



# Responsive Repairs Policy

## 1.0 Purpose and scope

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This policy sets out our approach to the delivery of responsive repairs services to Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) residents.

The policy applies to all properties for which NHG is responsible for carrying out responsive repairs, as determined by their tenancy, licence or lease agreement.

Where we are not responsible for repairs, we will communicate with third parties to ensure successful delivery of responsive repairs service.

The policy should be read in conjunction with our Damp and Mould Policy, and our Decant Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Deliver an efficient, effective and value for money responsive repairs service that meets the needs of residents
- Comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and meet our contractual obligations
- Provide easily accessible, customer centric services to suit residents' needs and to enable residents to access appropriate support in crisis and emergency
- Ensure that all properties are kept in a good state of repair, and that any repair work done in a property provides residents with a safe and secure environment to live in
- Ensure transparency for residents and meet our responsibilities and contractual obligations
- Provide a prompt, consistent and cost-effective responsive repairs service to residents
- Work in partnership with residents to continuously drive service improvements
- Improve the value for money of the service, including the delivery of better planned and programmed work to manage high demand for responsive repairs
- Work with a superior landlord and to communicate on any responsive repairs' issues, and where we work closely with the managing agents, to ensure prompt delivery of responsive repairs services to residents is in place.

## 2.0 Definitions

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For the purpose of this policy, we have defined the most commonly used terminology that may be useful in relation to the responsive repairs service provided at NHG.

**Decent Homes Standard:** A Government programme aimed at improving social housing homes to bring them all up to a minimum standard.

**Emergency Repair:** An emergency repair can be classified as one that presents an immediate danger and imminent risk to the resident, the public or the property (e.g., where the property is not secure), or would jeopardise the health, safety, or security of the resident.

A repair can be considered an emergency, when major damage has not yet occurred, but has the potential to do so, or where carrying out the works will ensure the resident is able to remain safely in their home due to their vulnerability.

**Non-emergency repair:** It refers to all other standard responsive repairs.

**Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018:** An Act to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to require that residential rented accommodation is provided and maintained in a state of fitness for human habitation, and for connected purposes.

**Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS):** Places a legal duty on landlords to assess and regularly review the condition of their properties to ensure that properties are safe and free from hazards.

**Local Officer:** The Officer position referred to in this document represents both Housing Officer and Property Management Officer roles.

**Responsive repairs or repairs:** A responsive repair is a repair reported by or on behalf of a resident. A responsive repair to an item that is already present but needs repairing or replacing, depending on what is necessary.

## 3.0 Tenants and landlord responsibilities

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We refer to individual tenancy and leasehold agreements, as these set out the specific contractual responsibilities for both parties. In some scenarios (e.g., fences, boundary walls and party walls, where NHG do not own the adjoining property), there may be contractual clauses that differ, which stipulate who is responsible for carrying out a repair.

In all cases, terms set out in individual tenancy and leasehold agreements take precedence over the statements in this policy.

Tenants are responsible for ensuring that any furniture or other items (including floor coverings) do not impede the contractor in delivering responsive repair in any way. The NHG staff and the contractors will not move furniture on your behalf.

### 3.1 Tenants' responsibilities:

The following is an example of items that a resident is responsible for repairing:

#### Outside space

- To keep wooden garden sheds, beds, and trellising in a good state of repair
- To look after plants, bushes and vegetation
- To look after paving weeding paths and decking in private gardens, paving and driveways (unless when covered by a service charge)
- To maintain a good level of repair of any conservatories and lean-tos not built and provided by NHG.

## Throughout the home

- Tenants are responsible to repair any appliances and fittings that they have installed (e.g., white goods; gas cooker, washing machine), carpets, furniture etc.
- Maintain an internal decoration (except where we are painting to cover an area affected by a leak etc.)
- To repair any small cracks in plaster or woodwork
- Replacing both internal and external light bulbs e.g., security lighting, fuses (unless they are in the communal area, or there is an above average height ceilings)
- To replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- To install additional locks or replacing keys and changing locks, if you are locked out. In an emergency or where your home is not secure, we may carry out these works and recharge the costs to you
- To lubricate door/window locks and hinges
- To replace or maintain security features such as spyholes and door chains
- To ease and adjust internal doors after own floor coverings laid to bedrooms, hallways and living rooms
- To maintain floor coverings (e.g., carpets, lino, tiles, and laminate) except in the bathroom and kitchen, which is NHG's responsibility
- To repair any items that have been damaged by the tenant or their guests, except where these pose a risk to health and safety (including glazing). We may charge for these repairs
- To provide and maintain curtains and blinds
- We are not responsible for any improvements tenant have made, unless they have gone through the NHG improvements process and have been authorised by us.

## Kitchen

- To maintain kitchen furniture and electrical appliances (including cooker hoods) in all instances, even when they have been provided by us
- To keep kitchen clean and in the good condition
- Sink waste pipe blockages
- Replacing sink plugs and chains
- Fixing and replacing cupboards and drawer handles
- Connecting and repairing tenant's own appliances.

## Bathroom

We expect tenant to keep the bathroom and WC clean and in a good condition.

Tenant is responsible to:

- Replace toilet seats, (including lids and hinges), shower heads, hoses, and sinks/bath plugs
- To provide, maintain and replace shower curtains
- To attend to sink/toilet blockages in the first instance. Tenant should attempt to unblock these with drain unblockers/ plunger where appropriate

- Any bathroom locks that were installed by the tenant
- To clean of low-level mildew around windows, doors, grouting and bathroom ceilings.

### **Heating, Gas and Electrical**

We will provide tenant home with a heating system, which is safe and provides adequate heat.

Tenant is responsible for:

- Allowing access for gas service at the property if there is a gas supply to tenant's home
- Bleeding radiators
- Painting radiators

Any repairs to gas installations such as cookers or gas fires should be carried out by a certified Gas Safe engineer. Tenant should always follow up on the Gas Safety engineer advice, to ensure their safety when such installations are at the property

### **Pest control**

- Tenant is responsible for keeping the inside of their home clean and tidy and not to encourage pest infestation, and to conduct internal pest control of their home, to ensure their home is safe, healthy, and free from things that could cause serious harm, (except with rats, mice, cockroaches, squirrels, pigeons, wasps, fleas, bedbugs and pharaoh ants, which can carry and transmit serious diseases and are our responsibility to attend to).

### **3.2 NHG responsibilities:**

The following is a list of items that Notting Hill Genesis is responsible for repairing:

#### **Outside space**

- It is our responsibility to attend to the structure of the tenant home including the roof, outside walls, doors, windows, and windowsills. We will cover glazing issues if there is a crime reference number
- We will repair chimneys, flues, guttering, down pipes, and drains
- Unsafe garden walls and brick sheds, fences except where they are the neighbouring property's responsibility (Usually NHG is responsible for the left side but not always)
- Trip hazards in paths, paving and driveways that provides access to tenant home
- Paving, paths and decking in communal areas or balconies
- Garage structure, roof, and garage doors
- Conservatories present before the tenant moved in unless they have been gifted.

#### **Throughout the home**

- Structural damage to inside walls, floors ceilings, skirtings, and air vents

- Door frames, door hinges, letter boxes, window catches, sash cords and window frames
- Fixtures (including those that have been approved as home improvements)
- Handrails, banisters and stair steps
- Persistent issues with drainage and blockages, removal of wastewater, plumbing leaks to bathroom, kitchen or heating and hot water including to taps, pipework
- Fitting or repairing fire and carbon monoxide alarms. Communal alarm systems and fire panels
- Warden call/telecare equipment (that is installed by NHG).

### **Kitchen**

- We repair kitchen units, doors and frames
- Kitchen sinks and taps
- Trip hazards in kitchen flooring
- Water leaks
- Wall tiling, seals, and splashbacks
- Air vents, extractor fans and pull cords
- Electrical sockets and isolator switches
- The cold-water supply, stop valve and trap for the washing machine and/or other white goods in the kitchen.

### **Bathroom**

- Showers (where provided by us), shower screens (not curtains), toilets, baths, wall tiles, splashbacks and basins
- Flooring (both tiled and vinyl) and wall tiles
- Extractor and humidity fans
- To maintain and replace internal locks and door handles installed by us
- Water leaks
- Toilet flushing mechanism
- Lighting fittings.

### **Heating, Gas and Electrical**

- We will repair your heating system if it breaks down
- We will also attend to the radiators and storage heaters
- Repairs to the gas installations such as boiler and pipework (not including appliances)
- Electrical repairs (not including electrical appliances)
- Water leaks from heating system
- Faulty plug sockets
- Faulty light switches and fittings
- Hard-wired doorbells
- Hard wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Electrical hazards.

### **Pest control**

We will provide infestation in communal areas and inside the property if the infestation is being experienced across multiple homes. The type of pest control we provide is listed in the Tenants responsibility section above.

We have created a repairs leaflet, which further clarifies on both our and tenants' maintenance responsibilities, which can be found on the NHG [website](#).

### **3.3 Communal repairs**

Where we are responsible for communal repairs, which is defined under the terms of individual lease and tenancy, we look after entrances, halls, lifts, communal TV aerials, stairways, passageways, rubbish chutes, lighting, door entry systems, communal letter boxes, paving, paths and decking in communal areas or balconies 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 NHG as the landlord.

Some communal repairs in the same scheme/group of properties might be collated to be completed together, i.e., 'batched'. In such cases they would not be completed within the usual target. We will inform you when we do this and the revised timescale for completion.

We work with contractors to gain access to the building, when planning to carry out identified repair in the communal areas.

We carry out some repairs to communal areas as part of its cyclical works programme, rather than as a responsive repair service.

## **4.0 Responsibilities across different tenures**

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### **4.1 Social, intermediate, market rent, key worker accommodation and affordable rented homes**

In the section above, we detail the respective repair responsibilities of NHG for tenants living in social, intermediate, market rent, key worker accommodation and affordable rented homes with assured tenancies, secure tenancies, assured short hold tenancies or licenses. This should be considered as the NHG minimum standard for landlord responsibilities.

### **4.2 Home ownership**

Leaseholders will have a different set of responsibilities for properties they occupy. These can be found in the terms of their individual lease.

Additionally, Leaseholders can also refer to the HM Land Registry, Title Deeds.

### **4.3 Temporary Housing**

For residents living within Temporary Housing, there may be occasions, where the repair responsibility lies with the property owner rather than NHG or the resident. In these cases, we will work with both the resident and the property owner to ensure the repair is carried out satisfactorily.

### **4.4 Care and Support**

Our responsive repairs services apply to all Care and Support tenants, who may experience repairs issues. In some instances, where we know that there are specific needs or circumstances, we may extend our approach and provide additional

services (e.g., replace a toilet seat, shower head or plugs for sinks and bath, or include tenants' flats, where there is a scheme infestation), to ensure safety and wellbeing of tenants.

## **5.0 Access to the property**

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There are instances where we need to access the property to inspect the level of repair and decide on the best course of action.

### **5.1 Inspection Visits**

Some jobs, including communal repairs, may require an inspection visit before the repair is arranged. These inspections can be carried out by a Surveyor, Contractor or Local Officer as appropriate. Reasons for these inspections include:

- Where investigations to identify the problem are required
- Where previous repairs have not resolved the problem
- Where there are boundary or ownership issues
- Where there are potential policy implications, e.g., where a generic problem has been identified
- Where precise measurements need to be taken in order to progress the repair
- Inspections may also be necessary in other cases, for instance, as part of a stock condition survey.

### **5.2 Emergency Access**

When we require emergency access to a property, we follow our No Access Policy.

## **6.0 Access to the service**

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Our aim is to provide all residents with easy access to our services through different routes to meet their needs and at a time and place to suit them.

### **6.1 Meeting the needs of residents**

NHG staff are expected to follow up on the Responsive Repairs Policy when assessing all requests for repairs from residents.

Where a resident is unable to carry out a repair that they are responsible for due to health or age, we consider carrying out the repair on their behalf.

We may recharge tenants for the costs of these discretionary repairs, which are not identified as the NHG responsibility.

NHG will also provide relevant additional information regarding the resident to repair operatives prior to them attending. This is to ensure both the safety of the operatives and to make them aware of any other circumstances the resident may have.

All resident information within this context will be reviewed periodically, in line with the relevant Policies and procedures.

### **6.2 Reporting Repairs**

Anyone can raise a repair. As part of our inclusive service provision offer, residents are able to report repairs via:

- Email

- Phone
- During home visit/annual visit (face-to-face)
- Our website
- Customer portal- MyAccount where applicable.

During normal office hours all repairs can be reported via telephone by calling the Local Officer. If the repair is an emergency, residents will always be able to contact us through our 24/7 emergency repair line.

Residents are also able to report a repair in person to any member of staff. The member of staff will make sure it is properly reported via appropriate channels as soon as possible.

### 6.3 Out of hours service

We help residents to report repairs, including an out of hours service, where residents can report emergency repairs through our Customer Service Centre.

### 6.4 Managing Agent

For properties for which the responsibility to carry out the repair does not lie with either the resident nor NHG, staff will always pass on the details of identified repair provider to residents and the landlord and liaise to ensure its satisfactory completion.

In some instances, the resident may need to report repairs directly with the landlord.

## 7.0 Repair timeframes

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### 7.1 Prioritising repairs

In line with the terms of the tenancy agreement, residents are required to report repairs to us as soon as possible. This allows us to prevent further damage, reduce costs and maximise resident satisfaction.

We categorise responsive repairs as follows:

Category	Response Time
Emergency Repair	Any emergency repair should be attended within 4 hours and works to make safe or temporarily repair should be completed at this visit or within 24 hours. Further repairs may then subsequently be required to complete the repair.
Standard Repair	We aspire to complete the standard repairs within 20 working days from date of report. In complex cases, where we must consult other residents, this may take more than 20 days, where we will communicate the time frame with the tenant.
Replacement/ Improvement	We will communicate with tenants about the timeframe to complete the work, where we have identified the need for replacement or improvement (e.g., windows or doors replacement).

## **7.2 Emergency repairs**

We recognise that some repairs which are considered standard may pose a higher risk to some households due to circumstances of conditions of the household.

Emergency repairs can present several issues, including but not limited to:

- A heavy leak and flooding in the property, where it is not possible to contain the water or when water is leaking between floors or properties
- An electrical fault in the property, which endangers health, safety, or life of a resident, (e.g., a total loss of power or smoking or sparking electrics)
- An event that threatens the safety and security of a resident (e.g., an external door that cannot be secured or a ground floor window(s) cannot be securely closed, a faulty window mechanism, where the window won't lock or shut properly or broken or shuttered windows in the property)
- A fault, which means that the only toilet in the property is not functioning
- A serious failure of heating or hot water in the property (during October to March only)
- A serious sewage or upsurging drainage issue
- A serious issue with internal structure of the building, (e.g., collapsed ceiling).

In instances where the resident is unable to secure the property and cannot pay to secure it themselves, we will consider offering assistance and refer to our Decant Policy.

## **7.3 Standard repairs**

All appointment times for standard repairs will be communicated and confirmed with the resident prior to the appointment taking place. Appointment will be at a time and date convenient to the resident and the arrival times will be no less specific than the following:

- Morning: Between 08:00-13:00
- Afternoon: Between 12:00-17:00.

In some instances (e.g., communal repairs) we will work with contractors and communicate with residents to gain access to the building, when planning to carry out identified repairs.

In some circumstances it may be possible for our contractors or operatives to offer a narrower window of arrival.

Residents will be informed about progress with their repairs through an agreed channel convenient to them including telephone, text messaging, email, or letter.

If we are unable to keep to an appointment, the resident will be communicated with as soon as possible, and an alternative date will be agreed.

We expect residents to provide us with access to carry out a repair at the appointed time.

If the appointment cannot be kept, residents will be asked to inform us at the earliest opportunity.

For a standard repair, in the first instance if there is no access and no contact from the resident, and after all methods of contact have been exhausted, the job order may be closed. If the repair is an emergency and access cannot be gained via the resident, then a forced access should be considered in line with our No Access Policy.

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

The tenant is responsible for ensuring that any furniture or other items (including floor coverings) do not impede the contractor in any way.

## **8.0 Resident considerations**

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### **8.1 Completing repairs on the first visit**

We aim to complete repairs on the first visit and will monitor our performance against this measure. Sometimes, during the course of a repair, additional works might be required e.g., where specific part is needed to complete the repair.

We have procedures in place to ensure the repair is completed with our target timescales and to the satisfaction of the resident. These procedures give us the flexibility to complete the repair in the first visit where possible without the need to make a new appointment.

### **8.2 Resident and staff behaviour**

We operate a code of conduct for our own operatives and external contractors who carry out repairs on our behalf. In addition, we take seriously any action by residents who harass or threaten to harass or use or threaten violence towards NHG staff, including employees, agency workers, contractors, and volunteers. We always take action to protect our staff where such circumstances arise in line with our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

## **9.0 Service quality**

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We operate a Quality Assurance Framework to test compliance.

All staff delivering our repairs service whether employed or not by NHG is identified as NHG and are expected to work in accordance with this policy. All our repairs' staff will demonstrate strong resident care skills.

### **9.1 Complaints and compensation**

We invite residents to raise a complaint where they feel service standards have not been met. Any such complaint will be dealt with in line with the Complaints and Compliments Policy and procedure and any lessons learnt fed back to the business for review.

Our contractors are expected to follow up on the NHG relevant Policies and procedures.

Where a resident is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they can ask the Housing Ombudsman to investigate their complaint or seek impartial advice.

The Right to Repair Scheme gives some tenants the right to claim compensation (statutory or contractual) when minor, urgent repairs have not been completed within the agreed service level agreement timescales.

Where we failed to meet our repair obligations, we will pay compensation as outlined in our Compensation Policy. Requests for compensation will be considered in line with the Policy.

### **9.2 Improving the service**

Feedback from residents on the quality of the service received is important to us to help in the continuous improvement of this service.

We are committed to working in partnership with our residents to achieve improvements in service delivery and performance. We will do this by tracking and analysing the performance data of the repairs service, and by working with residents through a range of involvement initiatives for instance, resident focus groups, consultations, committees, repairs and maintenance forums and estate visits, to identify areas for improvement and monitor the delivery of action plans.

Regular resident satisfaction surveys will be carried out following the completion of a repair across certain tenures.

We will consult residents and external stakeholders on any revisions to this policy.

### **9.3 Value for money**

We aim to deliver an efficient and effective business, demonstrating value for money to our residents with a high standard of service delivery provided at reasonable cost.

We have a range of mechanisms in place to demonstrate and improve our service delivery, including benchmarking cost and performance data, market testing of the responsive repairs service against other housing associations and external providers, and undertaking internal business reviews.

In line with our procurement policy, repairs contracts must provide good value for money for both us and the residents.

Our approach to responsive repairs represents value for money and delivers high level of customer satisfaction. Our annual survey allows us to gather feedback on repairs service and we use the information to continually monitor and improve our performance.

### **9.4 Post- inspections**

We aim to carry out the following proportions of post-inspections:

- 10% of all repairs costing below £500
- 50% of all repairs costing between £500-£1000
- 100% of all repairs costing in excess of £1000.

These inspections will be a combination of desktop reviews and on-site inspections, which highlight how well we did and provide us with useful insight about the quality of work, performance and understanding about the level of customer satisfaction.

## **10.0 Insurance**

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We are responsible for insuring the properties which we own. Any works that NHG is obliged to carry out as the landlord may be covered by the building's insurance.

Residents are responsible for insuring their own contents, and to ensure they understand the cover provided and any general exclusions and conditions that may apply.

## **11.0 Guiding legislation**

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### **11.1 Decent Homes Standard**

We make sure that our homes comply with the Decent Homes Standard (as a minimum).

We ensure our homes have modern facilities, are in a reasonable state of repair and warm and weatherproof.

All NHG programmes of planned and cyclical maintenance, including our stock condition survey as well as the retrofit programme 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.

The standard does not apply to leasehold and shared ownership properties.

### **11.2 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System is an important part of the regulatory framework governing our responsive repairs service.

Where a hazard or any risk associated with the HHSRS assessment system is highlighted by staff, contractors or third-party agencies, we will address any works needed as part of the responsive repairs service.

### **11.3 Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 and Letting Standards**

We are required to ensure that our properties, including where we are responsible for any common parts of the building, are fit for human habitation at the beginning of the tenancy and throughout.

We refer to the NHG lettings standard that clarifies on our approach to ensure a positive impact on resident satisfaction and the quality of our homes. NHG letting standards can be found on our [website](#).

The Act applies to all periodic tenancies.

## **12.0 Privacy and data protection**

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All NHG staff comply with our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018 when recording information and refer to and follow up on the NHG Data Protection and Information Governance Policy.

When receiving reports on behalf of the resident, we liaise with a representative nominated by residents when discussing, scheduling and completing repairs to their home. The extent of that communication will be limited to the repair. We will not discuss any other aspect of the customer's tenancy with third parties without formal written consent from the resident.

## 13.0 Monitoring and training

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Our Asset Leads promote a good repairs practice across the business and develop a positive responsive repairs culture within NHG. We aim to ensure that all staff are responsible for delivery of a good level of repairs and for following up on the NHG and resident's repairs responsibilities and recognising current policy position on repairs.

We ensure that all operational housing staff include repairs in their appraisal process and identify areas of improvements. We identify training needs for all staff at NHG and design and source appropriate training for all staff responsible for delivery of the responsive repairs at NHG. Mandatory learning must be completed by new employees, who are responsible to deliver responsive repairs service to residents.

## 14.0 Our approach

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In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering equality, diversity and inclusion. If you'd like a copy of the assessment, please email your request to [policy@nhg.org.uk](mailto:policy@nhg.org.uk).

## 15.0 Reference

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We comply with the Housing Regulator's Home Standard as set out in 'The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012'.

- Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 2004
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2018
- Localism Act 2011
- Equalities Act 2010
- 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
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Sections 2, 3 and 4
- Occupiers Liability Acts of 1957 and 1984
- Decent Homes Standard
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

## Document control

Author	Michael Drozynski, Policy Officer
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Approved by	Policy group
Policy owner	Director of Repairs
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## Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
March 2023	<p>Responsive Repairs Policy review captured the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarified on Tenants and NHG responsibilities</li> <li>• Reviewed NHG responsibilities across different tenures</li> <li>• Clarified on the expectation for staff when assessing all residents' requests</li> <li>• Defined Out of Hours service</li> <li>• Clarified on the Emergency and non- emergency service</li> <li>• We listed and clarified on several examples of emergency repair, which can present a number of issues for NHG residents</li> <li>• We have clarified on the meaning of value for money service</li> <li>• We have focused on the critical legislation that underline our approach, (Decent Homes Standard, HHSRS and Fitness for Human Habitation).</li> </ul>	v2.0