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Repair and Maintenance Policy



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REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

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1. What is the purpose of this Policy?

As a social landlord, First Choice Homes Oldham Limited (FCHO) recognises that meeting customers' expectations of a high standard of service delivery is essential. FCHO 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. FCHO has prepared this policy after consultation with the Homes Customer Forum.

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the corresponding FCHO procedures and other policies referred to within this document.

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

1.1 Definitions

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

Repair - The process of rectifying a component or installation in an FCHO 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 an FCHO owned and/or managed property for which it is responsible.

Customer - A tenant or resident of an FCHO property (including Use and Occupation customers). This policy includes some services and obligations to Licences and Leaseholders. Where applicable, it is clearly stipulated. This policy does not apply to shop customers.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 To deliver a customer focused repairs and maintenance service for all customers to their homes and neighbourhoods that is:

- High Performing
- Customer Focused
- Value for Money

1.2.2 Ensure assets are maintained in a more efficient planned, sustainable and affordable way.

1.2.3 To deliver a cost effective repairs and maintenance service.

1.2.4 Ensure homes are maintained to a high standard and meet all statutory obligations.

1.2.5 Develop the performance management framework for the repairs service to deliver real outcomes for customers.

1.2.6 Contribute to the wider corporate and social responsibilities of FCHO as a landlord.

1.3 Service Standards

- Provide a 24 hour, 7 days a week service to report emergency repairs.
- Attend and complete repairs works to published timescales.
- Emergency repairs will be attended within 3 hours and made safe (or we will complete the work inside 24 hours).
- Urgent repairs will be complete within 3 working days.
- Non-urgent repairs will be complete within either 10 or 20 working days. The timescale is dependent on the nature of the repair and the 20 day timescale will be used if we require more time to plan/arrange the works, inclusive of any specialist materials or access arrangements for example scaffolding.
- Planned (repair) works orders will be completed within 90 days. Works will be delivered within this timescale where it is judged they are “non-urgent” and the customer’s satisfaction with their home is not disturbed whilst waiting for the works to be carried out. The aim will be to complete these repairs quicker than the 90 day timescale.
- Planned (Major) works will be completed within 6 months. Within 3 months of the work being ordered, customers will be informed in writing of the completion date for the works. The works will be completed within 3 months of the customer being contacted. This work will principally be whole component replacements for example a new kitchen.
- Appointments for repairs can be made between 8:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday and on Saturdays between 9:00am and 4:00pm.
- FCHO will aim to diagnose the repair when the customer first contact the Service Centre and to give customers an appointment for a repair when it is reported.
- FCHO will send reminders of repairs appointments to customers by text message.
- FCHO provide a subsidised handyman service, which is able to undertake a certain range of customers own repairs and small improvements for a small charge.
- Carry out a gas safety check, where required, each year.
- Aim to inspect 20% of all completed repairs and any repair subject to a complaint.
- FCHO will continue to work with customers on identifying ways to improve the repairs service and the quality of work and materials.
- Improve properties to the “Oldham Standard” which exceeds the 2006 Decent Homes Standard.

2. Policy Details

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities for Repairs

2.1.1 Customers

- To allow access for repair works for which FCHO is responsible.
- To maintain areas of the home for which they are responsible – in accordance with the conditions of the tenancy agreement or lease.
- To ensure that a responsible adult is present for any repair appointment.
- To clear repair work area of personal items or valuables prior to a scheduled appointment.
- To not obstruct or deny works to their home or the communal areas.
- To use and inhabit FCHO homes (internal and communal) and installations responsibly.

- 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 customers household or visitors. FCHO will only carry out repairs that are required to ensure the safety of the customers and maintain the value of the property.
- To pay any charges for such repairs that are their responsibility but undertaken by FCHO (see Customer Charges Policy).

2.1.2 Repairs Service

- To ensure that FCHO approved operatives work in a clean and tidy manner.
- To comply with FCHO's Colleague Code of Conduct.
- To show ID when attending customer's homes.
- To only enter a customer's home where a responsible adult is present, unless there is evidence of a clear risk to any person(s).
- To only carry out work that is stated on the work specification.
- To inform customers of what work is to be carried out in their home prior to the work commencing (except in emergencies).
- To ensure that operatives work in a way that is healthy and safe; protecting themselves and the environment in which they are working.
- To give advice and information on what work to their home has been done at the end of a scheduled visit and advise if further visits are required.
- Make good any other item that has been disturbed during the repair where this is FCHO's responsibility.

2.2 Responsive Day to Day Repairs

2.2.1 For responsive repairs, our aim is to arrange an appointment during first contact with the customer and complete the repair in one visit. During normal working hours (8:00am to 8:00pm) FCHO operate a Service Centre, through which all repair requests can 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 customer. Customers may report repairs by any of the following means:

- By telephone on 0161 393 7117
- via the FCHO website
- in person at our office at First Place, 22 Union Street, Oldham, OL1 1BE

2.3 Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

2.3.1 Provisions for emergency repairs outside of normal working hours can be accessed via the telephone number above. Calls will be redirected automatically through to FCHO's out of hours service at 8:00pm. 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 customer will be asked to call back during office hours to make an appointment.

2.4 Appointment Times

2.4.1 FCHO offer weekday appointments for the completion of repairs, although evening and Saturday appointments are available by request. The following options will be given:

- Morning: 8:00am to 12:00pm
- Avoid school run 10:00am to 2:30pm
- Afternoon: 12:00pm to 5:00pm

2.5 Pre-Inspection

2.5.1 Some repairs 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 work is not known or if the diagnosis given by the customer is not detailed enough. Such inspections may be carried out by a Repairs Inspector or a nominated contractor representative. Staff will always advise where this is to be the case. Repairs will then be carried out within the appropriate timescales.

2.6 No Access

2.6.1 Where requested, customers must allow for access to repairs. We will offer an appointment for most internal repairs at the time a repair is reported. If you fail to keep an agreed appointment, a card will be left informing you that we have attended. You must then contact us to request another appointment for the work to be carried out.

2.6.2 Where the repair is an emergency or a health and safety risk and not repairing poses a serious safety risk for other customers or the building, FCHO will take appropriate steps to gain access. If by not permitting access for a pre-agreed appointment, FCHO experiences considerable cost and inconvenience, FCHO reserves the right to recharge the customer 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.

2.7 Heating and Hot Water: Provision and Services

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

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

2.7.2 FCHO will ensure necessary arrangements are in place to provide:

- a reactive repairs service which includes a 24 hour emergency response for some repairs in line with our repairs and maintenance responsibilities;
- the annual gas safety inspection programme for individual, communal gas boilers and appliances for which it is responsible; and
- to manage and maintain 17 electrically powered air source heat pumps.

2.7.3 FCHO is committed to meeting its legislative requirements ensuring that all of its homes, with a gas supply, have a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR). FCHO will service all gas appliances and boilers for all of its homes within 12 months of the previous service date.

2.7.4 FCHO will seek to ensure that annual safety checks and servicing is undertaken in domestic and communal heated properties in accordance with their tenancy agreement or lease, and prior to a new tenancy. Failure to allow access for servicing will result in FCHO following their formal legal process to gain access. This will involve seeking legal assistance from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC), applying for an injunction to gain access; this is as a last resort and is seldom necessary.

- 2.7.5 On communal systems, leaseholders have the opportunity to request that FCHO's heating contractor manage and maintain their heating installations at an agreed annual cost.
- 2.7.6 Leaseholders on individual gas central heating systems are advised to ensure that their heating system is properly inspected and maintained. FCHO's heating team are willing to offer any help and advice required.

2.8 Failing Safety Checks

- 2.8.1 When required to replace an existing boiler, FCHO will replace it with a new high efficiency boiler.
- 2.8.2 FCHO will remove any gas fire from a void property that fails its annual inspection and brick up and plaster the existing opening. In a tenanted property, we will either brick up and plaster the opening or offer an electric fire suite which the customer will assume repair responsibility for.
- 2.8.3 All FCHO's properties currently have either individual gas central heating or communal heating systems and do not require supplementary heating from individual gas or electric appliances.

2.9 Communal Systems

- 2.9.1 Where FCHO has the responsibility for 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.
- 2.9.2 2 Hours Emergencies – for major water leaks (that cannot be contained).
- 2.9.3 8 Hours Urgent Calls – For no heating and hot water controlled water leaks (except vulnerable customers which will be classed as emergencies).
- 2.9.4 24 hours Standard Calls – For loss of heating to a room or no hot water leaks (except vulnerable customers which will be classed as urgent).
- 2.9.5 Where third parties such as managing agents have an interest in, own or control the systems, FCHO will endeavour to communicate and work closely with them to ensure the service received by customers is satisfactory.

2.10 Planned and Programmed Maintenance

- 2.10.1 Planned maintenance is work carried out on a planned basis to maintain the general condition of property and fittings provided by FCHO. This includes cyclical maintenance of the exterior of the building and communal areas, Decent Homes key building components and the periodic servicing of specific equipment and installations. All planned maintenance work will be carried out in accordance with regulatory standards, relevant legislation, manufacturer's instructions or good trade practice.

2.11 Improvements

- 2.11.1 FCHO 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 FCHO make to individual properties outside of planned works will be done so on an individual case basis. Should customers 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 Customer Compensation Policy or in line with their lease or tenancy agreement.

2.12 The Right to Repair

2.12.1 You have the right to have certain small, urgent repairs, which might affect your health, safety or security, done quickly and easily. We have to carry out these repairs within a certain time. If we fail to do so you may be entitled to compensation, provided you have fully co-operated with us in getting those repairs done. Further information on the Right to Repair can be found in the Government's 'A Better Deal for Tenants: Your Right to Repair' leaflet or download it from www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/betterdeal2.

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

- the customer has told FCHO that they no longer want the qualifying repair carried out;
- where the customer 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; and
- where severe weather conditions prevent the contractor from completing the repair.

2.13 Repairs Responsibilities

2.13.1 Some repairs are the responsibility of the customer and not FCHO; such repairs are defined within FCHO's Customer Handbook and Customer Charges Policy, as well as the respective tenancy agreement or lease. The customer is responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement of the categories set out in their tenancy agreement. The customer will also be responsible for the repair or replacement of any damaged items in a property as outlined in the Customer Charges Repairs Policy. The repair responsibilities and obligations for Leaseholders are as outlined in their lease.

2.14 Fixed Floor and Wall Coverings

2.14.1 It is not advisable for customers 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. FCHO do not advocate the installation of fixed floor coverings. Where customers 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 FCHO deem essential. FCHO retains the right to recover costs of removing fixed floor or wall coverings from customers who have installed them, on their departure from the tenancy.

2.15 TV Aerials and Satellite

2.15.1 If your home is not served by a communal aerial, you will need our written permission to install a satellite television dish or aerial. If you have a communal aerial system, you cannot install your own system.

2.15.2 Where customers 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, FCHO may rectify this damage and recharge the costs to the customer.

2.16 Communal Area Repairs

2.16.1 FCHO 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 FCHO staff. However, some repairs may become apparent between inspections. For these, we rely on customers of the block to report these directly to FCHO.

2.16.2 Where the repair to communal installations affects customers' day to day usage of their own homes for example door entry systems, communal boilers or lifts, FCHO will aim to keep affected customers 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 customers will be notified if this is to be the case. Where third parties such as managing agents have responsibility for these repairs, FCHO will endeavour to communicate and work closely with them to ensure the service received by customers is satisfactory.

2.17 Defect Period Repairs

2.17.1 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 (except for new heating system which will be maintained by FCHO's heating contractor). Also any other investment works, for example new kitchens and bathrooms, have a defect period. Some specialist works such as cavity wall insulation have long term guarantees. The terms and conditions of these will be outlined within each building contract. This is known as the Defect Liability Period. During this time customers should report their repairs via the Service Centre in the usual way. FCHO will aim to ensure that these repairs are carried out in the appropriate timescales.

2.18 Latent Defects

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

2.19 Achieving Value for Money

2.19.1 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 FCHO. FCHO has a range of mechanisms in place to demonstrate and improve this, including:

- Benchmarking cost and performance data such as average repair costs per property.
- Undertaking reviews on processes, services and systems.
- Robust tendering process.
- Ensuring repairs are carried out by the original contractor where guarantees exist.
- Statutory consultation process with leaseholders

2.20 Confidentiality

2.20.1 FCHO treats all personal and sensitive customer information, however received, as confidential. This includes:

- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a customer;
- applicant, staff or committee member;
- sensitive organisational information;
- Officers will ensure that they comply with FCHO Data Protection Policy and that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the customer concerned, unless:
 - FCHO is required to by law
 - the information is necessary for the protection of children

2.21 Equality and Diversity

2.21.1 FCHO recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Single Equality Scheme, Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010.

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

2.22 Customer Participation and Feedback

2.22.1 Customer involvement plays a key role in developing the future direction of the Repairs and Maintenance service. FCHO works with the Customer Congress to obtain feedback on the service. FCHO also carries out 250 telephone surveys each month to gather customer feedback on responsive repairs, and this feedback is analysed and used to inform service delivery. We also review and act upon customer feedback that we received. Other ad hoc forms of customer consultation are employed as and when required.

2.23 Aftercare Service

2.23.1 Customer satisfaction is central to FCHO's activities within the repairs and maintenance service. Satisfaction levels are used to identify its customers' experiences and expectations and to drive future improvements within the service.

2.23.2 FCHO carries out customer satisfaction surveys amongst customers who have had a repair in order to gather feedback and identify and remedy any problems which are reported.

2.23.3 Additionally FCHO will carry out Post Inspections of void properties prior to letting them, and aims to post inspect 20% of responsive repairs.

2.24 Monitoring and Evaluation

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

- job completion data
- customer satisfaction
- appointments kept
- first time fix
- gas compliancy
- Health and Safety reporting

2.25 Health, Safety and the Environment

2.25.1 Officers will follow FCHO's Health and Safety Policy and procedures at all times. FCHO will work closely the requirement outlined in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System when diagnosing the condition of its homes and communal areas. FCHO 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 FCHO have a number of related policies to assist in the management of its homes and communal areas, such as the Asbestos Policy.

3. Legislative or other Guidelines

3.1 Regulatory Standards

3.1.1 As a registered provider of social housing, FCHO's provision to customers is regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). As per their 2012 guidance, FCHO works towards the required outcomes of the Homes Standard:

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

3.2 Legislation

- Section 11 Landlord and Customer Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004
- Secure Customers of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Section 20 Commonhold and 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

4. Links to FCHO Strategic Plan

Landlord: *Excellent landlord services*

Community: *Create independent and resilient communities*

Development: *Build desirable homes*

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
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