



Women's Pioneer Housing

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I. Policy aims

WPH is committed to maintaining our homes in good condition and to providing our residents with high quality maintenance and repairs services.

We have an asset management strategy which seeks to ensure that our homes are maintained to high standards and that the number of responsive repairs is reduced. This policy deals with those occasions where repairs are required outside our planned maintenance programmes.

The principles underpinning this policy are:

- To provide an effective responsive repairs service to residents; aiming to complete repairs right first time.
- To ensure that repairs provide good value for money through low life cycle cost, providing the best value for residents from available financial resources
- To ensure that access to the Responsive Repairs service is available to and understood by all residents.
- To prioritise repairs that affect the safety, comfort and convenience of residents.

- To maximise opportunities for residents to be at the heart of developing the responsive repairs service.
- To measure customer satisfaction and to learn from all customer feedback to continuously improve the responsive repairs service.
- To ensure that the principles of Health and Safety, diversity and equal opportunities are central to working procedures and practises.
- To consider the impact of our practises on the environment, the community, the workforce and the marketplace.

2. WPH Repairs and Maintenance responsibilities

WPH will aim to:

- Keep in repair the structure and exterior of all dwellings and common areas.
- Keep in repair and correct working order, installations for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sanitation and heating systems.
- Keep in repair and working order communal facilities e.g. lifts and communal lighting
- Comply with all health and safety requirements e.g. re gas, electrical, fire asbestos and water safety.
- If, as a result of a service failure a tenant loses the use of all or part of their accommodation, then recourse can be made to the Loss of Amenity and Service failure Policy.

We commit to carrying out repairs to our Homes Standard (currently under development) and within the timescales set out below.

In addition, we will make good any decorations damaged as a result of a breach of our repairing obligations. If wall or ceiling decorations are damaged, we will usually either paint the area white or offer the tenant a voucher for paint to redecorate themselves.

If we or our contractors fail to attend an arranged appointment or if we fail to meet our repairing obligations, we will provide compensation in accordance with our Loss of Amenity and Service Failure policy.

It is the resident's responsibility to insure their home and its contents. The resident is responsible for any loss or damage to their home due to theft, flooding or accidental damage. The resident may be responsible for damage caused to another property, for example, caused by flooding from their property. WPH actively promotes a Home Contents Insurance scheme run by our trade body the NHF. Alternatively, residents' can make their own insurance arrangements.

3. Reporting a repair

Our aim to ensure that residents can report repairs easily. Therefore, residents can report repairs in several ways:

- by email to repairs responseteam@womendpioneer.co.uk or info@womenspioneer.co.uk.
- by telephone (A dedicated repairs line operates from Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 5.30pm on 0208 749 7112. We have an emergency hotline on 020 8743 4422. Emergency repairs may also be reported out of hours by using the office number which provides the out of hours numbers for the emergency contractors.
- in writing
- in person at our office at 227 Wood Lane or to the Housing Officer, Scheme Manager or Estates Services Officer for the local area

We are also aiming to develop a self-service portal through our web site which will allow residents to report repairs.

Once a resident has reported a repair, a receipt and a satisfaction survey will be sent to them by post (along with a prepaid envelope) or by email on the same day. The receipt will show the contractor details, and where already arranged, the appointment details, job number, repair priority and completion target date. If it has not been possible to arrange a date on the telephone, the contractor will contact the tenant to arrange a convenient appointment. Residents should report any problems with contractors to WPH.

We are also looking into setting up a text message service to provide reminders to residents of appointments made.

4. Repair Categories and Response Times

The timescale that a repair is attended to will depend on the repair category that the repair is allocated to.

Emergency Same Day- within 12 hours

Applicable to repairs which are categorised as emergencies and require immediate action i.e. where the nature of the repair threatens the continued use or security of the building, where there are health and safety implications, where there is a partial loss of a service that affects the comfort or convenience of the tenant or where failure to carry out the repair will result in further damage to the tenants' property or another property.

Whilst the industry standard is 24 hours and against which we are benchmarked, we will always attempt to respond to such repairs as quickly as possible and our contracting arrangements reflect this.

In some extreme circumstances such as the breakdown of a lift or the complete failure of a warden call system within a sheltered scheme, we will aim to have a response within 4 hours. More generally we will aim to respond within 12 hours.

Our initial response will make the property safe and secure, further action will then be taken to an agreed timescale.

Outside office hours WPH employ a panel of specialist contractors whose details are provided on the WPH office number, on our website and all notice boards. These contractors will deal with all calls, liaising with WPH staff and each other as required.

Urgent – within 7 days

Applicable where the nature of the repair materially affects the comfort or convenience of the resident.

Everyday Repair- within 28 calendar days.

Applicable to day to day maintenance; usually of a minor nature which is unplanned. A routine repair that does not pose a health and safety risk to the resident.

When a resident requests a repair, WPH will aim to ensure that the works are undertaken within the timescales as stated above, except where the resident has requested a later appointment, or when the resident has been notified by WPH that it will be carried out at a later date.

Most responsive repairs should be completed first time but there may be cases where an inspection appointment may be needed to determine what works are required, in addition to identifying parts or materials. In such instances the inspection will be carried out within the timescales above and a timescale for works agreed following the inspection.

5. Appointing a contractor.

WPH selects an appropriate contractor from a panel of previously approved contractors. We will use contractors in prescribed areas so that they not only become familiar with the buildings but so that the tenants recognise the contractors, thus offering a degree of security to tenants. The areas on which the contractors work will be aligned with Housing Officer/RSO patches

We will be reintroducing a programme of 'Repair Days' for non-urgent works, whereby a contractor will attend an area on a prescribed day, This is efficient and enables residents to plan in advance.

6. Completing the Repair

Staff and contractors will

- Explain the nature of the repair that they are carrying out and give an indication of how long the repair/replacement will take (using plain English, avoiding jargon, and technical language where possible).
- Ensure minimal disruption for residents, throughout the duration of the works.
- Make every effort to ensure that all trade waste is removed on the same day that the repair is carried out.
- Ensure that the contractor conducts themselves in accordance with the Contractors Code of Conduct.

We expect the contractor to complete the repair on the first visit, however, there may be some circumstances when this is not possible and in these instances the resident will be kept informed. On some occasions repairs may require multiple visits, e.g. for measurements to be taken and for parts to be ordered. This may lead to an extended completion date.

During repair appointments, further works may be identified by the operative to those than were scheduled. The operative will report this back to WPH and we will inform the resident of what actions will be taken.

In some instances, the time required to complete the repair may exceed the time allotted. If further visits are required, then the resident will be kept informed.

The Repairs Team will make every effort to keep resident informed of progress and provide feedback on any reported problems.

WPH will always attempt to repair, as opposed to replace, whenever financially viable. Complete replacements will only take place where there is significant wear and tear and where the components have passed their useful life. If the extent of repairs required is deemed to be uneconomical then any essential work will be carried out and a referral for replacement will be made to a planned works programme. The planned works programme may be brought forward, at WPH's discretion, if urgent works are required.

Where a replacement sanitary component is necessary i.e. a wash hand basin, WPH will replace the single item with a standard white replacement, as is the case for wall tiles.

Where a kitchen component is necessary i.e. a wall unit, WPH will try to match the renewed component to the existing, however, this may not always be possible.

After completing a repair, where decorations have been disturbed, the surface will be prepared around the repair (e.g. a ceiling or a wall) so that it is ready to be decorated by the resident or if they prefer we will paint the surface white. This will include cases where disrepair in one property has caused damage to another e.g. where disrepair to a water tank has caused a leak. We will offer the tenant a voucher for materials if they wish to redecorate themselves.

Properties will be left weather tight in the interim in instances when a more permanent repair cannot be carried out within a reasonable timescale.

Electrical heaters will be offered when a repair to the heating system cannot be completed within 24 hours after it is reported or if required earlier because of the specific needs of the resident or a member of their household.

Dehumidifiers may be provided, at our discretion, when a property has excessive moisture, for example, when there has been flooding.

There are occasions when access may be required beneath floor coverings and wall coverings to undertake investigations. When required a resident will be asked to take up any floor covering that they have put down. WPH will not be responsible for replacing or reinstating any floor or wall coverings that are disturbed as a result of investigatory/repair works. However, due discretion will be exercised.

7. WPH tenants' responsibilities

WPH's obligations start once WPH are aware of any issues. WPH has an ongoing programme of maintenance and repair but if problems arise residents should report the need for a repair as soon as possible.

Tenants are responsible for allowing WPH access to carry out responsive repairs, technical inspections, health and safety checks e.g. annual Gas Safety checks or stock condition surveys within timescales or as requested. We ask tenants to co-operate with us in arranging appointments and being available to let our staff and contractors in as necessary. Failure to do so will result in WPH pursuing a potential breach of tenancy, in line with the Tenancy Agreement. We may charge tenants for appointments missed or a failure to provide access after reasonable notice.

There are certain responsibilities for the maintenance, repair and replacement of a variety of items within the home, which tenants have. These are detailed in the Tenancy Agreement and the Tenancy Handbook. These are small jobs around the house which are not covered by our repairing obligations such as replacing light bulbs, broken toilet seats or plugs to the bath, hand basin or sink. This list is not exhaustive but is intended to provide an indication of the type of work that we would not normally carry out. Some jobs are the tenants' responsibility if they, their household or their visitors have caused the damage e.g. broken glazing or blocked sinks.

We recognise that due to the nature of some of our buildings that some tenants will find certain repair jobs difficult. Where the tenant is vulnerable due to age, illness or disability we will do these jobs for them. We also have discretion to carry out these works in cases where because of the characteristics of the building (e.g. high ceilings) it would be difficult for the tenant to carry out the work safely. The tenant will be expected to buy the materials e.g. the light bulb or the bath plug. These would be routine jobs, and would usually be completed within 28 days.

We are unable to replace lost and stolen flat entrance door keys as we do not hold spare flat entrance door keys. We will enable tenants to replace lost or stolen main entrance door keys by providing a letter of authority to be taken to a local locksmith. It is expected that the costs of replacement keys will be met by the tenant.

If tenants wish to employ someone to carry out these, or other little jobs around the house then we can recommend contractors known to us to carry out the work.

We expect our tenants to make good any damage they or members of their household or their visitors cause.

If such damage is not put right we reserve the right to carry out such works and recharge them to the tenant. Any recharge will attract an administration charge which will be added to the invoice.

In some cases where the damage presents a health and safety risk e.g. blocked wastes within the flat or broken glazing, we may arrange for a contractor to attend but we will recharge the tenant for the cost of the repair plus administrative charges.

We may also recharge tenants for the cost of putting right any works to the property done by the tenant which are sub-standard.

Tenants are responsible for keeping the interior of the property in a reasonable state of decoration. At sign-up, residents may be offered a decorations voucher which can be exchanged for decoration materials. WPH will make good any damage to decorations caused by our carrying out or failing to carry out our repairs and maintenance obligations. Otherwise, residents are responsible for internal decorations except residents who meet the criteria for any internal decorations assistance schemes that may be established.

8. Resident Engagement

Tenants will have the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on the service that they receive for each repair and more generally as part of our quarterly customer survey.

This feedback will be used to appraise our own and contractor's performance and to inform how we may best improve and develop the repairs service.

We will continue to work with the Tenant Scrutiny Panel who provide valuable insight as to how the repair service is perceived by service users and how we might shape the service to better meet residents needs

In accordance with the Resident Engagement Strategy we will ensure involvement from groups of residents to inform our work to organise and deliver the responsive repairs service

9. Contractors

We will maintain a panel of approved maintenance contractors and consultants. Contractors will be admitted to the list after a vetting process which includes the taking up of references.

All works will be commissioned by an electronic works order which will state the works we require, the priority, the date by which we require the works to be completed and access details. The works order will require the contractor to comply with our Contractors' Code of Conduct.

The performance of the contractors we use will be monitored through a process of regular performance appraisal meetings informed by the performance data we collect and the feedback from residents via the repairs survey

We actively seek to maintain good ongoing working relationships with consultants and contractors. Any firms who consistently fail to meet the expected standards will be removed from the panel.

The vetting process and performance appraisal will also ensure that those individuals who work on behalf of the association uphold our mission statement and work according to our values.

We expect all of our contractors and people working on behalf of them, to treat residents with the utmost respect, and in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

10. Value for Money

We will agree hourly rates, travelling costs and material on-costs with contractors when initially approved and then during the annual performance review meeting.

We will choose the most cost effective contractor for each area.

A post inspection will be carried out on a sample of repairs to ensure that the correct time for the repair and the materials used are reflected in any invoice.

Works orders and the associated invoices will be monitored closely to ensure that as an organization we are achieving value for money. We will benchmark our costs with those of other RP's, conduct post repair quality checks and obtain competitive quotes or tenders for larger jobs.

Internal Audit will regularly report on vfm of this service and we will implement any recommendations to improve our approach.

11. Performance Monitoring

We will provide monthly KPI data to Senior Management Team on works completed on time (stratified by the different priority levels) and tenant satisfaction levels with the individual repairs. We will monitor this over time to enable trends to be established.

We will report this information regularly to the Board and to the Tenant Scrutiny panel.

We will benchmark our KPI's through Housemark and with other similar Registered Providers

12. Equality and diversity Impact

Our staff and contractors should treat residents with respect and courtesy at all times and treat all residents positively regardless of sexual orientation, sex, race, disability, religion or age and ensure we do not discriminate against any protected groups. This will be monitored and included in any performance appraisals.

We will seek to include on our list contracting companies owned and managed by women or who employ female tradespersons.

If a tenant is vulnerable due to age, illness or disability we will carry out the small jobs which normally fall to tenants on their behalf, on request. We have a team of site based staff, namely the Estate Service Officers and Scheme Managers, who are able to assist tenants who may have difficulty in reporting repairs to do so.

We have a number of foreign language speakers on the staff who can help us communicate more effectively with some tenants about repair issues. We also have access to translators and interpreters for this purpose.

Through the monitoring of our repairs survey responses we are able to see whether any particular ethnic groups appear less satisfied with the service than others. We are also able to monitor whether tenants who consider themselves to have a disability are any less satisfied with elements of the service than are tenants as a whole. We do not currently monitor by age or sexuality, but will consider this for the future.

12 Responsibility for this policy

The delivery of the responsive maintenance service is the responsibility of the Director of Property and Estate Services, operational responsibility is delegated to the Asset Manager.

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