

# **STIRLING COUNCIL HOUSING AND CUSTOMER SERVICE**

## **RESPONSE REPAIRS POLICY**

### **1. Scope of the policy**

- 1.1 This policy describes the activities and responsibilities involved in delivering a responsive repairs service;
- 1.2 The objective of the repairs service is to maximise the useful life of properties, improve standards within Stirling Council's housing stock and to provide a high quality service to our customers. Responsive repairs are defined in this policy as repairs that are requested by the tenant to existing elements of their property. They are day-to-day repairs that require to be done within a relatively short timescale and are not due to be carried out within our cyclical maintenance or capital investment programmes.
- 1.3 These responsive repairs are required to ensure the health, safety and/or security to our tenants and to prevent deterioration to our properties.
- 1.4 Housing Service will ensure that it does not discriminate in the delivery of its services, the design of its policies and practices or any proposed changes to these and that where possible, opportunities to promote equality and good relations between individuals and groups are identified.
- 1.5 The responsive repair policy will assist Housing and Customer Services to meet the aims and priorities detailed in the Housing Business Plan and the Council's relevant key priorities.
- 1.6 Detailed elements of the responsive repairs policy will be determined by an annual consultation on the "cost of service" rental values.

### **2. Context**

- 2.1 This policy is set in context of the Scottish Social Housing Charter for social landlords that was approved by resolution of the Scottish Parliament on 14 March 2012 and has effect from 1 April 2012 and continues to apply until the Parliament approves a revised Charter.
- 2.2 The Charter replaces the performance standards contained in the guidance that the Scottish Ministers issued under section 79 of the

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in November 2006. It does not replace any of the legal duties that apply to social landlords, but in a number of cases the outcomes describe the results that social landlords should achieve in meeting their legal duties.

- 2.3 The principles of this policy follow these standards in addition to supporting the principles of our service delivery.
- 2.4 The standards set out by this policy will incorporate the tenancy agreement terms and conditions.

### **3. Principles and Objectives**

- 3.1 Scottish Government's principal measure of housing quality in Scotland is through the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). This is a standard which requires to met by 2015 and thereafter maintained.
- 3.2 The overall aim of our Responsive Repairs Policy is to support the investment programme and cyclical maintenance to maximise the useful life of properties, improve and maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard whilst providing a high quality service to our customers.
- 3.3 In particular the objectives of the Responsive Repairs Policy are-
  - 1. to ensure that all properties are maintained to a high standard;
  - 2. to provide a responsive repairs service which is efficient, timely and cost effective; which will make the best use of our resources endorsing our commitment to Best Value;
  - 3. to provide a responsive repair service which is easily understood and accessible;
  - 4. to promote Housing Service's maintenance obligations and the maintenance responsibilities of our tenants;
  - 5. to ensure that tenants are advised of their rights under the Right to Repair Scheme as laid out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
  - 6. to ensure that all codes of guidance, health and safety requirements are observed;
  - 7. to maintain excellent customer service which includes high standards of customer care;
  - 8. to promote continuous improvement through performance monitoring, tenant scrutiny and customer feedback;

9. to promote health and wellbeing in housing by taking into consideration particular needs of vulnerable tenants.

#### 3.4 The foundation of the Responsive Repair Policy are:-

1. that all tenants and stakeholders are consulted and involved in the delivery and future development of the service ;
2. that through supervision, monitoring and feedback the service continuously improves;
3. we promise to communicate programme of works with those who are affected and we will use appropriate language in all forms of communication so that we are clearly understood;
4. that all members of housing are trained appropriately to ensure we provide a service which focuses on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and good staff attitude.

#### 4.0 Response Times

Before work is instructed we will assess then categorise the repair into one of the following:-

**Emergency:-** this is where the repair issue may cause a serious danger to health and safety or to the structure of the building. It will apply where failure to respond quickly to a repair would cause deterioration.

We aim to attend as soon as practically possible but will ensure the repair is attended to within 24 hours.

**Appointments** – this is where a repair is of a routine nature but requires attention earlier than the next maintenance programme.

We will offer the first available appointment for the required trade, our aim is to do this within 7 working days.

**Non-appointed routine repair** – this is where no access to the property is required and there are no shared costs for the repair.

We aim to complete these repairs within 20 working days.

**Shared responsibility repairs** – this is where the costs of a non-appointed routine repair is not solely the responsibility of the council and we require to communicate with other responsible parties (eg. Owners).

We aim to complete these works within 20 days of reaching agreement with the owners.

**Complex repairs** – this is where the repair requires a number of trades or external contractors. We will be responsible for the communication of the programme of works with those who are affected.

## **5.0 Tenant Responsibilities**

- 5.1 The council is not responsible for repairing damage caused wilfully, accidentally or negligently by tenants, anyone living in the property or an invited visitor to the house. Where the tenant accepts full liability we will carry these repairs by agreement once 80% of the estimated invoice is prepaid.
- 5.2 In the instance where damage was caused wilfully, accidentally or negligently by a tenant or anyone living with a tenant or an invited visitor and the council has a legal obligation to keep the property secure, wind and watertight, and fit for habitation, we will carry out the repair and invoice the tenant.
- 5.3 Tenants are responsible for the purchase and installation of consumable items, which includes light bulbs, batteries, decoration, plugs, floor coverings etc. Where items are difficult to obtain or install we will provide and install these at an appropriate charge.
- 5.4 Where a tenant has asked and attained permission for an installation or fitting we will make clear if we will accept responsibility for the maintenance in the permission letter. All tenant installations and fittings where no prior permission has been obtained from Housing Services will continue to be maintained by the tenant.
- 5.5 Where any obstruction, such as garden sheds, paving, furniture or stored materials obstructs the council or its subcontractors from accessing any area of the property to carry out any maintenance or improvement works, it will be the tenant's responsibility to remove any obstacles so any necessary repairs can be complete.

## **6.0 Review of the Policy**

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years.