



# Responsive Repairs Policy

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 We want you to be happy in your home and with the services we provide. We offer a range of services, one of the most important being our day-to-day repairs service. A reliable repairs service keeps you safe, secure, and warm as well as protecting your home for future generations.
- 1.2 Working together with you, we're confident we can provide simple, efficient, and transparent services.
- 1.3 In this Policy we're referring to responsive repairs and maintenance activity within all Southern Housing owned or managed homes and properties, excluding those managed by Spruce Homes Ltd. The service is delivered using a combination of direct labour operatives and contractors to the following business areas:
- General Needs
  - Retirement Housing
  - Care/Extra Care
  - Supported Housing
  - Shared Ownership (where applicable)
  - Leasehold (where applicable)
  - Student Accommodation
  - Key Worker Accommodation
  - Hostels
  - Estates
  - Offices
- 1.4 Some of our shared ownership homes and commercial operation sites have specific leases and/or management contracts. This means the specific scope, requirements and response times of responsive repairs may vary but the overall service approach still applies. Similarly, new homes less than 12 months or 24 months old (i.e. during the Defects Liability Period) may have slightly different contractual arrangements affecting repair response times.
- Terms set out in individual tenancy and leasehold agreements take precedent over the statements in this Policy.
- 1.5 The aims of this Policy are to:
- Meet our residents' expectations as laid out in our service standards

- Provide a reliable, accessible service
- Consistently deliver high quality work
- Meet Health and Safety Standards
- Meet our legal and contractual obligations
- Deliver value for money
- Involve residents and learn from feedback.

1.6 We will repair and maintain homes in line with best practice and legislation. This includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Tenancy Agreement
- Housing Acts 1988, 1996, 1998 and 2004
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Right to Repair Regulations 1994 (for secure tenants of Local Housing Authorities)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Defective Premises Act 1972
- Building Regulations
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014
- Modern Slavery Act 2015.

1.7 When we use 'you' and 'your', we mean residents. The terms 'we', 'our' and 'us' mean Southern Housing.

## **2.0 What is a responsive repair?**

2.1 A 'responsive repair' is day-to-day maintenance work carried out in response to a request from a resident. It is sometimes called a 'reactive repair'.

2.2 A responsive repair addresses works to maintain your home or a component in it, until the next cycle of planned programmes. So, for example, it would be a repair to a kitchen drawer (responsive) rather than the replacement of a whole kitchen (planned).

## **3.0 How do I report a repair?**

3.1 You can report a repair by:

- Using MyAccount / Online Account
- Webchat
- Phone or text
- Email
- Letter
- Telling us when we visit your home or estate.

Our Repairs Standards are shown in [Appendix Two](#).

#### 4.0 What is an emergency repair?

- 4.1 An emergency repair is anything causing immediate risk to the health, safety, and security of any occupants and/or visitors to your home. Or causing immediate damage to a property's structure, fixtures and/or fittings.

Typical emergency repairs include:

- Water leaks to a water pipe or riser on the landlord side of the stopcock
- Making safe immediately after a flood. e.g., checking electrics
- Dealing with the effect of severe storm damage on your home's structure (after the storm has passed)
- Risk of falling masonry or structural collapse
- Total loss of your electricity supply (excluding those caused by a Power Company)
- Unsafe electrical fittings (excluding resident owned appliances)
- Breaches of security to outside doors and windows (*Broken glazing will be boarded; replacing glazed units is your responsibility*)
- Gas Leak within our property
- Blocked mains drains, soil pipes or your only toilet
- Heating loss for elderly/vulnerable residents at all times and during the period 31 October to 30 April for others
- Passenger Lift breakdowns
- Personal Mobility Lift breakdowns where we remain responsible for repairs/servicing
- Insecure communal door access.

**Note:** *This is not an exhaustive list.*

- 4.2 We will carry out works to make it safe within six hours of you reporting the emergency repair. It's important a responsible adult over the age of 18 is at home to let us in. Work cannot start or continue without a responsible adult present.
- 4.3 Sometimes other repairs may be needed to complete the job. If this is the case, we'll arrange more appointments with you as soon as possible and, where possible, at a time to suit you. In exceptional circumstances, such as during a period of sustained adverse weather, we may need to lengthen the timescales for emergency repairs. We will notify you if this is the case.

#### 5.0 What types of appointment are available?

- 5.1 If your repair is not an emergency, we'll arrange an appointment, for as soon as possible and at a time that suits you.

## 5.2 Available appointments include:

- Mornings 08: 00 – 13:00 Monday to Friday\*
- Afternoons 13:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday\*
- First call of the day
- Last call of the day
- Avoiding school run

\* Available appointment times may differ in certain locations, but we will advise you of this when booking the appointment

## 6.0 How will we communicate with you?

- 6.1 When you book a non-emergency repair, we'll confirm the time and date of the appointment using your preferred communication style e.g., a phone call, an email or text.
- 6.2 When completed, we (or the contractor) may ask you to comment on the quality of the repair, rating your overall satisfaction with it. This information helps us to continuously improve our services.

## 7.0 How long should a non-emergency repair take?

- 7.1 We aim to complete all repairs in one visit and certainly want it to take as little time as possible. For this reason, we measure the amount of time it takes from the day you report a repair through to its completion date, even if it involves more than one trade. We call this measure 'End to End' times.

## 8.0 What are your responsibilities and what are ours?

- 8.1 Working side-by-side means each of us has clear responsibilities. Your tenancy agreement sets out your rights and responsibilities for the repair of your home. These are listed in [Appendix One](#).
- 8.2 Before work starts, you must move or arrange to move any furniture and belongings that may be affected by a repair. If you ask us to move it for you, we'll do our best to avoid damaging your items, but we'll ask you to sign a disclaimer.
- 8.3 If we accidentally damage your home while carrying out a repair, you can apply for compensation. We'll handle this in line with our [Compensation Policy](#).
- 8.4 We may recover costs from you to pay for repairs you're responsible for, or arising from:
- Deliberate, negligent or careless acts by you, a member of your household, or any visitors to your home
  - Failure to report a repair as soon as possible which then goes on to cause further damage
  - Failure to uphold the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement

- Any improvements you've made to your home without our permission.

8.5 Such repairs do not include those due to normal wear and tear.

8.6 We'll assess each case individually depending on the circumstances.

## **9.0 Are there guidelines around how operatives behave in my home?**

9.1 When working in your home, we will:

- Carry an ID card
- Take care with your possessions
- Be polite and treat you with respect
- Protect all surfaces near the work
- Clean up afterwards
- Leave your home secure and weather-tight, with the gas, electricity and plumbing all working at the end of each day, wherever possible.

## **10.0 Do you decorate after a repair?**

10.1 Some repairs may affect the decoration of your home. If this happens, we'll 'make good' the area. If you prefer to re-decorate yourself, we may offer you a voucher or payment contribution.

10.2 We aren't able to 'make good' if you've covered access panels, hatches, ducts or ducting with wallpaper, tiles, carpet, wood, laminate, or other finishes. In circumstances where we won't be able to make good, we'll tell you before we start work.

## **11.0 What happens if I miss my appointment?**

11.1 If you aren't at home when we attend the appointment, we'll try to reach you by phone. This includes our contractors and any sub-contractors.

11.2 We'll try to reach you using alternative numbers on our records. We'll only contact a third party if we have your permission to speak to someone other than you.

11.3 If we're unable to reach you, we'll leave a card asking you to contact us or the contractor/ subcontractor. If we don't hear from you within seven days, we'll cancel the repair.

11.4 In an emergency, where there is a health and safety issue or there's likely to be considerable damage to your or your neighbour's home, we'll gain access to your home in line with the law.

## **12.0 What if I need to move out of my home whilst the repair takes place?**

12.1 Where we consider it necessary for you to leave your home temporarily:

- We'll provide suitable alternative temporary accommodation and in return you'll leave your home for as long as is necessary for us to carry out the works, and
- You'll leave the temporary accommodation and move back into your home when the work is complete (on a date determined by us).

### **13.0 Communal repairs**

- 13.1 Where we are responsible for repairs to the communal areas and facilities that you have shared use of with your neighbours, we aim to complete these repairs as quickly as possible.
- 13.2 Communal repairs include repairs to entrances, halls, stairways, lifts, passageways, rubbish chutes, paths, grounds, roadways, parking areas, and communal gardens.
- 13.3 Some of the schemes and estates in which we have properties are not managed directly by us. Where this is the case a managing agent arranges contracts and provides services in the communal areas. We will endeavour to communicate and work closely with them to ensure the service residents receive is satisfactory.

### **14.0 Reporting a repair**

- 14.1 We ask you to tell us as soon as you are aware of any repairs that need doing to your home or the communal areas for which we are responsible.
- 14.2 If a member of staff is made aware of a repair, they'll report it as soon as possible.
- 14.3 All repairs can be reported by telephone through your local contact number during office hours, Monday to Friday 8 am to 5:30 pm. Repairs can also be reported at any time by email, or through our website.
- 14.4 The phone number used to report the repair will depend on the area you live and can be found using the post code checker on our website.
- 14.5 We recognise some repair issues have a potentially adverse impact on a resident with a medical vulnerability or condition. In these situations, we will investigate the matter promptly and work in partnership with our contractors and in liaison with the resident to resolve the matter. In all instances the resident's welfare, health and safety will be our primary concern.
- 14.6 For emergency repairs we also operate an 'out of hours' service, allowing emergency repairs to be reported 24 hours a day through your local contact number.

### **15.0 Quality monitoring**

- 15.1 We routinely inspect/test a selection of completed responsive repairs at random. This may be a home visit, a phone call or involve studying photos taken. This makes sure all work is of a high quality and we're getting value for money for you from our operatives and contractors.

- 15.2 Staff and resident representatives meet regularly with our key contractors to discuss performance.

## 16.0 Right to Repair

- 16.1 If you are a Secure tenant, you have the legal Right to Repair under the Right to Repair Regulations 1994.
- 16.2 If you are an Assured tenant, you may have a contractual Right to Repair; you will need to check the terms of your tenancy agreement.
- 16.3 The right to repair gives you the right to compensation, and in some cases the right to carry out certain qualifying repairs which are our responsibility, where we have failed to carry out our obligations.
- 16.4 This right may only be exercised in accordance with procedures laid down by us. We will refund you the agreed cost of any repairs carried out in accordance with these procedures.

## 17.0 Review

- 17.1 We will review this Policy to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.

### Policy controls

<b>Effective from</b>	16 December 2022
<b>Approved by</b>	Designate Executive Team
<b>Approval date</b>	13 December 2022
<b>Policy owner</b>	Director of Reactive Repairs
<b>Policy author</b>	Carl Dewey, Director of Reactive Repairs

### Version history

<b>Version no.</b>	<b>Summary of change</b>	<b>Author and approver</b>
1.0	New policy	Carl Dewey, Director of Reactive Repairs Designate Executive Team

# Appendix 1 – Repair responsibilities

**You are responsible for minor running repairs and the replacement of minor items in relation to the property. You should always check your tenancy agreement in the first instance.**

**Your responsibilities (this list is not exhaustive and may include):**

- Repairing damage caused by you, members of your household or visitors, including broken glass
- Replacing locks and lost keys
- Replacing doorknobs, letter boxes etc.
- Replacing broken toilet seats
- Unblocking sinks, baths and toilets
- Replacing sink and bath plugs and chains
- Replacing electrical plugs and fuses
- Replacing light bulbs and fluorescent strips (except in shared areas like stairwells in blocks of flats)
- Filling minor cracks in plaster
- Repairing paths in back gardens, excluding access paths that are our responsibility
- Repairing existing fences which are shared with neighbours <sup>1</sup>
- Replacing shared fences with an appropriate alternative when they cannot be repaired <sup>1</sup>
- Testing smoke alarms in line with manufacturers' instructions, and replacing their batteries where needed
- Replacing clothes lines (unless they are shared)
- Repairing items, you have installed yourself
- Repairing your own electrical appliances
- Telephone points or individual TV aerials – (repairs to communal aerial connection points should be reported to us)
- Internal doors, handles, hinges, cupboard catches
- Trimming and/or re-hanging doors when you've put in new carpets
- Minor fixtures such as coat hooks, curtains, curtain rails, shower heads and hoses
- Repairs to your own cooker, fridge and other white goods (including those that we have gifted to you)
- Floor coverings (unless we've provided, or those in communal areas)
- Fixtures or fittings provided by yourself, including additional security measures, alterations
- Maintaining your home in a good decorative order and not allowing it to fall into disrepair by deliberate damage or neglect
- Taking reasonable care of all specialist adaptation equipment

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<sup>1</sup> Fences between neighbours who are both our tenants are the responsibility of those tenants. If a fence is between our tenant and an owner occupier or private tenant, we will need to check the property deeds to see whose responsibility it is.



## Contents insurance

You're responsible for insuring the contents of your home and garden.

## Our responsibilities

We must keep the structure and outside of your home in a reasonable state of repair and in proper working order. This includes:

- Drains, gutters, outside pipes and the roof
- Outside walls, outside doors, windowsills, window catches, sash cords and window frames, including any painting and decorating needed outside
- Inside walls, floors, ceilings, doorframes, but not painting and decorating inside apart from the communal spaces inside a block
- Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues
- Front & rear paths, steps or other access points that are our responsibility
- Brick-built garages and stores that are part of the property (but not sheds in most cases)
- Boundary walls and fences, but not those you share with neighbours.

We will also maintain any installations we have provided for supplying water, gas, or electricity, and for heating, hot water and sanitation. This includes:

- Basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes, but not plugs, chains or toilet seats
- Electric wiring, including sockets and switches
- Central-heating systems, gas and water pipes, water heaters, showers and storage heaters, ventilation fans & ducts, fireplaces and fires we have fitted.

We will take reasonable care to keep shared entrances, hallways, stairways, lifts, passageways, rubbish chutes and other shared areas which are our responsibility, in reasonable repair.

## Buildings insurance

We're responsible for insuring the structure of your home (excluding any fixtures and fittings) and any shared areas, furniture and laundry equipment we are responsible for.

# Appendix 2 – Repair standards

## Repair standards

As part of our Responsive Repairs service, we'll:

- Confirm an appointment with you for as soon as possible, and, where possible, at a time that suits you
- Aim to complete the repair in one visit
- If it's an emergency, we'll visit to make things safe within six hours
- Remove offensive graffiti from estates within 24 hours
- Carry out a gas safety check to your home every year
- Give you a decision within 20 working days when you ask for permission to improve your home.