

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING BUSINESS CENTRE

Responsive Repairs Policy

Approved: 2021

Review due: 2024

1. Scope

1.1 Runnymede Borough Council Day-to-Day Repairs Service

The purpose of this document is to set out Runnymede Borough Council's policy when undertaking day-to-day responsive repairs to our tenant's homes.

The policy also details the responsive repairs service Runnymede Borough Council's leaseholders can expect to receive.

2. Context

This policy supports the Housing Landlord Service objectives of: -

1. Optimising Income and Efficiencies
2. Good Quality Housing

2.1 Data Protection

Runnymede Borough Council is committed to ensuring the privacy of individuals is respected and that all personal data that is processed by the organisation is dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and other related legislation.

The GDPR lays down rules relating to the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing and sharing of personal data; it protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons and in particular their right to the protection of personal data.

The Council will therefore aim to ensure that all employees, elected members, contractors, agents, consultants, or partners of the Council who have access to any personal data held by or on behalf of the Council, are fully aware of and abide by their duties and responsibilities under the law. Specifically, in respect of:

- their responsibilities under data protection law for the protection of personal data
- the necessity of appropriate data sharing
- the benefits for good records management
- the technical and administrative controls operating in the Council

(This is an extract from RBC's Corporate Data Protect Policy)

3. Policy Objectives

The objectives of our Repairs Policy are:

3.1 Our Goals

- To maximise customer satisfaction with the repairs service – by being clear what repair work Runnymede Borough Council is responsible for and what repair work we expect our tenants/leaseholders to be able to undertake.
- To undertake repair work to the highest possible standard – getting as much work as possible completed ‘right first time’.
- Ensure value for money for Runnymede Borough Council and our tenants/leaseholders, by: -
 - promoting self service via Housing Online
 - checking on the quality of work undertaken
 - monitoring customer satisfaction
 - recharging for damage caused by neglect or misuse.
- To encourage our contractors to report any concerns regarding the tenant/leaseholder and their household they identify while undertaking repair work

3.2 Monitoring and inspection

Runnymede Borough Council will monitor the quality of the repairs service being delivered by undertaking: -

- Post inspection
- Customer satisfaction monitoring

4. Policy Details

4.1 Repairs Responsibilities

4.1.1 Runnymede Borough Council’s repairing obligations

For our tenanted properties we are responsible for keeping in good repair the structure, fixtures and service installation at the premises, examples include:

Systems providing heating, gas, electricity and water in your home including:

- heating systems, water heaters fitted by the Council
- electrical circuits, sockets and switches
- internal pipes, baths, sinks, basins, toilets, taps and deck mixer showers (installed by us)
- other appliances we put in and own (such as communal

television aerials and door entry systems)

- annual servicing of Council gas appliances

Exterior of your home:

- external paint work
- chimneys, chimney stacks and flues but not including sweeping
- drains, gutters and outside pipes
- roofs, external walls and floors
- windows

- paths and steps
- fences, walls and gates erected and owned by the Council

- door fittings – locks, handles, hinges and letter boxes
- windows and window frames
- kitchen units and bathrooms

Interior of your home:

The Council is responsible for the following interior repairs due only to natural wear and tear. We are not responsible when damage has been caused through misuse.

- walls
- floors and ceilings
- plaster work
- doors and door frames

Communal area and facilities:

- lifts and entry phone systems
- fire detection and emergency lighting system
- shared entrances, halls, stairs and passages
- painting the inside and outside of shared areas
- parking areas and any other shared areas

In properties we managed owned by a leaseholder we are responsible for keeping in good repair the structure of the property (this does not include doors and windows) and the communal area and facilities.

4.1.2 Our tenants repairing obligations

As a tenant you are responsible for maintaining certain parts of your property.

Examples of tenant's responsibilities include:

Interior of your home

- chimney sweeping
- curtain rails
- damage caused by you, anyone living with you, your visitors or pets
- door adjustments required when installing flooring or floor coverings
- doorbells (if battery powered) and door furniture
- fuses and plugs on your own appliances
- general decoration
- glazing (unless authorised by us)
- plugs and chains for all baths, sinks, wash hand basins and WCs
- shower heads and hoses
- smoke alarms (if battery powered)
- toilet seats (unless resident is in sheltered accommodation)

- TV aerials and satellite dishes (unless linked to a communal aerial)

Exterior of your home

- blockages to waste pipes, gullies and WCs caused by misuse
- damage caused by forced entry by the police (unless nothing was found, and no-one charged)
- gardens / garden contents
- keys - lost or stolen, including the replacement of locks
- pests (unless they are interfering with our ability to carry out repairs)
- wooden sheds or outbuildings.

4.2 Repair Reporting

Tenants and leaseholders are able to make repair requests via our Customer Service Centre and via website customer portal 'Housing Online'

4.3 Repairs Appointments

Repairs should be convenient, and tenants should be able to arrange for work to be completed to their home according to their availability and the availability of the contractor.

We are therefore proposing that we will only operate two categories of repair appointments: -

Emergency – emergency repair work will be completed within 4 hours

General – all repair work will be completed within 20 days

Appointments will be given in two categories –

- AM (08:00 – 12:00)
- PM (12:30 – 17:00)

Appointments by arrangement for a specific timeslot can be arranged with the contractor directly to meet needs of residents.

Repairs to the structure of a property or to a communal area will normally be completed within 20 days. Leaseholders are able to make requests for this type of work either online or via our customer contact centre.

4.4 Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Runnymede Borough Council provide an emergency out of hours service which operates from the hours of 17:00 until 08:00. This service is for emergency works only that cannot wait until the next working day. The service is a make safe only and any further works required will be undertaken during normal business hours.

Wilful neglect of this service may result in residents being recharged.

5. Repairing Specifics

There are certain types of repair jobs that require further explanation; these include: -

Fencing

We will seek to repair existing fencing to prolong its life

Where existing fencing is in poor condition and needs replacing, the Council will: -

- Install 6ft close boarded fence panels bordering a public footpath
- Where an individual panel is 'down' we will replace if necessary, on a like for like basis
- Between gardens we will install x2 6ft close boarded fence panels from the back of the property to act as a privacy screen – all other fencing will be at 3ft. Including the rear of the property.

Fire Safety

When we are installing new kitchens or while properties are empty, we will ensure the door from the kitchen into the rest of the property is a fire door conforming to FD30 compliance.

Signs on the door will remind tenants that removing the door closer makes the fire door ineffective.

We will complete Fire Risk Assessments for each of our flat blocks and Independent Retirement Living Courts. These will be made available to tenants at their request.

More detail on Runnymede Borough Council Housing Service's approach to Health and Safety is contained within our Health and Safety Policy.

Mould and condensation

We will develop a procedure in relation to mould and condensation. The purpose of the procedure will be to support tenants with mould issues and address any 'lifestyle' issues that are impacting mould growth, alongside exploring issues associated with the fabric of the property.

Mutual Exchanges

If a tenant has installed, after receiving permission from RBC's Housing Service a non-standard item – such as a kitchen, or conservatory – they may be asked to maintain it.

If a tenant who has a non-standard alteration seeks permission to exchange – the exchanging tenant may be asked to continue to maintain the alteration.

Raising concerns

We encourage our repairs contractors to report concerns to us following visits to our tenant's homes. Where concerns are raised, we will ensure they are recorded and followed up by the relevant part of the service or external agency.

Trees

Where trees are decayed and/or dangerous we will arrange for them to be inspected and removed.

Where requests are made for 'cosmetic' work – we will refer tenants to a list of approved contractors.

Voids (Empty Homes)

We have published a specification for new tenants which details the work that has been undertaken to make the property ready for its new occupants.

Our focus while a property has been empty is to ensure it is safe to occupy for the new tenant – this means a gas and electrical safety check, the identification of any asbestos in the property and a thorough clean as a minimum. We will also lock loft hatches to ensure insulation is not damaged and so it cannot be used for storage.

As part of our health and safety commitment we will also clear the garden so it can be maintained, check the condition of the fencing and remove any potential trip hazards on paths.

If the property needs more extensive work – such as a replacement kitchen or bathroom this will be installed when the new tenant moves in to enable them to have as much choice as possible over the design.

Where we are not able to undertake work

The condition of some properties dictates that we cannot undertake repair work in them.

Where this is the case, we will record the contractor's objections.

The Council will support the tenant in making arrangements to enable the work to go ahead.

5.1 Permission for work

Alterations and home improvements may be classed as damage to the property if:

- the Council's Housing Service has not given permission (Planning/Building Control permission must also be sought in line with current planning requirements)
- not carried out to the required standard (recharges will apply if Runnymede Borough Council needs to put right unsatisfactory work). In certain circumstances, the Council will require a qualified surveyor to sign off works undertaken to ensure it is satisfactory and safe.
- not safe or adequately maintained

If we need to bridge over for example an extension to undertake repair/maintenance work, we reserve the right to recharge the tenant extra cost that may entail.

5.2 Recharges

The Council can recharge tenants for work that is the tenants' responsibility and for putting right some work. This can include: -

- Putting right unsatisfactory/poor repair work
- Repairing damage to our property as a result of misuse, neglect or wilful damage
- Removing rubbish from a property (normally after the tenant has ended their tenancy)
- Replacing lost keys
- Works listed as tenant responsibility as detailed within the policy

6. Consultation and communication

Tenants and leaseholders have been consulted on the content of this policy. Tenants and leaseholders will be consulted if any changes are made to the content of this policy.

Information on the repairs service will be communicated regularly via our newsletter and within our annual report including the performance of our repair's contractors.

Information will also be contained on our website and within our Repairs Handbook.

7. Monitoring and performance management

We aim to review this policy in 4 years (or before if there is a change in legislation) to ensure that it reflects current legislation and the latest examples of best practice.

We will consult staff and residents regularly about the operation of our policies.

We will meet with our contractors monthly to discuss the operation of this policy, including associated performance indicators and the success we are having in meeting our policy aims.

The Council welcomes feedback on its services. Complaints about the Repairs service or the operation of this policy can be made in line with the Complaints Policy ([link](#)).

8. Legislation and Regulation

The following regulation/legislation relate to this policy document: -

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

[Home Standard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Right to Repair (Housing Act 1980: Section 41a Secure Tenancies (Right to Repair) Scheme 1985) – Local authorities must have a right to repair scheme in place for secure, flexible and introductory tenants to use.

[Repairs available under the right to repair scheme](#)

Only certain types of repairs are covered under the right to repair scheme. These are called **qualifying repairs**. They include insecure windows and doors, unsafe power sockets or electrical fittings, leaking roofs and broken entry phone systems.

[Using the right to repair scheme - Citizens Advice](#)

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 defines the fundamental structure regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare.

The Act defines general duties on employers, employees, contractors, suppliers of goods and substances for use at work, persons in control of work premises, and those who manage and maintain them, and persons in general.

Equality Act 2010 protects people against discrimination, harassment or victimisation in employment, and as users of private and public services based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

9. Equalities Implications

We will monitor the take up of repair services. We want to ensure all parts of the community are able to access the service. We will act to ensure this happens.

Where individuals are over or under using the service, we may also seek to understand what is causing differences in use of the service.

10 Health and Safety

Repairs undertaken to our properties will be undertaken in accordance with all relevant health and safety legislation and guidance.

Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service have produced a Health and Safety Policy which details how we seek to maximise the health and safety of our tenants/leaseholders, staff and contractors.

This policy will be updated to reflect changing to legislation/guidance/best practice etc.

11. Related Strategies and Documents

Documents: -

- Runnymede Borough Council's Introductory/Flexible/Secure Tenancy Agreement
- Housing Asset Management Plan

- Housing Health and Safety Policy
- Runnymede Investment Standard
- Empty Homes Standard
- Repairs Handbook
- Improvements Policy

Approval

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Consultation	
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