fuse box - resetting of a trip switch		✓
Fuses		✓
Fuse on fuse board	✓	
Lightbulbs in encased lighting	✓	
Hard wired door bells	✓	

Quick reference guide – general needs, who is responsible?

Internal		
	GUHG	Customer
Communal areas (unless damage has been caused by the customer)	✓	
Cracks (minor in walls or ceilings. Generally smaller than the edge of £1 coin)		✓
Cracks (major in walls or ceilings)	✓	
Curtain pole, rail or track replacement		✓
Damage caused by customer to the property, fixtures or fittings		✓
Door changes to accommodate carpets, including re-fixing of any draught excluders		✓
Door bell replacement or fitting (including batteries)		✓
Doors and frames	✓	
Door hinges and skirting	✓	
Fixtures and fittings provided by GUHG	✓	
Fitting additional locks, catches, safety devices (spy hole, safety chain, burglar alarm etc.)		✓
Fixtures customer has fitted (flooring, shelves, coathooks etc.)		✓
Handles and latches on inside doors and cupboards	✓	
Keys or fobs		✓
Painting and decorating including papering, woodwork and coving		✓
Pests – general infestation of a neighbourhood	✓	
Pests – individual property		✓
Smoke alarm (battery powered) testing or replacement	✓	
TV aerial or satellite dish customer have had fitted		✓
TV aerial or satellite dish we have fitted for communal use	✓	
Walls, floors and ceilings	✓	
External		
Boundary walls and fencing	✓	
Doors	✓	
Door steps	✓	
Drains, gutters and external pipes	✓	
Dustbin replacement (individual property)		✓
Dustbin replacement (communal)	✓	
Fencing between gardens		✓
Garages and stores (excluding sheds)	✓	
Gardens, including hedging and trees		✓
Overall structure of the property	✓	
Painting	✓	
Paths and walkways where shared or main access to property	✓	
Roof	✓	
Walls	✓	

Quick reference guide – general needs, who is responsible?

Washing lines or rotary dryers		✓
Window sills, catches, sash cords and window frames	✓	
Windows (excluding glass, which is potentially rechargeable)	✓	

CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITY - OVERVIEW

Customers are expected to:

- keep the property to a good standard of cleanliness, repair and decoration
- keep gardens in a reasonable condition
- report a repair as soon as they notice that it is needed, to avoid the situation getting worse
- allow access to the property to carry out repairs, annual safety checks, services and any inspections that may be necessary
- take action to prevent and control condensation. For example, opening windows to allow fresh air to circulate
- ensure external air bricks and internal vents are free from any obstructions to ensure suitable ventilation for gas appliances, solid fuel appliances and condensation issues
- take action to prevent pipes from freezing or bursting
- keep any shared areas e.g. communal hallways, stairways, landings, lifts, balconies etc. in a tidy condition and unblocked
- obtain GUHG's permission prior to making any improvements to their home, or any additions or alterations to GUHG's installations, fixtures and fittings. Reasonable requests will not be refused but customers must ensure that appropriately qualified people install their new fixtures and fittings. For example, they might want to replace or install a new gas cooker. A Gas Safe registered engineer must undertake this work and the appropriate paperwork must be supplied to GUHG. Failure to do so will mean that GUHG will charge the customer for checking their new installation
- clear away rubbish.

Customers are expected to undertake minor repairs, such as:

- replacing electrical fuses and light bulbs
- care and provision of electricity, gas and water meters
- internal decorations
- replacing batteries in smoke alarms
- maintaining a garage, driveway or shed which has been constructed by them or previous customers
- clearing outside gullies e.g. clearing away leaves
- replacing toilet seats, as well as plugs/chains to wash hand basins, sinks and baths
- replacement of any items damaged by the customer, member of their household or visitors
- replacement of lost keys & key fobs
- replacing clothes lines and posts (except in communal areas or part of an independent living scheme)
- infestation issues i.e. rats, mice

CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITY - OVERVIEW

- internal and external clearing of domestic pet foul from cats, dogs or other pets
- items gifted to the customer at the start of their tenancy
- only burn smokeless solid fuels, if the home has solid fuel heating.