
Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Department: Property Services

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

As a social landlord, One Housing Group (OHG) recognises meeting residents' expectations of a high standard of service delivery is essential. OHG acknowledge that the provision of a value for money repairs service that is both responsive and of the highest technical competence is one of its core priorities. OHG has prepared this policy after consultation with recognised resident groups. This policy should be considered in conjunction with the corresponding OHG Repairs and Maintenance procedures and other policies referred to within this document.

1.1 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Repair - The process of rectifying a component or installation in a One Housing Group owned and/or managed property for which it is responsible, when it is faulty or in a state of disrepair.

Maintenance - The upkeep of components or installations in a One Housing Group owned and/or managed property for which it is responsible.

Resident - A tenant of a One Housing Group property, including intermediate rent customers. This policy includes *some* services and obligations to Leaseholders and Shared Owners. Where applicable, it is clearly stipulated. This policy does not apply to private market rent customers.

2.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Aims

- to effectively manage the repairs and maintenance obligations of OHG, for its residents
- to comply with all relevant government legislative requirements
- to ensure that all residents live in a safe and habitable environment at all times

Objectives

- to run an effective and reliable responsive repairs service
- to continuously improve performance
- to give the highest levels of residents satisfaction
- to provide a service that gives value for money
- to engage openly and responsively with residents about repairs to their home
- to provide technical expertise via OHGs internal staff and contractors
- to maintain up to date information about OHG residents, homes and the housing sector

3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

OHG is committed to providing a high quality service and all staff and suppliers are trained to work towards this aim. This policy recognises that a successful Repairs and Maintenance service considers its residents, its resources, its statutory obligations and external affecting factors. As a landlord, OHG have a responsibility to protect the value of its housing stock and to ensure that the service standards and obligations made to its residents in respect of their homes are honoured. OHG expects to work together with residents to ensure the high quality of its homes, through the meeting of mutual responsibilities.

4.0 LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

- Landlord & Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Commonhold & Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Sections 2, 3 and 4
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- HCA – The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012
- 2006 Decent Homes Standard

5.0 STANDARDS

5.1 Service Standards

- provide a 24hr, 7 day a week service to report emergency repairs
- to attend and complete repairs works to published timescales
- offer a choice of appointment times
- carry out a gas safety check where required each year
- aim to inspect at least 5% of all repairs and any repair subject to a complaint
- aim to inspect 5% of communal repairs.

5.2 Regulatory Standards

As a registered provider of social housing, OHG's provision to social, affordable and intermediate rent customers is regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency. As per their 2012 guidance OHG works towards the required outcomes of the Homes Standard:

1. ensuring the quality of accommodation
 - a. meeting the 2006 Decent Homes Standard
 - b. meeting the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built; if higher than Decent Homes Standard
 - c. agreeing Local Offers that are not less than the Decent Homes Standard
2. providing an appropriate repair and maintenance service
 - a. a cost effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas
 - b. meets applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes

NB: These standards are fully outlined in The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012

6.0 HEATING AND HOT WATER: PROVISION & SERVICING

OHG will ensure necessary arrangements are in place to provide:

1. a reactive repairs service which includes a 24 hour emergency response for some repairs in line with our Repairs and Maintenance responsibilities
2. the annual gas safety inspection programme for individual, communal and commercial gas boilers and appliances for which it is responsible

OHG is committed to meeting its legislative requirements ensuring all of its homes with a gas supply have a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR). OHG will service all gas appliances and boilers for all of its homes within 12 months of the previous service date. OHG will seek to ensure that annual safety checks and servicing is undertaken in domestic and commercial properties in accordance with their tenancy agreement or lease, and prior to a new tenancy. Failure to allow access for servicing will result in OHG following formal procedures to gain access. This may involve seeking legal assistance, applying for an injunction and in some cases an eviction whereby residents may lose their home. However, OHG is not responsible for the gas safety and servicing for leaseholder and shared owner properties, it will work to assist and enable owners to comply with their obligations, where possible.

OHG is dedicated to the provision of a high quality gas servicing and repairs service that:

- preserves the safety of its residents
- properly discharges its legal and regulatory obligations
- achieves the service standards outlined to its residents
- protects the value of its housing stock
- considers energy efficiency when carrying out necessary replacements

6.1 Failing Safety Checks

OHG will upgrade boilers and remove any gas fires that fail their annual inspection. Any faulty gas appliance owned by the resident that is discovered to be connected to the system will have a 'defective appliance' label attached and will be disconnected. It is the resident's responsibility to maintain or remove their own defective appliances, once advised.

6.2 Communal Systems

Where OHG has the responsibility of the maintenance or servicing of a communal system, it will always make sure it does so in line with published repairs and maintenance service standards. Where third parties such as managing agents have an interest, own or control the systems, OHG will endeavour to communicate and work closely with them to ensure the service received by residents is satisfactory.

Please refer to the OHG **Heating and Hot Water Servicing Procedure** for detail of the process followed by OHG staff and contractors.

7.0 AIDS & ADAPTATIONS

OHG commits to facilitating and supporting independent living, by carrying out alterations to meet the special needs of individuals to enhance their quality of life and where appropriate enable them to remain in their current home.

OHG assists eligible residents to secure aids and adaptations to their homes by directly undertaking the work where possible or assisting the resident in applying for a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) from their Local Authority (LA). In meeting these objectives, OHG together with its partner LAs will provide a responsive service to residents who are or become vulnerable or who have special requirements arising through disability or infirmity.

Aids are additional equipment installed to assist the usability of and mobility around a resident's home. An adaptation is an alteration to an existing installation in a resident's home that assists the usability of and mobility around a resident's home.

Aids and adaptations are split into **major** or **minor**, with varying timescales, cost and the amount of actual work to be carried out to install the aid or make the adaptations. Some examples include:

Minor	Major
grab rails	stair lifts
door alterations	low access baths
handrails	provision of showers
lever taps	raising electrical sockets
	lowering switches

7.1 Installation and Maintenance

For minor work the job must be completed within 20 working days of being raised. Major aids and adaptations will be dependent on the approval of a DFG by the Local Authority; therefore timescales will be dependent on this. Furthermore, adaptations that require major building work are subject to planning permission and building regulations and therefore the timescales for completion will be longer.

OHG will service and maintain all adaptations and maintain all aids, where supplied by us. OHG will also replace these at the end of their economic life provided they are still demonstrably required. Please refer to the OHG [Aids & Adaptations Procedure](#) for detail of the process followed by OHG staff and contractors. Please see the [OHG Aids and Adaptations leaflet](#) for more information on how the service is provided

8.0 PLANNED AND PROGRAMMED MAINTENANCE

Planned maintenance is work carried out on a planned basis to maintain the general condition of property and fittings provided by OHG. This includes cyclical maintenance of the exterior of the building, communal areas, of Decent Homes key building components and the periodic servicing of certain equipment and installation. All planned maintenance work will be carried out in accordance with regulatory standards, relevant legislation, manufacturer's instructions or good trade practice. Full details of this service will be outlined in the [OHG Cyclical Maintenance & Planned Programmes Policy](#).

Improvements

OHG have a responsibility to repair and maintain and therefore are not obliged to carry out any improvements to their properties outside of those which are part of planned programmes of work. This includes requests for secondary glazing or sound insulation. Any improvements that OHG make to individual properties outside of planned works will be done so on an individual case basis. Should residents wish to make improvements to their home at their own cost and management, they must do so in line with the process outlined in the Home Improvements section of the [Compensation & Other Payments Policy](#), or in line with their lease or tenancy agreement.

9.0 RESPONSIVE DAY TO DAY REPAIRS

For responsive repairs, our aim is to arrange an appointment during first contact with the resident and complete the repair in one visit. During normal working hours (8:00am to 6:00pm) OHG operate a Customer Contact Centre, through which all repair requests must be made. We will aim to ensure that all urgent and routine repairs (with the exception of specialist work requiring contact with a third party) will be made by appointment with the resident. Residents may report repairs by any of the following means:

- By telephone on **0300 123 99 66** or for Berkshire residents **0800 587 9941**
- via the OHG website www.onehousinggroup.co.uk
- in person at a local OHG office
- in writing (non emergency repairs)

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Provisions for emergency repairs outside of normal working hours can be accessed by the standard responsive repairs telephone number. Calls will be redirected automatically through to OHG's out of hours service at 6:00pm. Only those repairs categorised as emergencies are dealt with out of office hours. If the reported repair is deemed not to be an emergency then the resident will be asked to call back during working hours to make an appointment.

9.1 Appointment Times

OHG offer weekday appointments for the completion of repairs and pre and post inspections. The following options will be given:

- Morning: 8am to 1pm
- Afternoon: 12pm to 5pm
- Lunchtime: 11am to 2pm (for some of our contractors only)

9.2 Priority Categories

Timescales for the commencement and completion of works will be arranged within OHG's approved priority categories listed below. Extra consideration will be given to those residents who are vulnerable, such as those who are elderly (aged 70+), disabled or who live with children aged 6 months or younger.

Emergency Repairs - Attend and make safe within 24 hours. If possible complete. Any follow up work to be raised as a new job and placed within its appropriate category.

Urgent Repairs - Attend within 3 working days, complete within 5 working days.

Routine Repairs - Attend within 5 working days, complete within 20 working days.

Resident requests for appointments beyond these timescales will be accommodated with the exception of emergency repairs.

9.3 Batched Repairs

These will be completed within 3 months of issue to our partners with the exception of those repairs which are larger or more complex in nature that can be scheduled as part of a programme of works. This will reduce administrative and overhead costs for both One Housing Group and our contractors and adhere to economies of scale. These repairs include:

- kitchen repairs
- bathroom repairs
- path renewals
- rebuilding of brick walls
- fence and boundary maintenance
- roof repairs
- window and door repairs

9.4 Pre-Inspection

Some jobs will require a pre-inspection before the repair appointment can be arranged, to establish the extent of the works. These will be where the scope of the job is not known or if the diagnosis given by the resident is not detailed enough. Such inspections may be carried out by a surveyor or a nominated contractor representative. Staff will always advise where this is to be the case. Repairs will then be issued in the appropriate timescales or programmed in to planned or batched works.

9.5 No access

Where requested, residents must allow for access to repairs. Where access cannot be gained for a standard appointment, the repair will be passed back to the contact centre to be rescheduled. Where the repair is an emergency or a health and safety matter then OHG will continue to make contact. OHG will try up to two times to rearrange access for a requested repair before the repair is cancelled. If not repairing poses a serious safety risk for other residents or the building, OHG will take appropriate steps to gain access.

If by not permitting access for a pre-agreed appointment, OHG experiences considerable cost and inconvenience, OHG reserves the right to recharge the resident for the call-out cost. This will only

be done once investigation has taken place in to the circumstances or frequency of no access instances.

9.6 Roles and Responsibilities for Repairs

Residents	OHG
To use and inhabit OHG homes (internal and communal) and installations responsibly	To ensure that OHG approved operatives work in a clean and tidy manner
To allow access for repair works for which OHG is responsible	To show ID when attending resident homes
To maintain areas of the home for which they are responsible – in accordance with the conditions of the tenancy agreement or lease	To only enter a resident’s home where a responsible adult is present, unless there is evidence of a clear risk to any person(s).
To ensure that a responsible adult is present for any repair appointment	To only carry out work that is stated on the work specification
To clear repair work area of personal items or valuables prior to a scheduled appointment	To inform residents of what work is to be carried out in their home prior to the work commencing (except in emergencies)
To not obstruct or deny works to their home or the communal areas	To ensure that operatives work in a way that is healthy and safe; protecting themselves and the environment in which they are working
To be responsible for the repair or replacement of items in a property damaged due to neglect, carelessness or deliberate action on the part of the resident household or visitors. To pay any charges for such repairs that are undertaken by OHG (see Chargeable Repairs Policy)	To give advice and information on what work to their internal home has been done at the end of a scheduled visit and advise if further visits are required

9.7 Zero Tolerance

OHG has a zero tolerance towards the abuse of any staff or contractors by residents. All customers of OHG are expected to treat all staff with respect and dignity. This means that they must refrain from behaving in a way that is aggressive, threatening, abusive, or insulting. Nor must they engage in any behaviour, intentional or otherwise, that constitutes harassment or discrimination. OHG will take reasonable measures to protect staff from such behaviour where appropriate.

10.0 THE RIGHT TO REPAIR

In accordance with Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994, if a qualifying repair cannot be completed within an agreed timescale, the resident has the right to request our management team to instruct a second contractor to complete the work. Where the second attempt or second contractor also fails to complete the work within the agreed time OHG will pay compensation to the resident. This statutory requirement applies to tenants with a secured tenancy. As a matter of courtesy, OHG extends this right to all general needs tenancies. Application of this or similar payment to other customers lies at the discretion of the service manager.

10.1 The Right to Repair does not apply in the following circumstances:

- the resident has told OHG that they no longer want the qualifying repair carried out
- where the resident fails to provide details for the contractor to gain access to their home
- access for an inspection or for the repair to be carried out has not been provided

- where the contractor needs to order special parts to complete the repair
- where severe weather conditions prevent the contractor from completing the repair
- Leaseholder properties

10.2 Qualifying Repairs

Repairs that qualify for the terms noted above are those to a resident’s home which do not cost more than £250 and which, if not carried out within a specified period is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or security of the resident. This are:

	Defect prescribed period (in working days)
Total loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting	1
Total loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Total or partial loss of gas supply	1
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 31 October and 1 May	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 30 April and 1 November	3
Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack or toilet pan (where only one in dwelling)	1
Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling house)	1
Blocked sink, bath or basin	3
Tap which cannot be turned	3
Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern	1
Leaking roof	7
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair treads	3
Door entry-phone not working	7

11.0 REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Some repairs are the responsibility of the tenant and not OHG; such repairs are defined within the OHG [Tenant Handbook](#) and [OHG Chargeable Repairs Policy](#), as well as the respective tenancy agreement or lease. The resident is responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement of the categories set out in their tenancy agreement. The tenant will also be responsible for the repair or replacement of any damaged items in a property as outlined in the [OHG Chargeable Repairs Policy](#). The repair responsibilities and obligations for Leaseholders or Shared Owners are as outlined in their lease.

In some instances where OHG is not the freeholder, repairs to the fabric of the building or communal areas will be the responsibility of the managing agent or the freeholder. These responsibilities will be managed in accordance with the Head Lease and a deviation or exclusion from this policy may be required. In this instance, affected residents will be informed by OHG at the earliest opportunity.

12.0 FIXED FLOOR AND WALL COVERINGS

It is not advisable for residents to lay fixed floor coverings (tiles, hard wood or laminate) in their homes. This is due to the difficulty in removing them to carry out essential works such as under floor pipe work, without damaging the fixed covering. OHG do not advocate the installation of fixed

floor coverings. Where residents have installed fixed wall or floor coverings they are responsible for obtaining the correct noise insulation, contents insurance cover and for removing them for works which OHG deem essential. OHG retains the right to recover costs of removing fixed floor or wall coverings from residents who have installed them, on their departure from the tenancy.

13.0 TV AERIALS & SATELLITES

OHG makes provisions for communal aerial systems on blocks of flats. Many blocks also have communal arrangements for satellite systems. Any resident seeking to install further satellite dishes on the external of their flat or street property must contact their local authority Planning Department and obtain written permission. Please note, OHG may ask to see this for TV/Radio reception installations which have not been installed by us. Some OHG properties are listed buildings, where this is the case or the resident wishing to erect an installation is not sure of the listed status, they must contact the authority Planning Department and may need to apply for additional listed building consent.

Where OHG locates an unauthorised satellite dish on one of its properties we will contact the resident, who will have to provide a copy of their obtained written permission within 28 days. If this has not been provided then OHG reserves the right to remove the unauthorised satellite dish. The resident who owns the dish may claim it back from OHG within 28 days from its removal, after which point it will be disposed of.

Where residents have undertaken their own installation of a TV/Radio reception installation and damage has been caused to the fabric of the building due to the quality of installation work, OHG may rectify this damage and recharge the costs to the resident.

14.0 COMMUNAL AREA REPAIRS

OHG will manage repairs to shared communal areas to the same timescale and standard as internal repairs. Reports of these repairs will generally be identified during monthly estate inspections by OHG staff. However, some repairs may become apparent between inspections. For these, we rely on residents of the block to report these directly to OHG.

Where the repair to communal installations affects residents' day to day usage of their own homes e.g. door entry systems, communal boilers or lifts OHG will aim to keep affected residents updated of progress. Occasionally repairs to such installations may be temporarily remedied and the bulk of the work may be deferred in to a planned programme for cost efficiency. Affected residents will be notified if this is to be the case. For further information please see the [OHG Cyclical Maintenance & Planned Programmes Policy](#). Where third parties such as managing agents have responsibility for these repairs, OHG will endeavour to communicate and work closely with them to ensure the service received by residents is satisfactory.

15.0 DEFECT PERIOD REPAIRS

For newly built buildings, the repairs and maintenance are managed through the contractors who constructed the building for the first year from the building completion. The terms and conditions of these will be outlined within each building contract. This is known as the defect rectification period. During this time residents should report their repairs via the customer contact centre in the usual way. OHG will aim to ensure that these repairs are carried out in the appropriate timescales.

Latent defects

These are faults to the property that could not have reasonably have been discovered through inspection before sale or sign up e.g. faults in hidden fabric or cavities of building structure. In such cases OHG does not take automatic responsibility for rectifying or improving the defect. These will be managed on a case by case basis, and homeowners and tenants will be advised accordingly.

16.0 ACHIEVING VALUE FOR MONEY

Operating as an efficient and effective business and demonstrating value for money to its customers with a high level of service are key strategic objectives for OHG. OHG has a range of mechanisms in place to demonstrate and improve this, including:

1. Benchmarking cost and performance data such as average costs per property
2. Market testing of the repairs service against other social and external housing providers
3. Undertaking reviews on processes, services and systems
4. Analysing emergency jobs issued to determine long term remedial or planned works
5. Robust tendering process
6. Statutory consultation process with leaseholders

17.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:

- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or committee member
- sensitive organisational information

Officers will ensure that they comply with **OHG Data Protection Policy** and that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the resident concerned, unless:

- OHG is required to by law
- the information is necessary for the protection of children

18.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

OHG recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own **Equality and Diversity Policy**, Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

It has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. The Performance Improvement & Policy Team is responsible for recording, analysing and monitoring information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

19.0 RESIDENT PARTICIPATION & FEEDBACK

Resident involvement plays a key role in developing the future direction of the repairs and maintenance service. OHG works with a recognised Maintenance Forum and a Leasehold Forum of residents to obtain feedback on the service. Other ad hoc forms of resident consultation are employed as and when required.

19.1 Aftercare Service

Resident satisfaction is central to OHG's activities within the repairs and maintenance service. Satisfaction levels are used to identify its customers' experiences and expectations to drive future improvements within the service. OHG has a specialised officer who contacts by telephone, a random sample of residents who have recently had a repairs appointment to record feedback and remedy any problems which are reported. Additionally OHG will carry out Post Inspections in line with service standards.

20.0 MONITORING & EVALUATION

OHG will evaluate and measure its performance and benchmark itself against other Registered Providers through the use of Performance Indicators. These include:

- job completion data
- resident satisfaction
- appointments kept
- first time fix
- gas compliancy
- Health & Safety reporting

21.0 HEALTH, SAFETY & THE ENVIRONMENT

Officers will follow OHG's **Health and Safety Policy** and procedures at all times. OHG will work closely the requirement outlined in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System when diagnosing the condition of its homes and communal areas. OHG staff and contractors when on site will use appropriate personal protective equipment, when necessary. In addition environmental checks shall be undertaken covering waste and carbon management. As a commitment to health, safety and the environment OHG have a number of related policies to assist in the management of its homes and communal areas, such as the **Asbestos Management Policy**.