

# CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CAERPHILLY HOMES

### RESPONSE REPAIRS POLICY

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 All reference in this Policy to Caerphilly Homes means Caerphilly County Borough Council.
- 1.2 Caerphilly Homes is committed to providing a responsive and effective housing repairs and maintenance service in order to ensure high levels of Contract Holder satisfaction and to protect the value of its housing stock.
- 1.2 This policy details the arrangements for the repairs and maintenance of properties owned by Caerphilly Homes.
- 1.3 Contract Holder Representatives were consulted in the development of this policy.

## **2.0 Policy statement**

- 2.1 Caerphilly Homes will keep its housing stock in good condition by providing an efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service to Contract Holders.
- 2.2 Caerphilly Homes will ensure that its repairs and maintenance service reflects the following overall principles:
  - 2.2.1 To repair and maintain the housing stock to a good standard, in compliance with statutory legislation and where relevant in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.
  - 2.2.2 To provide a flexible, convenient and customer-oriented repairs service that gives priority to the safety, comfort and needs of Contract Holders.
  - 2.2.3 To measure and monitor customer satisfaction and make use of the information to continuously improve services.
  - 2.2.4 To meet Caerphilly Homes legal and contractual obligations.
  - 2.2.5 To ensure the repairs service meets the performance and quality standards set out by Caerphilly Homes Contract Holders Handbook.
  - 2.2.6 To ensure the services provided are outcome and quality focused, cost effective and obtain the best value for Contract Holders from available financial resources.

2.2.7 To ensure the principles of Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities are central to working procedures and practices.

### **3.0 Principles of the Policy**

Maintenance of the Contract Holder's home is a partnership with Caerphilly Homes and the Contract Holder. As with any partnership there are responsibilities, and these are set out below:

#### **3.1 Responsibilities of the Contract Holder.**

- 3.1.1 The Contract Holder is responsible for reporting repairs to Caerphilly Homes and must allow access to their home in order for the repair to be carried out. In addition, the Contract Holder must also allow access for planned/improvement works to be carried out by Caerphilly Homes where reasonable notice is provided.
- 3.1.2 If a Contract Holder is unable to fulfil an appointment for any reason, they have a responsibility to notify the Central Repairs Team (CRT) in order that alternative arrangements can be made. Should the Contract Holder fail to keep an appointment or notify the CRT, charges may be levied in accordance with the No-Access Procedure.
- 3.1.3 Contract Holders also have a duty to allow access for Caerphilly Homes to undertake an annual service of the heating system, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, along with a five yearly electrical installation condition report.
- 3.1.4 The Contract Holder is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of minor items within the home, as described in the Contract Holders Handbook.
- 3.1.5 The Contract Holder is responsible for any repair of any fault, defect, damage or disrepair required to the property caused wholly or mainly by their (act or omission, or that of any person residing in or visiting the property) and for the removal and any necessary reinstatement work of any unauthorized alterations or improvements. This is explained more fully in the Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

#### **3.2 Responsibilities of Caerphilly Homes**

- 3.2.1 Caerphilly Homes is responsible for keeping the structure and common parts of its properties, in repair, as set out in the Occupation Contract and the Contract Holder Handbook. Caerphilly Homes is responsible to maintain the condition of the

dwelling so that it is fit for human habitation as required by the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 and relevant regulations.

3.2.2 Caerphilly Homes fulfils its repairing responsibilities through a combination of an improvement, response repair and planned maintenance approach.

3.2.3 Response maintenance

3.2.3.1 Response maintenance is work carried out, usually at the request of the Contract Holder to repair damage to an item or part of structure of the building. This may also include replacement of the item if required.

3.2.3.2 An appointment system is available so that Contract Holders can arrange for repairs to be carried out at a time and date to suit themselves.

3.2.3.3 An emergency service is provided to Contract Holders for any response repair required outside the Caerphilly Homes normal working hours.

3.2.4 Planned/Improvement works including WHQS and Planned Asset Management Strategy (PAMS) (This type of work is not covered under this policy).

Planned/Improvement work is work organized and carried out on a planned programme in line with the Caerphilly Homes 30-year business plan. This includes all major repairs and improvements needed to maintain homes to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

Planned maintenance also includes cyclical statutory and preventative works, which are repeated at regular intervals, such as external painting, boiler servicing, electrical testing, smoke alarms servicing, carbon monoxide detectors, sprinkler systems, water treatment, lift servicing, fire alarm servicing.

3.2.5 Damp and Condensation

Caerphilly Homes will investigate all reports of dampness however caused, offering advice and solutions to Contract Holders concerning the management of condensation and remedial works in the case of rising or penetrating dampness. Independent advice can be obtained where necessary.

### 3.2.6 Landlord Lighting

Lighting to communal areas will be checked weekly and replacements made. All landlord lighting will be subject to an annual electrical safety test.

### 3.2.7 Re-chargeable Repairs

Any damage, which is deemed to be the Contract Holder's responsibility, will be identified and dealt with in an appropriate manner. Where the statutory responsibility for the repair lies with Caerphilly Homes, or there is a health and safety risk, the damage will be repaired and where necessary the costs charged to the Contract Holder in line with the Rechargeable Repairs procedure.

Details of rechargeable repairs are provided within the Contract Holders Handbook and can also be accessed via Caerphilly Homes housing website.

Contract Holders are also charged for any repairs found in a property after their contract has ended which also includes the condition of the property in line with the Rechargeable Repairs procedure, Empty Property Management Procedure and Termination of Contract Procedure. Photographic evidence, before and after the repair/s has been undertaken, should be provided in such circumstances.

### 3.2.8 Repairs to Empty Properties

Caerphilly Homes will ensure all empty properties meet its Letting Standard ensuring Fitness for Human Habitation and in line with the Empty Property Management Procedure.

### 3.2.9 Joint Liability Repairs

Often repairs are reported by the Contract Holder that affect a component of the property that is shared by the adjoining property, e.g., chimney stack, fencing. If this adjoining property has been sold and there is a joint responsibility for the cost of the works full consultation will be undertaken and agreement reached with the Owner before the work is completed.

## 3.3 The Right to Repair

- 3.3.1 Contract Holders have a right to expect repairs to be completed within set timescales. These timescales are defined in the Contract Holder Handbook.

3.3.2 Under the Right to Repair legislation, Contract Holders may be entitled to claim compensation where a qualifying repair has not been completed within agreed timescales.

3.3.3 Caerphilly Homes will provide the Contract Holders with information on the Right to Repair where relevant.

3.4 Permission for a Contract Holder to carry out an improvement will not be unreasonably withheld, but permission may be withheld if the requested improvement:

3.4.1 Will make the property more expensive to maintain.

3.4.2 Will make the property less safe

3.4.3 Will reduce the value of the property

3.4.4 Any other relevant reason under Schedule 6 of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016

Compensation for improvements may be payable in line with the provisions of the Compensation Scheme.

#### **4.0 Review Process**

4.1 A right for Contract Holders to ask for a review of a decision is included in both the Rechargeable Repairs Procedure and the Landlords Consent Procedure.

#### **5.0 Compensation Payments**

5.1 A decoration allowance may be paid for consequential damage following a Landlord repair in certain circumstances.

5.2 Compensation may be payable to Contract Holders who suffer total or partial loss of heating. The criteria for winter payments and summer payments differ as do the level of compensation payable.

5.3 Compensation will be payable to Contract Holders if their energy supply is utilised in the undertaking of any repairs in line with the Charter for Trust.

## **6.0 Relevant legislation and regulatory compliance**

6.1 Caerphilly Homes will ensure that properties are repaired and maintained in accordance with best practice and relevant policy and legislation, including the following:

- 6.1.1 Occupation contract and Contract Holder Handbook
- 6.1.2 Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- 6.1.3 Housing Acts 1988,1996,1998,2004
- 6.1.4 Defective Premises Act 1972
- 6.1.5 Building Regulations
- 6.1.6 Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- 6.1.7 Equality Act 2010
- 6.1.8 Gas Regulations (Gas Safe)
- 6.1.9 Electrical Regulations (NICEIC)

## **7.0 Repairs and Maintenance Process**

7.1 Response repairs can be reported by Contract Holders or their representatives in the following ways and will normally be dealt with by the Centralised Repairs Team.

By telephone

By letter

By email

In person at local housing/council offices

In person during estate inspections

By telephone to the 'out of hours' call-out service for emergency repairs only. Misuse of this service may result in a recharge.

7.2 Caerphilly Homes is continuously improving the methods of reporting repairs and will seek to develop more modern methods through the use of new technology.



7.3 Caerphilly Homes has set the following categories of response repairs with target timescales for responding to and completing repairs. In exceptional circumstances, for instance where the Contract Holder is in poor health, Caerphilly Homes may consider a faster response time than the published targets.

7.3.1 Emergency repairs

Current priorities are:-

<b>Priority Code</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Target Time for completion of repair</b>
01	Emergency - out of hours	2 Hours (repaired or made safe)
02	Emergency - working hours	24 Hours (repaired or made safe)
03	Appointment	20 Working Days
05	Appointment	45 Working Days
08	Appointments following pre-inspection of work	60 Working Days

Emergency repairs are those that need to be carried out to avoid serious danger to health and safety or where a failure to carry out the repair could cause extensive damage to buildings and property.

The target time for Priority 01 out of hours emergency repairs to be completed or made safe is 2 hours.

The target time for Priority 02 working hours emergency repairs to be completed or made safe is 24 hours.

7.3.2 Response Repair Appointments

For the convenience of its Contract Holders, Caerphilly Homes offers an appointment system for carrying out response repairs during normal working hours.

Appointments are arranged with the individual Contract Holder, with morning, afternoon, school run or all-day appointments offered. They should be completed to the Contract Holder's

convenience within the appropriate target time from the repair being reported.

### 7.3.3 Planned Response Works

Planned response works are larger type repairs, which generally take more than one day to complete that are not urgent, although they may cause inconvenience to Contract Holder.

The target time for completion of Planned works is within 60 days of being reported.

### 7.3.4 Pre-inspections

Certain repairs may need to be inspected in order to assess the nature of the work required and its priority. Where possible, all inspections will be carried out within 10 working days.

## 7.4 Quality Control

- 7.4.1 Caerphilly Homes believes that the quality of its maintenance service is extremely important, not only to ensure the health, safety, comfort and satisfaction of its Contract Holders but also to protect the fabric and value of its housing stock.
- 7.4.2 Caerphilly Homes requires all Contract Holders, staff and Contractors to comply with the 'Charter for Trust' developed by Caerphilly Homes.
- 7.4.3 Contract Holders who report a response repair may be contacted after the repair has been completed, to help assess the performance and quality of the repairs service by completing a satisfaction survey.
- 7.4.4 Caerphilly Homes aims to check the quality and the service received to a minimum of 20% of its completed works either via post inspection or satisfaction survey. Any issues arising from these checks will be referred to the Foreman responsible for further investigation who will ensure that any necessary remedial works are undertaken or if any lessons can be learnt from the service provided.
- 7.4.5 The Council's complaints policy is also available to any Contract Holder who is dissatisfied with the response repairs service provided. Details are available on the Council's website, at local housing offices or at any of the Council's main offices.

## 8. Equalities and Welsh Language Implications

Response Repairs Policy

- 8.1 Caerphilly Homes is committed to giving an equal service to all. Any action taken under this policy will comply with current Equalities and Welsh language legislation.
  - 8.2 Caerphilly Homes staff will operate within the requirements of the current corporate Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Strategy and meet any specific needs which may arise in respect of the Contract Holder's requirements regardless of their individual circumstances and backgrounds.
  - 8.3 The Repairs and Maintenance procedure will be tailored to meet the needs of individuals, for example the priority of a repair may be increased for vulnerable Contract Holders. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.
  - 8.4 All contractors will be asked to provide their Equality and Diversity policy prior to allocating any works.
  - 8.5 Caerphilly Homes will make information available in a variety of information formats upon request.
9. Contract Holder Participation
- 9.1 Caerphilly Homes will provide performance information to Contract Holders through the various Contract Holder Groups, Council website, social media and the Caerphilly Homes Newsletter so Contract Holders can measure and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the services delivered.
  - 9.2 Caerphilly Homes will listen to the Contract Holder's views at every opportunity to enable continuous improvements to services, in line with the Local Tenant Participation Strategy.
  - 9.3 Caerphilly Homes will:
    - 9.3.1 Involve our Contract Holders in decisions regarding response repairs
    - 9.3.2 Involve our Contract Holders in developing repairs policies
    - 9.3.3 Involve our Contract Holders in the selection and drawing up of specifications for contractors and key components.

9.4 Caerphilly Homes will ensure that wherever possible the Contract Holders are able to exercise a choice on repairs, for example through our appointment system or on colour schemes.

9.5 Caerphilly Homes will undertake all building repair work in line with the provisions of the Charter for Trust for building maintenance work.

## 10. Policy Monitoring

10.1 To help achieve our aim of being a continuously improving organization and to ensure that we meet all statutory obligations, Caerphilly Homes has systems and processes in place which allow us to monitor and evaluate our performance.

10.2 Caerphilly Homes will constantly monitor repair standards and the performance of its contractors. Appropriate action will be taken if the repairs are not performed to the required standard.

10.3 Caerphilly Homes will continually review its standards by measurement against performance benchmarks set by the Welsh Government in comparison with other social housing providers.

10.4 Caerphilly Homes will benchmark its performance against other similar housing organizations with the aim of achieving continuous improvement and to ensure compliance with best practice and promote through newsletters.

10.5 Reports on the Response Repairs Service will be considered by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and appropriate Contract Holder groups.

## 11. Links to other relevant policies/documents

11.1 This policy links closely with the following policies and documents:

11.1.1 Occupation Contract

11.1.2 Contract Holder Handbook

11.1.3 Local Tenant Participation Strategy

11.1.4 Re-chargeable Repairs Policy

11.1.5 Empty Property Management Procedures

Response Repairs Policy

11.1.8 Corporate Complaints Policy

11.1.9 Health & Safety Regulations

11.1.10 No Access Procedure

11.1.11 Compensation Procedure

11.1.12 Response Repair Joint Responsibility Procedure

11.1.13 Landlords Consent Procedure

11.1.14 Annual Service No Access Procedure

11.1.15 Termination of Contract Procedure

12. Review

12.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there is an earlier change in legislation.

13. Policy Approval / Amendment

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