



# Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy

Last reviewed August 2021

# 1.0 Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy overview

This policy is managed and adhered to by the housing service. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with government legislation, guidance and good practice.

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## Introduction

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) aims to deliver repairs, maintenance and improvements services that take into account the aspirations of the tenants and fulfil the requirements laid down in legislation and the Council's Constitution.

Achieving high quality repairs, maintenance and improvements services is necessary to protect the value of DBC housing stock and to ensure that DBC's obligations and promises to its residents in respect of the accommodation provided to them are satisfactorily achieved.

## 1.2 Aim(s) of the policy:

The aims of this policy are to;

- Maintain DBC properties in good condition and to DBC lettable standard, the ['Standard for letting empty homes'](#)
- Make appropriate budget provision for the repairs and maintenance of DBC properties
- Respond to requests for repairs promptly in accordance with published time response standards
- Carry out repairs efficiently and to a high standard

- Comply with statutory obligations to residents
- Undertake a programme of improvements to bring all properties up to DBC's lettable standard and provide tenants with choice wherever possible
- Extend the useful life of DBC properties and reduce responsive maintenance costs by putting in place an effective planned maintenance programme
- Take into account the views of residents in the preparation of our programmes for improvements, repairs and maintenance
- Grant tenants a right to repair
- Clearly define relevant service standards and monitor customer satisfaction

## 1.3 Links to the council's corporate aims:

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities, which are set out in

['Delivering for Dacorum' – Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025.](#)

- A clean, safe and enjoyable environment
- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need
- Delivering an efficient modern council

*The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.*

## 1.0 Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy overview (continued)

### 1.4 Equality and diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all Applicants and Tenants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

### 1.5 Policy Statements

We will provide responsive maintenance within the approved priority categories (see 2.1)

We will provide cyclical maintenance in accordance with statutory requirements alongside some non-statutory commitments (see 2.3)

We will carry out planned maintenance work on a pre-programmed basis (see 2.4)

We will carry out aids and adaptations subject to individual assessment and budgetary constraints (see 2.5)

We will carry out improvement schemes where a need is identified through consultation with tenants and leaseholders (see 2.6)

Tenants must follow the tenant responsibilities outlined in the tenant handbook (see 2.7)

All work will be carried out in accordance with DBC's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Procurement Policies. (see 2.9)

If any person feels he or she has not been treated in accordance with this policy, she or he may complain through DBC's Complaint Policy (see 2.10)

We will monitor customer satisfaction for repairs, maintenance and improvements services (see 2.11)

## 2.0 Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy detail

### 2.1) Responsive Maintenance

DBC will provide a service within the approved priority categories. We will aim to minimise the time between a request for a repair and its completion, unless the repair can be carried out more cost-effectively as part of a programme of planned or cyclical works.

Appointments will normally be arranged at the time the repair is requested and will be made within the relevant priority category assigned to the nature of that specific job. If the tenant wishes to agree a date outside that timescale this will be accommodated where it is possible without the delay resulting in risk of damage. If for any reason a repair appointment is not possible (e.g. an inspection is needed) the repair will be given a timescale. The priorities are set out in **Appendix 2** to this policy.

## 2.0 Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy detail (continued)

### 2.2) Ordering Repairs

Repairs may be ordered as follows:

- By telephone
- In writing or by email
- Via the DBC website
- Outside normal working hours a telephone facility will be provided for requesting emergency repairs.

Details of all contact points and telephone numbers will be supplied to individual tenants and included in the [Repairs Handbook](#).

### 2.3) Cyclical Maintenance

DBC will implement a programme of cyclical maintenance in accordance with statutory requirements for the following:

- Service gas carcass and gas boilers annually
- Service solid fuel room heaters annually
- Periodic electrical testing
- Legionella testing where there is communal cold water storage.

- Service lifts and stair lifts
- Service and maintain fire alarm installations, fire detection (not battery operated smoke detectors)
- Service and maintain fire-fighting equipment

In addition, DBC will enter into service contracts for the following non-statutory inspection, testing, maintenance and repair:

- Door entry and supported housing officer call equipment
- Communal aerial installations

### 2.4) Planned Maintenance

Planned maintenance is work carried out on a pre-programmed basis to maintain the general condition of property and fittings provided by DBC.

DBC will develop a programme of planned maintenance to minimise future maintenance costs and reduce demand for responsive repairs.

DBC will periodically survey dwellings for the purposes of planning maintenance. This will include carrying out an inspection of property condition and attributes to facilitate life cycle costing.

DBC will maintain a stock condition database, which will allow predictions of future repair and investment needs.

Tenants will be-informed and consulted where relevant about planned maintenance programmes. They will be given at least 14 days' notice of any such work that is likely to cause them significant disruption.

### 2.5) Aids and Adaptations

As part of its commitment to community care, subject to individual assessment and budgetary constraints, DBC will carry out minor alterations to meet the special needs of tenants to enhance their lifestyle and, where appropriate, enable them to remain in their current home. In this respect, DBC will liaise with Social Services, Occupational Therapy and other agencies.

Full details of our approach are set out in our Aids and Adaptations Policy.

### 2.6) Improvements

DBC will endeavour to carry out improvement schemes to its properties where the need has been identified, through consultation with tenants and leaseholders. The need may be as a result of outdated or faulty construction and required to keep the Housing stock in tenable repair.

### 2.7) Tenant Responsibilities

Tenant responsibilities are defined within the tenancy agreement and set out in the Tenants' Handbook. They are subject to review. Please refer to the current [Repairs Handbook](#).

The tenant must tell DBC when a repair needs to be done and allow access for the required repairs to be completed within the required timescales.

Tenants may make improvements to their homes, subject to receiving DBC's prior written permission. Tenants must also obtain any necessary planning or building regulation consent before work begins. Please refer to DBC's Tenant Alteration and Improvement Policy for further information.

## 2.0 Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements Policy detail continued

### 2.8) Leaseholders

Please refer to separate policy on Leasehold Management, which sets out the respective rights and obligations of DBC and leaseholders for repairs, maintenance and improvements.

### 2.9) Tenders and Contracts

All work will be carried out in accordance with DBC's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Procurement Policies.

### 2.10) Complaints

If any person believes that he or she has not been treated in accordance with this policy, or is unhappy with this policy, or is unhappy about any aspect of the Policy, he or she may complain through DBC's Complaints procedure.

### 2.11) Performance, Monitoring and Evaluations /Quality Assurance

Customer satisfaction will be monitored for repairs, maintenance and improvement services using various methods for obtaining feedback, including surveys sent following a repair.

Tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders may be contacted for the purposes of reviewing this policy, in order to take into account their needs and priorities.



## 3.0 Links to other corporate documents

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

- Empty Homes Policy
- Leasehold Management Policy
- Asbestos management Policy
- Aids and adaptations Policy
- Tenants Alterations and Improvements policy
- Vehicular Crossing Over Amenity Greens Policy
- Mobility Scooter Policy
- Tenant Compensation Policy
- The Tenant's Handbook

## 4.0 Legislation

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- The Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994/133
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) (Amendment) Regulations 1997/73
- Construction Design and Management Regulations
- Procurement and Financial Regulations
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) (Amendment) Regulations 1994/844
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 1985
- Equalities Act 2010

## 5.0 Appendices

The appendices listed below form part of this policy:

- Appendix 1: Right to Repair
- Appendix 2: Our Response Times

## 5.1 Appendix 1: Right to Repair

### Right to Repair

Under Right to Repair legislation, the qualifying repairs are:

Repair	Period to Complete (working days)
Total loss of electrical power	1
Partial loss of electrical power	3
Unsafe power	1
Total loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 1 November and 30 April	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 1 May and 31st October	3
Blocked or leaking foul drain or soil stack	1
Toilet not flushing (if no other working toilet)	1
Blocked sink bath or basin	3
Tap which cannot be turned	3
Leaking from water or heating pipe	1
Leaking roof	7
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or handrail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread	3
Door entry system not working	7
Mechanical extractor fan in kitchen or bathroom not working, or passive ventilator blocked or defective	7

If a qualifying repair cannot be completed within an agreed timescale, the tenant has the right to request DBC to instruct a second contractor to complete the work. If the second contractor also fails to complete the work within the agreed time DBC will pay compensation to the tenant. See the Separate Compensation policy for details.

## 5.2 Appendix 2: Our Response Times

### Our Response Times:

Different types of repair need to be undertaken within different timescales, as set out below. When tenants report repairs, they will generally be offered an appointment dependent upon the nature of the repair, in line with the relevant priority category. Some repairs will need to be inspected to determine the nature of the work and its priority before repair work can be ordered.

Where DBC fails to meet its targets or fulfil a works appointment, tenants will have the benefit of the right to repair.

**Emergency:** We will respond within 4 hours. This priority is used when there is a real danger to life or limb, major damage to the property, flooding, or the property is insecure. This is also used where there is a major inconvenience caused to occupants e.g., where there is no electricity.

**Priority 1:** We will respond within 24 hours. This is used for repairs that need to be carried out urgently, to overcome substantial inconvenience to the tenant, to prevent immediate damage to the property or where there is a potential health and security risk.

**Priority 2:** We will respond within 3 days. These are summer heating repairs - this priority is principally for loss of space heating 30<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> November.

**Priority 3:** We will respond within 20 working days. This is used for non-urgent work where the repair does not cause immediate inconvenience or pose any danger to occupants or the public but cannot wait for programmed maintenance.

**Small Works:** We will respond within 45 days. These are non-urgent repairs which can be undertaken in batches, to ensure that we can secure the best price for the works.

The following table provides details of the types of repair that will normally be carried out within each priority category.



Type of repair	Timescale	Examples
4-hours repairs	Attend and make safe in 4 hours Emergency repairs	Impact to a building Collapse of a building Fire Flood Burst water pipe, cylinder or cistern Unsafe gas or electrical installation or fitting Total loss of electrical power Any blockages to soil and vent pipes in flats or maisonettes Security of property (e.g. broken front door lock)
<b>Priority 1</b>	Attend and make safe in 24 hours	Partial loss of electrical power Total loss of water supply Partial loss of water supply Total loss of gas supply Partial loss of gas supply Blocked flue to open fire or boiler Total or partial loss of space or water heating (between 30 <sup>th</sup> October and 1 <sup>st</sup> May) Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil and vent pipe, or (where there is no other working WC in property) toilet pan WC not flushing (if there is no other WC in the dwelling) Blocked sink, bath or basin Tap which cannot be turned Leak from water pipe, tank or cistern Insecure external window, door or lock Missing or defective inspection chamber cover Loose or detached banister or handrail Rotten timber flooring or stair tread Warden call system failure in sheltered housing Fire alarm failure in sheltered housing Emergency lighting failure in sheltered housing Lift failure
<b>Priority 2</b>	3 days	Total or partial loss of space or water heating (between 1 <sup>st</sup> May and 31 <sup>st</sup> October)
<b>Priority 3</b>	20 days	Non-urgent roof leak or defective roof covering Door entry phone not working (except in Sheltered Housing) Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working or passive ventilator blocked or defective Single light failure in communal lighting

Type of repair	Timescale	Examples
		Re-glazing in communal areas following making safe Non-urgent work on electrical fittings Single smoke detector failure (where more than one is installed) Defective floor or floor covering where there is no immediate danger Repairs to DBC owned fridges, cookers, washing machines where there is more than 1 communal appliance Repairs to communal TV aerials Blocked or broken gutters or down pipes Replacement and/or repair of any sanitary fittings not mentioned above Replacement and/or repairs to plumbing installations and appliances (other than those installed by the tenant) Remedial works to wall/ceiling plaster and finishes (if not dangerous) Re-glazing where window glass is cracked Structural repairs to chimney stack (where not dangerous) Repair or replacement of garage doors Repair or replacement of clothes posts or driers Repair or replacement of chimney pots or cowls (where not dangerous) Repair or replacement of roof coverings where there is no immediate danger Repairs to doors and frames Repairs to window frames and sills
Small works	45 days	Repairs to footpaths, steps etc. where there is no immediate danger Remedial works to external fabric of building e.g. render or brickwork Rising damp treatments Repairs to fencing or gates close to main road Repairs to garage roofs