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| Repairs & Maintenance Policy  |
| December 2024  |

Contents

[1. Version control 2](#_Toc201054412)

[2. Policy Statement 2](#_Toc201054413)

[3. Policy Aims & Objectives 2](#_Toc201054414)

[4. Scope 3](#_Toc201054415)

[5. Roles & Responsibilities 3](#_Toc201054416)

[6. Legislation & Guidance 3](#_Toc201054417)

[7. Definitions 4](#_Toc201054418)

[8. Repair Responsibilities 4](#_Toc201054419)

[9. Repair Categories 4](#_Toc201054420)

[Emergency Repairs 4](#_Toc201054421)

[Urgent Repair 5](#_Toc201054422)

[Routine Repair 5](#_Toc201054423)

[Planned Repairs 5](#_Toc201054424)

[10. Out of Hours Emergency Repairs 5](#_Toc201054425)

[11. Individual Circumstances 5](#_Toc201054426)

[12. Inspections 7](#_Toc201054427)

[12.1 Pre-Inspections 7](#_Toc201054428)

[12.2 Post-Inspections 8](#_Toc201054429)

[13. No Access 8](#_Toc201054430)

[14. Rechargeable Repairs 8](#_Toc201054431)

[15. Tenant Led Alterations 8](#_Toc201054432)

[16. High Levels of Repairs 9](#_Toc201054433)

[17. Leaseholders 9](#_Toc201054434)

[18. Repairs & Maintenance 9](#_Toc201054435)

[18.1 Cyclical Maintenance 9](#_Toc201054436)

[19. Performance & Tenant Satisfaction 11](#_Toc201054437)

[20. Gifted Items 12](#_Toc201054438)

[21. Monitoring & Review 12](#_Toc201054439)

[22. Equality & Diversity 12](#_Toc201054440)

[23. Appendices 13](#_Toc201054441)

# Version control

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| Date | Details | Updated by |
| December 24 | V1 | Anita Merritt |

# Policy Statement

Torbay Council are committed to delivering a high-quality, modern and effective repairs service and to provide homes that are comfortable, maintained and safe for people to live in.

The primary purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Torbay Council staff and tenants are aware, understand and are equipped with information to deliver the requirements of the repairs service.

# Policy Aims & Objectives

This policy recognises that a successful repairs service considers doing the right thing for Torbay Council tenants by getting it right first time.

The policy is designed to meet the following aims:

* To deliver a great, consistent and modern repairs service
* To provide an efficient service that ensures our properties are protected and well maintained whilst maximising added value
* To ensure that all tenants live in a safe and habitable environment
* To comply with relevant statutory and regulatory obligations
* To deliver the promises made within the service standards (Appendix A)
* To promote a culture of innovation and incorporate emerging technologies.
* To respect and protect our planet through our working practices

And objectives:

* To interact and listen to the feedback of tenants to shape service delivery

and tenants experience

* To continually strive for the highest levels of performance and tenant’s satisfaction
* To place emphasis on the quality of repair works
* To clearly define the repair responsibilities of Torbay Council and its tenants
* To provide a service that is accessible and convenient for tenants
* To undertake repairs in the most efficient manner whilst adopting a right first-

time ethos

# Scope

This policy covers the responsive repairs and maintenance service to properties and any communal areas owned and/or managed by Torbay Council. Excluded from this policy are rechargeable repairs, tenant alterations and void repairs which will have their own policies.

# Roles & Responsibilities

The Housing Manager will have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Housing Manager will ensure that the policy and associated procedures are embedded within the operational delivery of the repairs service and that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are adequately trained to carry them out.

Torbay Council staff and tenants will follow the policy guidelines and its approach to repairs and maintenance.

# Legislation & Guidance

Torbay Council will deliver a repairs service that complies with regulatory and statutory obligations to ensure the health, safety and security of people and property are always maintained.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) provides The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from 2012 including ‘The Home Standard’.

The key areas of legislation in this policy are:

* Defective Premises Act 1972
* Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
* Building Regulations Act 1984
* Landlord and Tenants Act 1985
* Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
* Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
* Housing Act 2004
* Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006
* Equality Act 2010
* Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
* Data Protection Act 2018
* Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

# Definitions

#### ‘Tenant’ – Any tenant or licensee of a property owned by Torbay Council.

‘Repair’ – The process of rectifying a component or installation when it is faulty or in a state of disrepair; in Torbay Council owned property.

# Repair Responsibilities

The responsibility for repairing and maintaining homes is shared between Torbay Council and its tenants and are set out in the Tenancy Agreement.

Tenants can report repairs 24 hours a day, every day of the year. We aim to offer appointments for most repairs and all repair inspections; and complete the repair at the first visit.

Repairs request can be taken

* Via our website
* By telephone line direct to the housing management team or the property service helpdesk – 01803 208526
* In writing
* Via email - PropertyServicesHelpdesk@torbay.gov.uk

When a repair is requested, we will:

* Offer a convenient appointment date for the repair
* Tell the tenants approximately how long they will have to wait for the repair to be completed once a member of our facilities management team, or a sub-contractor has attended, if matters cannot be rectified on the first visit.
* Complete all non-urgent repairs within an average of 20 working days.

Tenants must report repairs that are the responsibility of Torbay Council, as soon as reasonably possible, to ensure the property does not fall into disrepair, this also includes repairs to the communal areas where you live, if not covered by a management company.

# Repair Categories

Repairs will be classified and responded to within Torbay Council’s repair categories and timescales.

### Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs are any defects that put the health, safety or security of properties, tenants or anyone else at immediate risk.

Emergency repairs will be responded to and made safe within 24 hours.

Where possible a full repair will be carried out, if this is not possible, we will arrange a new

appointment at a time convenient for the tenants.

### Urgent Repair

Urgent Repairs are any defects that causes loss of facilities to the tenants or likely to cause further deterioration to the structure, fabric or services to the building.

Urgent Repairs will be carried out within 5 working days, from the repair being reported and accepted.

### Routine Repair

A routine repair is a repair that can prevent immediate damage to the property and/ or overcome inconvenience to tenants.

Routine repairs will be carried out within 20 working days from the time a repair is reported to the completion of the work, at the tenant’s convenience.

### Planned Repairs

There are some repairs that require specialist materials and/ or equipment and further time to complete. They can also consist of a replacement rather than a repair of a component.

Planned repairs will be carried out within 40 working days.

Torbay Council also carry out planned maintenance to properties as part of wider estate investment schemes. If a property is identified for improvement works, the tenants will be notified, and works can be brought forward if required.

Examples of repairs that fall under each response category are listed in Appendix 3.

# Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs are available outside of day-to-day operating hours for repairs that pose an immediate risk to people and/ or property.

# Individual Circumstances

Torbay Council appreciate and embrace the diversity of tenants and there will be occasions where services will need to be tailored to accommodate individuals and their needs. Every attempt will be made to identify any individual circumstances at first point of contact to ensure reasonable adjustments can be made.

11.1 Code of Conduct (Torbay Council and Tenants)

Torbay Council and its Representatives

* will answer calls promptly and be polite, honest and helpful always.
* will introduce themselves when calling the tenants by phone and will show photo identification before entering a tenant’s home.
* will explain what work is going to be carried out and discuss with the tenants how this might affect them.
* will take care of all tenants’ belongings whilst working in their property, protecting them from damage and dust for example.
* will make sure that materials and tools do not cause danger to anyone in the tenants’ home.
* will make sure that when having to use tenants’ 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.
* will 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.
* will make sure that electricity, water and gas are connected at the end of each day wherever possible.
* will limit the use of their mobile phones.
* if the repair is the responsibility of Torbay Council, we and our contractors will take responsibility and take ownership and not blame any other party.
* are not allowed to smoke or play radios whilst working in a tenant’s home or garden.
* are not allowed to use a tenant’s phone or toilet without asking for permission first.

are not allowed to make or receive personal phone calls during their work.

* are not allowed to be in a tenant’s property with children under 18 without a responsible adult being present.
* are not allowed to accept gifts from tenants.
* are not allowed to keep keys for tenant’s homes.
* Where appropriate a tenant may ask for a security code word to be used to gain access. If given this will be made available to the member of staff or representative to give added security to tenants that feel especially vulnerable.

11.2 Tenant access Responsibilities

* Torbay Council offer a flexible appointment system for repairs (excluding emergencies which are carried out within 24 hours).
* Tenants must allow authorised staff of Torbay Council or other agents/contractors of Torbay Council into their home at all reasonable hours to inspect its condition, do any repairs needed, or improvements or to service appliances or to carry out work Torbay Council considers necessary to make sure the property and surrounding properties do not put the tenants or anyone else at risk.
* Staff or contractors employed by Torbay Council must have access to carry out gas servicing as and when required.
* Torbay Council may need to gain access to homes to inspect, clean or repair a home or neighbouring dwellings, or any sewers, drains, pipes, wiring or cable serving a home or neighbouring dwellings.
* Authorised staff of Torbay Council may need to enter a property without notice in an emergency, using reasonable force, if necessary, if Torbay Council feels there is a risk of personal injury or damage to property or surrounding properties.

Tenants must not cause or commit or allow anyone living with them or visitors to cause or commit any form of harassment or other anti-social behaviour. Harassment and anti-social behaviour or any act or omission which interferes with the peace and comfort of or which may cause nuisance, annoyance, injury or offence to any other tenants, members of their household, visitors, neighbours, our employees, agents and contractors or any other member of the general public and includes (but is not limited to):

* harassment on the grounds of age, gender, race, religion, culture, sexuality, disability or lifestyle
* violence or threats of violence to any person
* abusive or insulting words or behaviour
* offensive drunkenness
* damage or threat of damage to Premises

Tenant’s dogs must always be kept in a different room. If this is not possible the tenants will be asked to remove them from the property. If this is not possible the repair will be cancelled and rearranged with a new priority when this is possible.

Employers must protect their staff from second hand or passive smoking. Therefore, tenants will be expected to refrain from smoking for two hours prior to a member of our staff or contractors visiting their homes. Tenants must not smoke during the period staff and contractors are in their home.

# 12. Inspections

## 12.1 Pre-Inspections

A pre-inspection maybe required before a repair appointment can be arranged. This will include circumstances where the scope of the repair is unknown. Following the inspection, the repair will be diagnosed and planned within the appropriate timescales.

If a pre-inspection is required, the repair priority will not be made until the inspection has taken place and an assessment carried out.

Appointment to carry out a repair at your home:

* Appointments will be offered for most repairs unless they are external to the property or to be carried out by a specialist contractor. Appointments will be offered for all repairs that require an inspection or a visit from an estimator.
* The repair appointment will be offered that is convenient to both the tenants and the housing department. Appointments will be offered for the morning or afternoon. Mornings being 8am-12pm and afternoon being 12pm-4pm.
* No appointments will be offered for emergency repairs. Emergency repairs are defined in Appendix C. The aim is, within 24hrs, to make safe an emergency repair or complete the repair where possible. Any follow up work required will be appointed if appropriate to do so as set out above.
* External repairs that do not require the tenant to be present will not be given an appointment time unless requested. 24 hours’ notice will be given prior to commencement of the repair.
* Specialist contractors and some contractors working on supported housing properties will make their own appointments with the tenants within 3 days of the repair request. Tenants will be informed of this when they report the repair, as we will require the tenant's permission to share their contact phone number with the contractor.
* The tenants will be informed about their repair appointment via a phone call. In all cases this information given will include the appointment date and if it is in the morning or afternoon.
* If there is no access when the operative calls, then the repair may be cancelled. Tenants will be required to report the repair again.

## 12.2 Post-Inspections

To ensure Torbay Council are delivering a high-quality repairs service and committed to added value, a text may be sent to the tenant with a link to complete a very quick survey.

# 13. No Access

If Torbay Council are unable to gain access due to the tenant not being home for a pre-arranged appointment, the tenant may be notified that the repair has been cancelled and to contact Torbay Council to raise another appointment. (This depends on the urgency of the repair).

Where a no access occurs and the repair is related to health and safety matters or materials have been ordered, the repair will stay open to allow time to make contact to rebook the repair.

Torbay Council will monitor no accessed visits to ensure a property does not fall into disrepair.

# 14. Rechargeable Repairs

Damage that has been caused by a tenant, their family members or visitors to a property, may be rechargeable. A rechargeable repair is defined as, ‘repairs that are above and beyond normal wear and tear, and arise from abuse, accidental damage, neglect or deliberate and/or malicious damage’.

Rechargeable repairs are underpinned by the tenancy agreement which will enable Torbay Council to recover the costs resulting from tenants who fail to meet their obligations.

Rechargeable repairs, unless covered under Health and Safety will have to be paid for before the repair is completed, or the tenant will be made aware that the repair is rechargeable and advised a repayment plan will need to be agreed.

# 15. Tenant Led Alterations

Where tenants have carried out alterations or improvements to a property and written permission has been sought, Torbay Council will not be responsible for carrying out repairs unless this has been previously agreed and in writing.

Torbay Council recognise that tenants will want to make alterations and improvements to their homes. Where requests are reasonable, they will not be refused. However written permission must be obtained if tenants wish to carry out any improvements. This may also require the need for planning permission, building regulations approval or any other permission must be obtained before starting the work. Any cost of obtaining permission will be down to the tenant.

# 16. High Levels of Repairs

Where a tenant has reported a high level of repairs over a set period of time, an inspection will be carried out to the property to determine the cause of the repairs. The inspection will identify whether further repairs should be raised.

# 17. Leaseholders

Leaseholders should refer to their leasehold agreements for details of their repairs and maintenance responsibilities.

Torbay Council manage a number of leasehold properties (i.e., we own the whole block and are responsible for cleaning and maintenance of the communal areas). The specific repairing responsibility for each of these properties is contained in the lease agreement. In the main, Torbay Council retains repairing responsibilities for the structure of the building, communal areas and any communal systems and installations within the property. The leaseholder is generally responsible for maintaining the interior of their property. However, it is important that the specific detail of each property is ascertained from the lease agreement.

In addition to the repairing responsibility, the lease agreement will also confirm if the leaseholder is responsible for a proportion of the repairing costs incurred by Torbay Council where we retain the repairing responsibility. These costs are recovered via a service charge and presented to the leaseholder in the Annual Service Charge Statement.

Before any repair or maintenance work is carried out to a leasehold property consideration should be given to the anticipated total cost of the work. If the cost to any leaseholder is expected to be £250 or more, then formal Section 20 Consultation is required before the work can be undertaken.

# 18. Repairs & Maintenance

## 18.1 Cyclical Maintenance

Gas & Solid Fuel Servicing

All properties that contain gas appliances will be serviced on an annual basis and properties containing solid fuel appliances will be serviced every six months.

The gas installation is also checked when a property becomes empty prior to the new tenant taking the property

Electrical Periodic Testing

Every five years a full electrical safety test will be undertaken to all properties, as well as when the properties become empty. The electrical installation will also be visually checked for safety when an electrician visits the property. This includes planned maintenance works and repairs calls.

Asbestos

We will establish where asbestos containing materials (ACM) are within our properties, in line with our Asbestos policy and procedures. This information will be made available to our staff, contractors and tenants where necessary.

Legionella

We will carry legionella risk assessments in line with our Legionella policy and procedures. Legionella risk will be managed through regular monitors where necessary.

Smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors

Our aim is to fit hard wired smoke detectors to all properties. In homes with two or three stories, it is now a requirement to have a smoke detector fitted on each floor. These will be linked so all detectors are activated when one is set off.

Smoke detectors have a battery back-up. These can either be a 9v battery that can be bought on the high street or a 10-year lithium battery that is embedded within the smoke detector. It is the responsibility of the tenants to test the smoke detector on a regular basis and to report any issues. Replacement of 9v batteries is the responsibility of the tenants. Embedded batteries will be replaced by Torbay Council, where possible, or the unit itself replaced, whichever is viable at the time.

Homes with a gas supply or solid fuel appliances legally need carbon monoxide detectors. The association’s policy is to install carbon dioxide detectors to all homes where necessary. Where installed, it is the tenants’ responsibility to test the detector on a regular basis, change the batteries and report any issues.

Gardens

The maintenance of gardens within dwellings is the responsibility of the tenant. Where communal facilities are offered then grounds maintenance will be carried out via Torbay Council or a management company and charged to the tenants via a service charge.

Pest Control

It is not necessarily the responsibility of Torbay Council to deal with pest control, unless there is a risk of damage to the property, or there is a fault with our property which is allowing pests to enter/reproduce. We aim to initially visit to make a visual assessment, or the tenant will be asked to send photos. Normally, tenants will then be directed to the Environmental Health department to deal with any issues. Pest control within communal areas will be managed by Torbay Council in conjunction with an appointed contractor. We will normally make an assessment on a case-by-case basis.

Adaptations

Torbay Council is committed to meeting the needs of its tenants for independence, privacy and dignity. We aim to help people continue to live independently and comfortably in their homes for as long as possible, with the minimum intrusion or intervention.

A budget is allocated for carrying out adaptation works each year, and, in addition, grant applications will be made for Disabled Facilities Grants from the Adult Services department wherever possible. This ensures that the maximum possible number of adaptations can be carried out. We will ensure our processes are cost effective and represent value for money.

The Aids and Adaptations Policy provides the basis to produce and implement procedures for providing aids and adaptations. There are many differences in the way each subsidiary handles aids and adaptations, however this policy provides a statement on Torbay Council stance on the provision of aids & adaptations

Right to Buy Applications

Once an application under the Right to Buy Scheme is received by Torbay Council, there becomes a legal responsibility for the authority to carry out emergency repairs only. This will make sure that the property remains wind and watertight and is fit for human 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

Locks and key replacement

The security of tenants is a basic requirement for Torbay Council to provide. The tenants will be provided with a set of keys to all relevant locks within the property. Torbay Council does not generally hold keys for any occupied dwellings of buildings, unless requested by the tenant.

If a lock is faulty then Torbay Council will affect a repair where necessary. Where keys are lost or mislaid by the tenants then it is the responsibility of the tenants to replace the locks or regain access to the property. Torbay Council does not provide a locksmith service out of hours.

# 19. Performance & Tenant Satisfaction

Torbay Council will collate and monitor performance information in relation to repairs strategic key performance indicators.

Tenant’s satisfaction testing will be conducted regularly on a random selection of completed repairs.

Feedback and analysis will be used to identify trends and to continuously improve service delivery.

# 20. Gifted Items

Any items that are gifted to the tenants, usually at the start of a tenancy will require the tenants to sign an agreement that explains future maintenance and replacement of the items is their responsibility.

# 21. Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there is a significant incident, important change in circumstances or legislation which would warrant a review being carried out at an earlier date.

# 22. Equality & Diversity

Torbay Council is committed to promoting equality and inclusion and to ensuring that our communities thrive. We complete equality impact assessments (EIAs) to help us understand the possible impacts that our decision may have on different groups.

The Equality Act 2010 provides legal protection from discrimination across nine ‘protected characteristics’ which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnerships.

Under the Act, the Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that we must take steps to actively promote equality. The PSED requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
* Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and
* Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The PSED requires us to give ‘due regard’ to equality when making decisions and delivering services. This is to ensure our actions actively promote equality and do not directly or indirectly adversely affect people with protected characteristics.

# 23. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Service Standards

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Repairs and maintenance** | **Torbay Council*** Provide you with a convenient way to report your repair
* Offer flexible appointments to carry out your repair
* Be polite and respectful when carrying out work in your home
* Where possible, carry out your repair on the first visit
* Make you aware when we are unable to complete your repair at first visit and keep you updated on progress
* Undertake a regular programme of improvements and keep you informed of when this work will take place
 | **Tenants*** Inform us of any repairs that need doing to your home or any communal area which is part of your home.
* Give our employees

or subcontractors access to your property to carry out any necessary work, including your annual safety checks |

Appendix 2 – Repair Categories & Examples – This is not a compressive list.

**Emergency repairs – 24 HOURS**

* Total loss of water supply
* Total loss of heating (between 1st November – 31st March)
* Dangerous structures including wall or ceiling collapse
* Unsecure doors and windows
* Full loss of electricity
* Avoid major damage to a property such as a serious flood.
* Make the property secure following a break in by changing locks or boarding a broken window; and
* Removing any possible health and safety risk. This could be following Domestic Abuse attack; a Crime number may be required)
* Blocked WC/drains
* Graffiti Removal – (Obscene or Racist)

**Urgent Repairs – 5 WORKING DAYS**

* Minor Plumbing repair or fault.
* Blocked sink, basins, bath or second toilet, No caused by a person at the property.
* Faulty Extractor fan
* Damage caused to stair treads, handrails or banisters.
* Entry phone handset failure. Avoid major damage to a property such as a serious flood.

Routine repairs - 20 WORKING DAYS

* Repairs to ease and adjust windows or doors
* Minor leaks or dripping tap
* Non urgent electrical work (e.g. loss of power to one socket or light)
* Partial loss of electricity
* Partial loss of heating or water

Planned repairs 40 WORKING DAYS

* Repairing internal joinery including cupboards, shelving, skirting, bath panels.
* Cleaning out and/or repairing defects to gutters and rainwater pipes
* Fencing repairs
* Graffiti Removal – Non obscene or racist