



Repairs & Maintenance Policy

May 2020

Consultation completed:	April 2020
Approved:	May 2020
Review Date:	April 2023

Our Vision

Excellent housing in vibrant communities.

Our Values

Respect

We see the positive in everyone, especially our tenants. We treat everyone fairly, regardless of age, race, gender, sexuality or background. We ask for opinions even if we know we might not like what we hear. And we address people's concerns in any way we realistically can.

Integrity

What we say in public is the same as what we say behind the scenes. If we say we'll do something, we mean it. Our tenants can count on us to solve their problems and make sound decisions.

Aspiration

We want the best for all our current and future tenants. We're not afraid to strive for things that won't be easy – or try things that haven't been done before. We seek out opportunities and welcome change. If it doesn't turn out as planned, we learn and improve again. And then we try again.

Our Strategic Objectives

1. Build more desirable homes in popular neighbourhoods
2. Deliver more excellent services to suit our tenants' lives
3. Invest in our people to grow and develop their skills
4. Find more ways to ensure value for money
5. Continue to challenge poverty
6. Put even more focus on community health and wellbeing
7. Be ready for opportunities

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Queens Cross Housing Association's Vision is "Excellent housing in vibrant communities".
- 1.2 In order to achieve our vision of excellent housing, the Association provides repairs services to over 4300 tenanted homes and to common areas in multi-tenure blocks. The Association aims to provide a consistently high quality repairs and maintenance service for all of our customers and to maintain our properties to provide an attractive, well-functioning and safe environment.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers our approach to delivery of the repairs and maintenance service. The service is one of our most important functions as a landlord, ensuring our stock is well maintained, meets all current standards and is able to meet the needs of our customers.
- 2.2 This policy has been developed to take into account legislative, regulatory and good practice requirements in relation to repairs and maintenance services.
- 2.3 This policy will also be supported by a suite of procedures, detailing relevant repairs and maintenance activities.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 This policy assists the delivery of three of the Association's Strategic Objectives;
 - Desirable homes in popular neighbourhoods – by ensuring the good quality of our homes and our neighbourhoods is maintained, and our stock is always in demand
 - Excellent services to suit our tenants' lives – by engaging customers in service design and setting service standards to achieve customer satisfaction
 - Value for money – by focussing on the whole-life value of our assets whilst managing annual costs prudently.
- 3.2 Objectives in regard to our repairs and maintenance service are as follows: -
 - to provide a prompt and cost effective responsive repairs service that our customers value, consistently delivering on our Customer First principles
 - to provide services that are easily accessible in a way that suits customers and which deliver high standards of customer care
 - to ensure repairs are completed "Right First Time" wherever possible, minimising inconvenience for customers and cost to the Association
 - to ensure all our properties are kept in good repair, prioritising necessary works to minimise health and safety risks, damage to the property and impact on the occupants
 - to comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements in order to fulfil the Association's contractual obligations to our customers

- to ensure customers are aware of their responsibilities for general upkeep of their home and to assist us with the repairs process, stated in our tenancy agreement
- to work with customers to set and monitor service standards and drive improvements, valuing customer feedback and complaints
- to work to maximise the Value For Money of our service, seeking efficiencies where possible
- to utilise cyclical maintenance programmes to reduce the requirement for responsive repairs and prolong component life spans
- Minimise void repair periods
- Achieve compliance with outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter

4. Responsibilities in the Repairs Process

- 4.1 The effective maintenance of our properties requires both the residents and the landlord to undertake their responsibilities. In multi-tenure blocks, there is also a role for the property factor to act on behalf of owners, who may or may not be resident, in respect of the maintenance of common elements of the building.
- 4.2 The Association will ensure that tenants are aware of the landlord's role and their own in respect of repairs, by providing information in the Tenancy Agreement, information leaflets and on our website.
- 4.3 Customers are encouraged to report all repairs as soon as they become aware of them, and to seek advice if they are unclear who is responsible. Customers are also required to allow access to Association employees and approved Contractors at all reasonable times to carry out inspections or to undertake repairs.
- 4.4 The Association will endeavour to liaise with the property factor to ensure they are notified in advance of common repairs required in multi-tenure blocks that would exceed factors authorised limits and where possible will allow additional time for the factor to consult with the owners and advise on the terms of the property title.
- 4.5 The Association is not responsible for repairs resulting from damage caused by tenants or owners. Such repairs are considered rechargeable.

5. Repairs & Maintenance Service

- 5.1 The Association aims to provide our customers with a complete property management service to maintain the quality of our stock. There are three categories which are used to define the service.
- 5.2 **Responsive Repairs** - These are repairs that are carried out in response to a request from a customer or employee, where a defect has been identified and is the responsibility of the Association to rectify. These works will be categorised in terms of impact on the property and the occupants and will be given appropriate timescales for completion.

5.3 **Cyclical Maintenance** -These are works that are carried out at agreed intervals and which usually involve some element of inspection, servicing, decoration, testing or cleaning. Cyclical works ensure safety, or enhance the operation or appearance, or maximise the lifespan of key components of our buildings and the environment.

5.4 **Void Works** – These are works that are carried out during the “Void” period between one tenancy ending and the start of another, when a property is unoccupied. Void works will be a combination of required repairs, safety checks and servicing and may include decoration and investment works, depending on the property type, condition and location.

6. **Responsive Repairs**

6.1 The Association’s response to day-to-day repairs reported by tenants, or by staff inspecting our common areas and environment, is co-ordinated by our Customer Services Contact Centre. The Contact Centre categorise the work and allocate the job to our in-house teams or external contractors.

6.2 Our aim is to provide customers easy access to our repairs service through different routes to suit their individual needs. During normal office hours, a repair can be reported to the Contact Centre by telephone, email, via our Website or the QCHA App, or in person at one of our offices. We also operate an “out of hours” emergency repairs service, every day of the year, accessed via our main telephone number.

6.3 The Association uses four categories for responsive repairs and has a target response time for each category:

Emergency Repairs – 4 Hours to attend, repair or make safe. This category of repairs has the highest priority and applies to repairs that present a threat to health, safety or security.

Urgent Repairs – Two working days to complete. This category includes repairs that have a serious impact on customers, but do not present an immediate safety or security concern.

Routine Repairs – Five Working days to complete. These are general repairs, where there is limited impact on customers.

Non-Urgent Repairs – 28 working days. These are repairs that require non-standard parts to be sourced or particular arrangements to be made with the tenant

6.4 The Association aims to complete all repairs “right first time”, and we will monitor our performance against this measure. Customers who request a repair will be asked to provide adequate information to assist the Association to allocate work appropriately and ensure the necessary materials are available. Where the description of the fault is unclear, or the issue appears complex, the Association will undertake a pre-inspection before instructing a contractor.

- 6.5 When access to a customer's home is required, contact details and preferred time for access will be requested. The Association aims to accommodate the access time most suitable to the customer within standard working hours (between 9.00am and 5.00pm from Monday to Friday). Where the customer cannot arrange access during these times, depending upon the urgency of the repair, appointments can be made out with these times, up to 7pm Monday to Thursday, or Saturday mornings.
- 6.6 Under the terms of the tenancy agreement, tenants must allow the Association's employees or Approved contractors reasonable access to inspect or undertake repairs or improvements, as necessary to keep the property and surrounding properties safe. Persistent failure to allow access will be viewed as a breach of tenancy.

7. Cyclical Maintenance

- 7.1 Cyclical Maintenance works are carried out periodically to prolong the life of building components, avoiding expensive repairs and complete failure. Our cyclical programmes ensure key building systems operate safely and effectively, and help to minimise the cost and disruption of responsive repairs. This is particularly important for the Association's high density neighbourhoods and supported accommodation sites, which contain complex common building systems e.g. lifts, firefighting and ventilation systems.
- 7.2 The Association also delivers cyclical maintenance programmes in compliance with Health and Safety legislation in respect of high risk areas such as Gas Servicing, Electrical Testing, Fire Safety, Legionella Testing, asbestos monitoring, playground equipment, etc. These programme are regularly monitored to ensure that any certificates of compliance are current and up to date, and any remedial works are actioned.
- 7.3 Other main cyclical programmes undertaken by the Association include environmental maintenance e.g. maintaining external planting, gutter cleaning and common area decoration.
- 7.4 The Association will address as soon as practical, any defective equipment, or issues of non-compliance raised as a result of any programmes carried out on a cyclical basis.
- 7.5 Each cyclical maintenance programme will be monitored in accordance with their relevant Policy and/or Procedure.

8. Void Works

- 8.1 The Association aims to let void properties as quickly as possible in order to meet housing need and to minimise loss of income. To meet our target turn-around timescale, the Association has a systematic approach to undertaking inspections and instructing necessary repair work; to monitoring progress towards completion; and to passing properties fit for let.
- 8.2 To achieve consistency across our properties, the Association has agreed a lettable standard. This defines, as far as practically possible, the standard that a property will achieve to be considered ready to let.
- 8.3 Detailed procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure efficiency is maintained throughout the full void process.

9. Rechargeable Repairs

- 9.1 The Association carries out repair work, for which it is responsible, in accordance with tenancy or lease agreements. The Association is not responsible for repairing damage caused wilfully, negligently or accidentally by tenants or owners, their families or visitors. Where damage is caused, or neglect results in damage, the responsible person can
- arrange for the repair to be completed to the Association's standards and satisfaction, meeting any relevant legislation, building regulations and health & safety requirements
 - agree to pay the Association up front to undertake the repair
 - agree to pay for the work after completion
- 9.2 The Association will aim to advise if a repair is rechargeable before starting work.
- 9.3 The Association will always seek to recover repair costs for works which are the tenant's responsibility. Where work is not carried out the Association's standards further work will be carried out and the costs will be recharged.

10. Right to Repair

- 10.1 The Association must meet the requirements of the Right to Repair scheme defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and has in place systems and procedures that ensure full compliance with this.
- 10.2 The Association will ensure information about the scheme is freely accessible and available to all tenants; and will provide advice to customers on an individual basis, whenever the provisions of the scheme apply.

11. Right to Compensation for Improvements

- 11.1 The Association must meet the requirements of the Right to Compensation for Improvements scheme defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and has in place systems and procedures that ensure full compliance with this.
- 11.2 The Association will ensure information about the scheme is freely accessible and available to all tenants.

12. Request for Alterations

- 12.1 The Association recognises that tenants may wish to carry out alterations to their homes, including installation of satellite dishes and will ensure that clear information is freely accessible and available to all tenants on the guidelines and procedures required for consent.
- 12.1 Written consent must be provided by the Association prior to any alteration being undertaken, to ensure compliance with any relevant legislation, but consent will not be unreasonably withheld. However, failure to obtain written consent may result in reinstatement works being undertaken by the Association and recharged to the tenant.

13. Complaints

- 13.1 The Association will monitor and evaluate complaints received in the delivery of the service, to ensure that issues identified by customers are resolved, and we continue to improve our repairs service.

14. Monitoring Performance, Quality, and Safety

- 14.1 The Association will monitor the performance of our in-house teams and external contractors in the delivery of the repairs service. This is to ensure that repairs are carried out in line with the stated service standards - within the agreed timescales, "right first time", and meeting customer care requirements - and to arrange prompt action in the event of any significant service failure.
- 14.2 In addition, the Association will undertake a process of pre and post inspection of repairs to ensure a quality service and value for money. Where detailed information cannot be provided by the person requesting a repair, or it is thought that the repair may be complex or high cost, a pre-inspection of the works will be arranged to determine the exact nature of the repair and the most cost-effective solution.
- 14.3 The Association will post-inspect at least 10% of all reactive repair requests after the repair is complete. The repairs inspected will be randomly selected to test quality of work and Value for Money. In addition to our random selection, other repairs will also be inspected due to high costs or unusual nature of the work.
- 14.4 Regular customer satisfaction sample surveys will also be carried out following the completion of responsive repairs, with the results reviewed and reported at Management and Board level. Feedback from customers on the quality of the service received is important to help us to make service improvements, and alongside survey work we will engage with customers in our Resident Task Force to identify areas for development.
- 14.5 The Association will agree and publish service standards that will be utilised within Service Level Agreements for all repairs and maintenance contracts. This Service Level Agreement will detail the Associations exact requirements in relation to performance, timescales, reporting & customer service that will be expected by the Associations Contractors.

15. Selection and Control of Contractors

- 15.1 The Association will ensure that only qualified and experienced contractors with proven safety records are appointed to carry out works or services.
- 15.2 Selection will be based on these contractors providing satisfactory information on their Insurances, Health and Safety Policy, Risk Assessment, Method Statements, Equal Opportunities Policy, Insurances, their recent track record in carrying out similar works and value for money.
- 15.3 All Construction Works undertaken will be in accordance with current Construction (Design & Management) Regulations.

16. Value for Money

- 16.1 The Association aims to deliver an efficient and effective service with a high standard of customer care provided at reasonable cost. We have a range of mechanisms in place to assess Value for Money including benchmarking cost and performance data against other housing providers and undertaking service reviews as well as internal and external audits.
- 16.2 We deliver our repairs service using a combination of in-house and external contractors, with jobs directed to our in-house operatives prior to issue externally, to maximise value of money.
- 16.3 The Association utilise a multi-trade Contractor to deliver the majority of our reactive and cyclical maintenance services, which are procured in a programmed basis in accordance with our Procurement Policy & Procedures to ensure value for money.
- 16.4 The majority of reactive and cyclical maintenance works are valued in accordance with the Schedule of Rates contained within each contract. Where a repair is non-standard, complex, or expected to be costly, or if no equivalent Schedule of Rate item exists, then quotes may be requested from our existing, and if necessary other, contractors. These quotes will then be analysed to ensure value for money can be demonstrated.
- 16.5 Authorisation of any invoices are done in accordance with the Associations Standing Financial Instructions Delegated Powers.

17. Procedural Guidance

- 17.1 This policy is supported by comprehensive procedures that detail the processes involved in the effective delivery of the Associations Repairs and Maintenance services. The Association will also ensure that all relevant staff receive appropriate training and support to meet the requirements of this policy and the related procedures.

18. Responsibilities

- 18.1 The Association's Board will have full responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this Policy. Day to day responsibility for the operation and monitoring of the Policy will lie with the Director of Property, Enterprise & Regeneration Services and the Head of Property Services. Ultimately, all Property Services staff will have a responsibility to ensure the Policy is effectively applied.

19. Monitoring and Review

- 19.1 This Policy will be subject to a review every three years, or sooner in the event of any relevant legislative or regulatory changes or best practice guidance.

20. Related Legislation, Policies and Documents

QCHA Asset Management Strategy
QCHA Asbestos Policy & Procedures
QCHA Procurement Policy
QCHA Investment Policy
QCHA Lettable Standard Guide
QCHA Gas Servicing Policy
QCHA Electrical Safety Policy
QCHA Aids & Adaptations Policy
QCHA Control of Legionella Policy
QCHA Complaints Policy
QCHA Quality Promise
Standing Financial Instructions
Housing Regulator: Scottish Social Housing Charter
Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
The Building (Scotland) Regulations & Building Standards 2017
Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
Health and Safety Executive Guidance
Health and Safety Manual Sections:
5.1 Selection and control of contractors
5.2 Construction Design & Management

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