



Blackpool Coastal
Housing

Responsive Repairs Policy

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INSPIRING PEOPLE TO BUILD BETTER COMMUNITIES

Document Information

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Objective	To provide clarity around the expectations of both Blackpool Coastal Housing and its Customers concerning responsive repairs. To ensure a consistent and high-quality service is delivered within target and budget constraints	
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Amendment Record

Date	Issue No.	Section/Page	Details of Change	Authorised By:
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Amendment Notes

- Documents at draft status are to use letter designations to denote issue status: a, b, c etc.
- Documents at full issue status are to use number designations to denote issue status after full revision: 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc.
- For an amendment to a full issue document, you are to use number designation to denote issue status: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, etc.
- On full issue the draft amendment record should be deleted from the above table.
- Notification of the amendment must be sent to the person maintaining the Central Register.

Introduction

This policy sets out Blackpool Coastal Housing's (BCH's) approach to the delivery of the responsive repairs service. The responsive repairs service complements our programmes of planned and cyclical maintenance to ensure our stock is well maintained, up to date and meets the needs of our customers.

The principles of this policy apply to all customers, regardless of tenancy type, however the full scope of this policy does not apply to leaseholders. For clarity we will not carry out repairs for leaseholders where the terms of the lease state that such repairs are the responsibility of the leaseholder.

The purpose of this policy is to outline how BCH will:

- Deliver an efficient, effective and value for money responsive repairs service that meets the needs of our customers
- Comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and meet our contractual obligations.
- Ensure properties are free from damp and mould in-line with BCH [Damp and Mould Policy](#) and Awaab's Law. [A Damp and Mould customer guide](#) has been produced to provide further information and advice for tenants.
- Ensure that all properties are kept in good repair in line with the, [Repairs Handbook](#) and that any repair work completed leaves customers in a safe and secure environment.
- Ensure customers are aware of their responsibilities as detailed in the Repairs Handbook
- Provide a prompt and cost-effective responsive repairs service that our customers value.
- Provide services which are easily accessible at a time and in a way to suit our customers and which deliver high standards of customer care
- Work in partnership with our customers to continuously drive service improvements
- Agree ways in which we can improve the value for money of the service including the delivery of more planned and programmed work to manage the demand for responsive repairs.

Access to the Service

Our aim is to provide our customers with easy access to our services through different routes to meet their needs and at a time and place to suit them within our agreed appointment slots.

Reporting repairs

All repairs can be reported via a freephone number through the Repairs Hotline during normal office hours. Repairs can also be reported at any time via our website or by email.

We operate an 'out of hours' emergency repairs service every day of the year which can be accessed via the normal Repairs Hotline freephone number. This service is for emergency repairs only.

As part of their tenancy agreement, it is a customer's responsibility to report repairs to us as soon as they have become aware of a problem.

In scheme-based services, where staff members are regularly present on site, repairs can be reported to a member of staff when they are on duty.

If a member of staff is made aware of a repair need, they will ensure that it is reported as soon as possible.

Repairs appointments

All repairs are made by appointment with the customer at the time they report it through the Repairs Hotline, or sometimes through members of staff in scheme-based services. Repairs can also be reported

online and we will confirm the appointment date with the customer. We aim to minimise the time between a request for a repair and its completion within appropriate timeframes and repair category.

The repair appointment will be at a time and date convenient for the customer, in line with the appointment windows in which we offer. We offer appointments for the completion of repairs and for any inspections required. The following options will be given as arrival times (not repair completion times):

- First Appointment – 8am
- Morning (AM): Between 8am and 1pm
- Afternoon (PM): Between 12pm and 5pm

If we are unable to keep to an appointment, we will inform the customer as soon as possible and agree an alternative appointment.

Where we are unable to confirm an appointment with a customer, we will book the next available appointment date and send a letter to confirm the appointment date.

We expect customers to provide us with access to carry out a repair at the appointed time. If the appointment cannot be kept, customers are asked to inform us at the earliest opportunity. If there is no access and no contact from the customer, and after all methods of contact have been exhausted, the job order may be closed. When we close a job down we will write to the customer advising the job has been cancelled. If this is a repair of an emergency or urgent nature we may escalate this to Housing Services to assist us with gaining access.

In cases where a repair can be more cost effectively carried out as part of a programme of planned or cyclical works, we will consider this option and inform customers accordingly.

Communal repairs

Communal repairs are repairs carried out to entrances, halls, lifts, stairways, passageways, rubbish chutes, lighting, door entry systems and other parts provided for common use. They may also be carried out on fencing and to other external structures which are the responsibility of BCH, including some shared fences with private owners.

Inspection visits

Some jobs, including communal repairs, may require an inspection visit before the repair is arranged. These include:

- Where an initial diagnosis cannot be determined (e.g. damp)
- Where previous repairs have not resolved the problem
- Where there are boundary or ownership issues

Exceptions to policy

BCH staff are required to follow this policy when assessing all requests for repairs to be completed. However, where it has been identified that a customer has a need that directly impacts on their ability to carry out a repair themselves, or if there are circumstances, conditions or risks that would require a quicker response, we will assess the case on its merits, and may agree to carry out the repair on their behalf or as an emergency. Customers may also be recharged for this.

Decisions to divert from the responsive repairs policy in these cases requires authorisation from a manager.

Repairs Categories

Repairs are categorised as follows:

Category	Response Time
Emergency - where there is an immediate danger to life or threat of major damage to the property e.g. flooding, major electrical fault, no heating or hot water.	24 Hours
Urgent – blockages, water pipe leaks, roof leaks	Within 5 Days by appointment
Routine - non urgent work where the repair does not cause immediate inconvenience or pose any danger to occupants or the public such as a loose door handle or minor leak.	Within 28 Days by appointment
Programmed works – Plastering, structural repairs, non- emergency roofing.	Within 60 Days by appointment

Service Quality

BCH aims to consistently deliver our responsive repairs services to a high standard and our complaints policy allows customers to raise a complaint with us where our service fails to meet the desired standards.

Quality Assurance Checks/ Post Inspections

BCH will undertake intelligence led quality control on both BCH Operatives and Contractors. Inspections are also carried out when a customer is dissatisfied because they believe:

- The repair carried out has not rectified the problem
- The quality of workmanship is not of an acceptable standard

Completing repairs on the first visit

BCH aims to complete repairs on the first visit and will monitor our performance against this measure. Sometimes, during the course of a repair, additional works may be required. We have procedures in place to ensure the repair is completed with our target timescales and to the satisfaction of the customer.

Code of conduct

BCH operates a code of conduct for our own operatives and sub-contractors who carry out repairs on our behalf. In addition, we have a Zero Tolerance Policy and take seriously any action by customers who harass or threaten to harass or use or threaten violence towards BCH staff, agents or contractors. We always take action to protect our staff where such circumstances arise.

Improving the service

Feedback from customers on the quality of the service received is important to us to help in the continuous improvement of this service. We will use our quality assurance monitoring of operatives and contractors to support this.

We are committed to working in partnership with our customers to achieve improvements in service delivery and performance. We will do this by tracking and analysing the performance of the repairs service, and by working with customers through a range of involvement initiatives for instance customer satisfaction surveys and customer focus groups such as Tower Scrutiny. We aim to further develop our performance management by tracking the performance of individual operatives and contractors using the statistical data we hold including customer satisfaction.

We aim to deliver an efficient and effective repairs service, demonstrating value for money to our customers with a high standard of service delivery.

Insurance

BCH strongly advises customers to obtain contents insurance for their personal possessions and decoration. Should a repair be caused by an unforeseen circumstance such as accidental damage, BCH will repair the problem, we are not responsible for repairing any damage to decoration, floor coverings or personal belongings. Customers will be expected to claim on their own insurance to cover this.

New Build Properties

All works carried out as part of new build or improvement contracts are covered by a defect's liability period. This starts from the date of completion and the defects period is usually valid for 12 months.

Customers should report defects to the Repairs Hotline in the normal way. These repairs will be passed to the relevant contractor to deal with.

Background Legislation

This policy is written in the context of the legal and regulatory requirements BCH is required to work within

The main legislation is as follows:

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 - This Act imposes on landlords an obligation to carry out basic repairs, covering the structure and exterior of the property and installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, and for sanitation and space heating and heating water. There is also an implied covenant to maintain the property in good order.

Defective Premises Act 1972 - Section 4 of this Act places a duty on landlords to take reasonable care to ensure that anyone who might be expected to be affected by defects in a property is reasonably safe from injury or damage to their property.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 - This Act makes provision for the control of premises which are considered to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance. This legislation means BCH may become liable for damages and compensation to customers and their families who suffer as a result of failure to maintain properties so as not to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

We comply with provisions in other legislation, including:

- Localism Act 2011
- Equalities Act 2010
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Party Wall Act 1996
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 2004
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Sections 2, 3 and 4
- Occupiers Liability Acts of 1957 and 1984.

We comply with relevant statutory regulations covering construction, asbestos, water hygiene, electrics, gas safety and health and safety more generally. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System, introduced under the Housing Act 2004, is an important part of the regulatory framework governing our responsive repairs service.

We make sure that our homes comply with the Decent Homes Standard (as a minimum). This Standard was introduced by the Government in 2000 and updated following the Housing Act 2004. To meet the standard, homes must have modern facilities, be in a reasonable state of repair and be warm and weatherproof. We will therefore seek to replace and/or improve components and/or services to ensure properties continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard when we undertake responsive repairs on them.

Repair Responsibilities

BCH is responsible for the upkeep and repair of the structure and exterior of a customer's home and the building in which it is situated.

This includes:

Exterior property

- Foundations
- Roof
- Outside walls and doors
- Windowsills
- Window catches
- Repair or renewal of window fasteners on windows
- Repair or renewal of window locks on windows
- Glazing putties
- Window frames
- Glazing
- Drains
- Guttering, fascia's and soffits
- External pipes
- Chimneys
- Pathways, steps or other means of access
- Garages and stores that are part of the property
- Fencing

Internal property and structure

- Internal walls
- Skirting boards
- Internal doors and door frames
- Internal fire doors
- Kitchen units
- Door jambs
- Thresholds
- Floors (but not floor coverings, other than those provided by BCH)
- Ceilings and plasterwork (excluding minor cracks, painting and decorating)
- Overhauling leaking or dripping taps (including mixers) to wash hand basin, bath and kitchen sink
- Pests where the point of entry has been proven to be as a result of a design fault or damage to the exterior of the property
- Pests in communal areas

Gas, water and electricity

BCH is responsible for repairing all leaks and will make good any damage in the surrounding area caused by a leak as part of the repair, any damage caused to decoration and to floor coverings will be assessed on a case by case basis. We are responsible for keeping in repair and working order installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity. This includes:

- Basins
- Sinks
- Baths
- Toilets
- Flushing systems and waste pipes
- Taps and washers
- Electrical wiring
- Gas, water pipes and taps
- Re-lighting boilers
- Water and space heaters
- Fireplaces
- Fitted fires
- Sockets
- Light fittings.

Communal areas

We will ensure that the communal areas are kept in reasonable repair and are fit for use. This includes keeping communal area lighting and entry phones in working order.

Customer responsibilities

We expect our customers to:

- Keep the inside of their home clean and in good condition.
- Keep the decorative standard of their property to an acceptable standard.
- Keep gardens and communal areas clean and tidy. This includes maintaining grass, plants and trees within the property boundaries so as not to cause a nuisance to other customers. It also includes not using communal corridors, hallways or cupboards for storing personal items or dumping unwanted items.
- Avoid doing anything which may result in blockages to pipes and drains (e.g. disposing of fat, oil, sanitary ware, nappies etc. down toilets or in sinks)
- Take responsibility for pest control, including removal wasp/bee's nests, bed bugs and disinfestation, except where point of entry has been proven to be as a result of a design fault or damage to the exterior of the property.
- To take action to resolve instances of condensation. Where condensation is the likely cause of any reported dampness, BCH will provide advice to customers of the action they should take to deal with the problem and prevent further incidences.

Interior and exterior of a property

Door furniture

- Door locks and keys (we will only replace door locks if the damage is the result of a crime. A crime reference number must be provided)
- Fitting extra locks and catches
- Replacing damaged locks and the keys if you lose them
- House numbers, and door knockers
- Draught exclusion

- Adapting doors to accommodate carpets

Interior fittings

- Cupboard and wardrobe catches, hinges and doors
- Fitting extra catches and safety devices
- Internal painting and decorating
- Minor gaps between skirting and floors
- Plumbing in washing machines or dishwashers

Bathroom

- Shower heads (if damage is caused by blockage and lack of cleaning).
- Bath and basin plugs, chains and handles
- Bathroom cabinets, towel rails, toilet roll holders
- Mirrors
- Toilet seats and lids
- Cleaning and descaling of toilets, wash basins, baths and showers

Property maintenance

- Clothes lines, posts, tidy-dryers and rotary dryers (unless in communal areas)
- Curtain rails
- Provision/replacement of dustbins
- Minor cracks to wall or ceiling plaster
- Floor coverings. Where any floor covering needs to be removed when access is required to access pipework or other repair works, the customer must arrange for this to be removed, lifted and/or relayed
- General fixtures and fittings
- Pest control, e.g. vermin removal (mice in the dwelling), wasp/bee's nests, disinfestation
- Replace or repair any items (such as white goods, gas or electrical appliances) gifted to the customer
- Cleaning of communal parts, except where specified

Heating

- Any customer's fittings/appliances e.g. gas cooker
- Setting heating controls on boilers
- Bleeding radiators
- Supplying and fitting cylinder jackets

Electrics

- Fitting TV aerials
- Plugs, lamps and tenant's own light fittings
- Changing light bulbs, tubes and fuses, unless sealed LED lights.
- Doorbells, doorbell wiring, batteries and bulbs (except in communal areas and entry phones)

Garden/external

- Rubbish clearance
- Customers own fences and sheds
- Gardening at individual properties

- Garden maintenance including tree branches, hedges and lawn cutting (for individual properties)

Rechargeable Repairs

A rechargeable repair is when something has to be repaired because it has been broken due perhaps to an accident or by customer damage. Examples of rechargeable repairs are as follows:

- Key replacement
- Re-glazing a deliberately broken window
- Renewing a deliberately damaged door, internal or external
- Making safe any electric items damaged as a result of action by a customer, member of their household or visitor
- Making safe any gas connections damaged as a result of action by a customer, a member of their household or visitor
- Making good any heating or plumbing services damaged as a result of action by a customer a member of their household or visitor

Normally rechargeable repairs would be identifiable when reported to BCH as part of the general conversation with the customer. At this stage agreement will be obtained to ensure that the customer agrees to BCH undertaking the repair.

Where information is not forthcoming then further questioning e.g. how/when/why did the repair occur will be required to determine if the repair should be rechargeable.

If there is any doubt about the nature of the repair or the circumstances in which it arose, it may be necessary to visit the property and inspect prior to any remedial works being carried out.

For further information please refer to the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.