



Repairs, Maintenance & Planned Improvements Policy			
Last Reviewed	April 2025	Next Review	April 2027
Responsible Officer	Director of Operations		

Policy Statement:

We aim to maintain and improve our homes to a high standard, and to develop high quality housing. The repairs service is one of our most important functions. We are committed to providing a high-quality service that considers our resident's needs, our resources, statutory obligations, and external affecting factors. The responsive repairs service complements our planned and cyclical maintenance programmes to ensure our stock is well maintained, up to date and meets the needs of our residents.

Policy Detail:

Introduction

This policy outlines the plan for the delivery of an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvement service to the homes and communal areas for which Freebridge Community Housing (FCH) is responsible.

Scope

This policy details the service that FCHs customers can expect in the delivery of repair, maintenance and planned improvement services. It provides details on how FCH, its Direct Labour Organisation, contractor and our supply chain partners are committed to delivering these services.

Application

This policy applies to all social housing tenants of FCH.

This policy should be read in conjunction with FCH's [Damp and Mould Policy](#).

Exclusions

The full provisions of this policy do not apply to leaseholders, shared owners, and residents whose properties are managed by but not owned by FCH.

Leasehold Properties

Repairs for leasehold properties are carried out in accordance with the terms of the individual lease and Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. Responsibilities typically include maintaining the structure, exterior, and common areas, ensuring buildings insurance is up to date, and keeping communal areas clear and well-lit. Leaseholders will be recharged for repairs according to their lease agreements. Details can be found in individual lease agreements.

Properties not Owned but Managed by FCH

For properties not owned but managed by Freebridge on behalf of the freeholders, we will communicate with the property owners to ensure necessary repairs are conducted in line with this policy's principles. Details can be found in the relevant management contract.

Vulnerability

When we determine the category of a repair, we will make reasonable adjustments required to cater for individual needs and vulnerabilities. For example, if you or a member of your household has a disability or vulnerability, we will take this into account to ensure we meet your needs. Therefore, we may undertake work that would ordinarily be the customers responsibility or enhance the category and/or the response time.

This will be on assessed on a case-by-case basis and consideration will be given to the individual circumstances and the work required. The decision will be at the complete discretion of FCH who will use the vulnerability definition contained within FCHs Vulnerability Policy.

Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring that all of our customers are able to access our Repairs and Maintenance service and will seek to make reasonable adjustments to do so.

Reasonable adjustments will depend on individual need but may include things such as:

- provision of auxiliary aids
- provision of information in alternative formats (e.g. large print, Braille, coloured paper
- etc.)
- allowing extra time for customers to report repairs or provide access to their home
- use of email or telephone in preference to hard copy letters
- use of plain English or Easy Read service
- communication through a representative or intermediary

Customers can request reasonable adjustments or additional support at any point during the repairs process; where we are aware that a customer may require a reasonable adjustment, we will seek to provide these proactively.

Reporting

Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements can be reported by a customer, colleague, contractor, or a member of the public.

Repairs, Maintenance and Planned Improvement Categories & Response Times

Emergency Repairs A

- **Definition:** Repairs required that present a significant and immediate risk of harm to our customers (inc. members of their household) and/or immediate damage to their home or community
- **Examples:** Fire or flood, gas leaks, total loss of electrical power (unless outside of our control, such as a power cut), broken communal entrance doors that pose a significant security risk), blocked main drains or sewage systems, damp and mould that is affecting a customer or a member of their household's ability to breathe, internal leaks that cannot be contained
- **Response Time: 4 hours.** An out of hours service is provided for emergency repairs. The emergency repairs service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days per year. A temporary repair may have to be undertaken with a full repair completed within 24 hours

Emergency Repairs B

- **Definition:** Repairs required that could present a significant and immediate risk of harm to our customers (inc. members of their household) and/or damage to their home or community, to fully complete a temporary emergency 4-hour repair
- **Examples:** blocked toilet and there is only one toilet in the property, loss of heating or hot water (emergency temporary heating will be provided if unable to affect a temporary or permanent repair) during the months of Oct to Feb. Internal leaks that can be contained
- **Response Time: 24 hours.** An out of hours service is provided for emergency repairs. The emergency repairs service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days per year

Urgent Repairs

- **Definition:** Repairs that do not present a risk of harm to our customers or a risk of damage to their home but are required to prevent significant inconvenience
- **Examples:** Partial loss of electrical power, minor leaks that can be contained, blocked pipes, blocked toilet and there is more than one toilet in the property, loss of heating or hot water during the months of March to Sept. Continuously running overflow pipes
- **Response Time: Within 7 calendar days**

Routine Repairs

- **Definition:** Repairs required that do not pose a risk of harm to our customers (inc. members of their household) or further damage to their home or community
- **Examples:** Dripping taps, loose tiles, cosmetic damage (e.g., wall cracks), repairs to kitchen units or doors
- **Response Time:** Within **28 calendar days**

Hazards & Repairs

Definition: Repairs required to address Category 1 Hazards under the Health & Housing Safety Rating System, or where a risk or dangerous condition poses a significant risk of harm to a customer or a member of their household.

Examples: Damp and mould that is affecting a customer or a member of their household's ability to breathe. Presence of mould on walls or ceilings, persistent damp patches, condensation issues, excess cold, excess heat, poor ventilation.

Response Time:

- **24 hours** if repairs pose a significant and immediate risk of harm to a customer or a member of their family. To avoid delays in emergency repairs, FCH will not provide a written summary before completing the work. In cases where temporary measures are taken or customers are given alternative accommodation, FCH will issue a summary explaining the issue, the planned permanent solution, and the expected timeframes.
- **Within 14 calendar days** FCH will complete an initial investigation and provide a summary of findings to the customer for repairs that do not pose an immediate risk of harm. If the investigation identifies a repair posing a significant and immediate risk, either a temporary or permanent repair will be done within 24 hours. FCH recognizes that sometimes a full investigation takes longer than 14 days. In such cases, an initial investigation will be conducted within the 14-day period to assess the issue and determine next steps, which may include a specialist damp survey. Exact dates for next steps may depend on external contractors' availability. FCH will provide an estimated timeframe and follow up with specific timings.
- **Within 48 hours of completing the initial investigation** (and within a total of 14 calendar days from when the potential hazard was reported), FCH will provide a summary of findings to the customer. This summary will include details of any identified hazard, the next steps, and a timeline for repairs. If only temporary repairs are made, FCH will inform the customer when they can expect the full schedule of works.

If a hazard is identified but does not pose a significant risk, FCH will explain why it is not covered by Awaab's Law and outline the next steps as a routine repair. If no hazard is found, FCH will produce a summary explaining the investigation and its conclusion, assuring the customer their home is safe.

- **7 calendar days to commence repair work** from the date the initial investigation concludes (for repairs that do not pose a significant and immediate risk of harm to a customer or a member of their family).
- Repair work will be completed within a reasonable period based on complexity of work and the needs of our customers. FCH will ensure that repairs will not be unreasonably delayed, and evidence provided where delays to repairs are necessary. Future planned programmes of works will not be used to substitute work needed to address hazards in our customers' homes, as these will be prioritised

Other Works

Minor Works

- **Definition:** Small, basic one-off projects that are a significant repair, renewal or improvement and are not part of planned or cyclical programme
- **Examples:** Structural repairs, passenger lift renewal, door entry system upgrade/renewal, large roof repairs, extensions, communal heating replacements, resurfacing works, communal garden redesign
- **Response Time:** Up to 90 calendar days. Customers will be advised on the anticipated response time, as this will be project specific

Planned Improvement Programmes

- **Definition:** Planned replacement and/or improvement work to maintain, improve and upgrade properties and communal areas
- **Examples:** Roof replacement, window & door replacement, kitchen replacement, bathroom replacement, heating system replacement
- **Response Time:** Programme timings are based on data held on our properties. Customers will be consulted with prior to work commencing and updated on a regular basis.

Cyclical Maintenance

- **Definition:** Work carried out at regular intervals to maintain properties and communal areas
- **Examples:** Decoration of internal and external communal areas, gutter clearing, fencing renewal
- **Response Time:** Programme timings are based on data held on our properties. Customers will be consulted with prior to work commencing and updated on a regular basis.

Servicing and Testing

- **Definition:** Work carried out to ensure that the health and safety of our customers is maintained
- **Examples:** Gas safety check, heating servicing, electrical installation inspections, lift servicing, fire safety equipment servicing and testing

- **Frequency:** Servicing and testing frequencies are based on statutory, regulatory and best practice requirements. Where relevant, customers will be contacted prior to servicing and testing being undertaken.

Repair Completion

There may be some instances, due to the complexity of the work or when new parts need to be ordered, when the repair cannot be completed within the above timescales. In these instances, we will aim to undertake a temporary fix and complete the repairs within 90 days of the date the repair was reported and will keep the customer updated.

Temporary Relocation (Decants) for Repairs That Pose a Significant and / or Immediate Risk of Harm or Danger

If a hazard poses a significant, or a significant and immediate risk of harm or danger, and the property cannot be made safe within the specified timescales, FCH will offer to arrange for the occupant(s) to stay in suitable alternative accommodation until it is safe to return. See FCHs Moving Out Policy for further information.

FCH recognises that some customers will have reasons to resist being moved from their homes, even if temporarily. In these instances, FCH will provide customers with clear information on how to keep themselves and their families safe ahead of the hazard being addressed, including if it is FCHs judgement that it is not possible to do so.

Repair Responsibilities

We will repair many items in our customer's home, but we will not do everything. In accordance with our tenancy agreements our customers have some responsibilities to keep their home in a good state of repair. A full list of repairing responsibilities can be found on FCHs website.

FCH will fix damage due to fair wear and tear, but may not carry out repairs where a customer, a member of their household or guests visiting accidentally or deliberately cause damage, unless the damage poses a significant risk of harm to the occupants; in this event the cost of the repair will be recharged to the tenant (see also [Charges for Damage and Repairs that are not FCH's Responsibility](#))

We will continually monitor repairs data to highlight trends such as frequent reoccurrence of the same issues, to identify and resolve any systemic or underlying problems.

Charges for Damage and Repairs that are not FCHs Responsibility

In accordance with FCH's Rechargeable Works policy, repairs will be refused or charged to the customer for damage caused through neglect, misuse, unauthorised alterations, or if the repair is not the responsibility of FCH. However, these will be

undertaken and recharged to the customer if the repair poses a significant risk of harm to a customer, a member of their household or damage to the property or community.

Access and Record-Keeping

FCH will offer customers suitable timeslots that take into consideration customers needs, such as their working pattern and childcare arrangements. Should FCH or its contractors be unable to access a property to conduct an investigation or make repairs following three reasonable attempts, FCH may apply to the courts for an injunction to gain access. Should access be refused to undertake compliance related activities, FCH will apply for an injunction to gain access.

FCH will keep clear records to provide assurance of compliance with this policy. This will include records of all:

- correspondence with customers (inc. household members) and contractors
- reasonable attempts to comply with the timescales within this policy
- reasons that have prevented FCH from complying with response times and frequencies
- correspondence with customers on offering alternative suitable accommodation

Improvements

In most cases customers wishing to make improvements to their home will need permission from FCH prior to commencing work. Customers can check FCHs website to determine whether permission is required or not.

New Build Property Defects

For newly built properties, any defects identified within the defect's liability period will be managed in accordance with our new build defects policy and contract with the builder.

Customer Engagement

We value customer feedback in order for us to continually improve our services.

After a repair, maintenance or improvement is completed, customers may be invited to provide feedback through a range of methods. Our Vulnerability Policy and Customer Influence Plan sets out how we work to ensure all customers are enabled to provide feedback.

Performance Management

Focus Area	Description
Quality of Works and Materials	All repairs and maintenance will adhere to the Freebridge Home Standard, ensuring high-quality workmanship and materials.
Responsiveness	Repairs will be managed within the specified timescales to ensure timely resolution and tenant satisfaction.
Contractor Performance	Regular reviews of contractor performance to ensure that standards and deliverables are consistently met.
Value for Money	Ensuring all repairs provide good value for money in terms of both materials and labour.
Compliance with Regulatory Standards	Ensuring all repairs comply with relevant health, safety, and housing standards.
Tenant Perception	The overall perception tenants have of their housing provider, influenced by their experiences and interactions with the services provided.
Tenant Satisfaction Measures	Surveys and feedback mechanisms used to gauge tenant satisfaction with various aspects of their housing, including maintenance, safety, and communication.
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Metrics used to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of services.

Compliance Review and Audit

Activities covered under this policy will be subject to continuous performance monitoring with Key Performance Indicators reported to both the Operations Committee and Board to provide assurance.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or sooner if required, to ensure compliance with statutory, regulatory and best practice requirements.

Periodic audits of this policy will be undertaken to ensure that the requirements are being undertaken consistently, with findings and any action required, reported to the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board.