

North Ayrshire Council

Housing Repairs Policy



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Version 1.00

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 North Ayrshire Council is committed to delivering a high quality, efficient and effective reactive and planned maintenance service to all of our tenants and factored owners in a manner which maintains high customer satisfaction.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the service provided by the Council for repair and maintenance and aims to ensure the needs of our current and future tenants are met in relation to the provision of high quality housing.
- 1.3 This policy has been developed in consultation with tenant representatives.

2 Our commitment to improving and upgrading our homes

- 2.1 North Ayrshire Council will carry out the repairs we are responsible for in our tenanted homes and will manage common repairs on behalf of our tenants and factored owners

The Council will:

- Ensure, where possible, all our homes meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Scottish Housing Energy Efficiency Standards
- Ensure homes are in good condition and well maintained
- Give tenants a choice of when work is done

- Make sure empty homes are clean, in a good state of repair and meet our agreed minimum letting standard when re-let
- Make it easy for tenants to report repairs
- Provide opportunities for tenants to influence decisions about the quality of our service
- Ensure repairs and maintenance works to properties factored by North Ayrshire Council are carried out in accordance with the factoring code of conduct and written statement of services.

3 What are the main objectives of this Policy?

3.1 Our key objectives are to:

- Achieve excellent standards of customer care and customer satisfaction
- Provide an excellent repairs service which is customer focused, efficient, prompt, and cost effective.
- Comply with legal responsibilities and statutory requirements, implement best practice and ensure value for money
- Maximise the useful life of our housing stock
- Optimise planned and cyclical maintenance programmes
- Ensure ease and equality of access to the service in line with the Council's Equalities Policy

4 How will we achieve these objectives?

4.1 To help achieve these, the Council will

- Provide an emergency repair service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- Carry out non-emergency repairs within our published service standard and complete repairs with minimum disruption and at first visit where possible.
- Carry out post inspection of a range of repairs to ensure that they are completed to the agreed standard.
- Ensure that all tenants are provided with clear information on repair responsibilities.
- Reclaim costs from tenants who wilfully, or through neglect, cause damage to their home.
- Give tenants the opportunity to comment on the standard of all types maintenance works carried out to their home and use their feedback to continuously improve our service.

5 Reactive Maintenance Repairs.

- 5.1 Reactive repairs to a property are those that are carried out in response to a tenant's notification of a problem or defect with their home. They tend to arise on a day to day basis and require attention within a short period of time. Before repair work is undertaken it is categorised using a set criteria to ensure that the repair is necessary and that the most urgent repairs are undertaken first.
- 5.2 The response classifications listed below may in certain circumstances be re-categorised to enable the needs of specific individuals (eg older people, vulnerable people or people who have a medical condition) are met.
- 5.3 There are two categories of repair:
1. "Emergency" and
 2. "Non - Emergency".

5.4 Emergency Repairs

A repair will be classified as “Emergency” where there is an immediate risk to life, substantial property damage or results in the property being insecure. Emergency repairs will be attended to and made safe within 4 hours. If we need to carry out further work after making the situation safe we will arrange for this to be carried out at a convenient time and as a non-emergency repair.

Examples of emergency repairs are shown in Table 1 at the end of this document. In responding to an emergency repair our priority is to ensure tenant safety and the prevention of serious damage to the property.

5.5 Non – Emergency Repairs

All other repairs will be carried out by appointment at a convenient time and date agreed with the tenant. The Council will take account of the urgency and nature of the repair and the right to repair timescales shown in Table 2 at the end of this document. The response time for completing repairs by appointment will vary depending on the type of work but should be carried out on average within 7 working days. This approach will help maintain and improve customer satisfaction, make the best use of resources and reduce missed appointments.

5.6 Right to Repair

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced the Right to Repair scheme which gives tenants the right to have small repairs carried out within a given timescale as shown in Table 2 at the end of this document. When you report a repair you will be told if Right to Repair applies.

If we do not attend to complete a repair in this category within the timescales you are entitled to compensation of £15, and a further £3 each day until the repair is completed. The maximum compensation that can be paid is £100.

The Right to Repair does not apply if the date for repair is extended due to the tenant requesting an alternative appointment.

5.7 Exceptional circumstances

There may be circumstances beyond our control which make it difficult to carry out the repair within the set time, such as severe weather or the availability of parts from a manufacturer.

In these cases the Council may need to make temporary arrangements and extend the maximum time to complete the repair.

If boiler parts are not available, temporary heating will be provided and an appointment will be offered as soon as the parts are available.

5.8 Rechargeable Repairs

The Council will recharge tenants for repairs resulting from:

- Vandalism, negligence or wilful damage by the tenant, family members or visitors
- Blocked drains or sanitary ware which has been caused by the tenant.
- Supplying lost keys
- Forcing entry to the tenant's home

- Failing to clean/clear a home at the end of the tenancy
- Making good unauthorised alterations
- Failure to provide access for annual gas safety checks and statutory maintenance

5.9 Appointments

A morning or afternoon appointment will be agreed with tenants when the repair is reported and categorised. The Council will be as flexible as possible within the constraints of its resources, best value and its contractual agreements. Where appropriate appointment times can be adjusted within normal working hours where the tenant is unavailable e.g. taking children to school.

5.10 Missed Appointments

Where a tenant does not provide access at the arranged time a card will be left asking them to call to re-arrange the appointment. It is the responsibility of the tenant to contact the Council to arrange a new appointment. The repair will be cancelled if the tenant does not contact the Council to arrange a new appointment within 24 hours.

6 Cyclical, Planned Maintenance and Project Based Works.

- 6.1 Cyclical maintenance is carried out at agreed intervals and usually involves inspection or servicing. The Council will carry out cyclical maintenance to ensure that appliances and equipment are maintained to safe operating standards and in accordance with guidelines and legislation. Examples of cyclical maintenance include painter work, gutter cleaning, roof inspection, boiler servicing and electrical testing.
- 6.2 Planned maintenance is work which is programmed in advance, normally over a thirty year period and usually involves the replacement of external or internal elements of properties such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows, central heating and roofing. Planned maintenance will be programmed according to the regularly updated stock condition survey information and components will be replaced in accordance with their anticipated lifespan shown below
- Replacement kitchen 20 years
 - Replacement bathroom 25 years
 - Replacement windows 30 years
 - Replacement boilers 15 years
 - Replacement roofs 45 years
- 6.3 Project based works are repairs or improvements which have been identified from condition survey information or has been identified as repairs to be carried out as part of a programme. The timescale for completing this category of work is within 60 working days.

- 6.4 Estate based projects which have been identified from involving tenants will be carried out as part of a planned programme and delivered within an agreed timescale.
- 6.5 The Council will contact tenants to arrange a suitable appointment for internal works and some external works as appropriate within the timescale of 60 working days.

7 Repair Responsibilities

7.1 Tenants are responsible for:

- Keeping the inside of the property clean, decorated, heated and properly ventilated.
- Reporting repairs to the Council so we can ensure that property standards are maintained.
- Reporting any criminal damage to the police and obtaining an incident number.
- Reporting any gas leak immediately to Transco.
- Clearing minor pest infestations eg ants, slugs, cat fleas etc
- Taking action to avoid condensation – ventilating and heating your home. Wash away any damp stains or mould with a reputable anti mould cleaning solution.
- Repairing any minor fixtures and fittings such as curtain rails, light bulbs, plugs, toilet seats, internal door handles, and shower curtains..
- Small repairs such as replacing keys and fitting extra locks.
- Obtaining written consent from the Council before making alterations to a property
- Filling minor cracks or holes in wall plaster

- Maintaining/replacing floor coverings supplied in kitchens and bathrooms as part of our investment programme
- Television aerials (except in multi storey flats and sheltered housing complexes)
- Damage to glass, sink or sanitary ware, blocked sinks or sanitary ware (if the blockage is found to be the fault of the tenant).
- Taking action to prevent pipes freezing.
- Maintaining fittings that they have installed.
- Bleeding radiators (where appropriate), resetting tripped switches, replacing fuses, fluorescent tubes, starters, light bulbs (not communal stair lighting).
- Regular testing of smoke detectors, replacing batteries where appropriate.
- Attempting to clear blocked wastepipes or toilets.
- Maintaining the garden and maintaining any fences they or a previous tenant has erected.
- Uplifting and relaying laminate floors or floor coverings for access required by North Ayrshire Council.
- Replacing lost keys and changing locks if locked out.
- Allowing the Council access to the property to carry out surveys, safety checks and improvement works.
- Any repairs necessary due to wilful damage or negligence by the tenant, their family or their visitors.
- Work which may be required to the property to bring it up to an acceptable lettable standard for a new tenant such as cleaning out the property, removing rubbish from gardens, lifting and removing floor coverings, removing panelling, tiling, shelves or other fixtures which have been poorly fitted, repairing or replacing damaged plasterboard and repairing poor quality “do it yourself” works.

7.2 Where the Council has to carry out necessary repairs, which have been classified as the responsibility of the tenant, the tenant will be required to repay the cost of the work and any administrative costs.

- 7.3 Tenants must also inform the Council as soon as possible about any damage or repairs needed to their home or related communal areas and take action to prevent further damage once a fault has been identified. They must also allow reasonable access for work to be carried out and to inspect the condition of the property.
- 7.4 Tenants have the right to carry out improvements to their home provided approval is obtained in advance. Tenants who undertake improvements without approval will be liable for the full costs of reinstatement should the improvement need to be rectified either during or at the end of their tenancy.
- 7.5 North Ayrshire Council is responsible for:
- The external envelope of the property – the roof, chimneys, external walls, windows and doors.
 - The internal structure i.e. internal walls, floors, ceilings, staircases, doors and door frames (excluding decoration).
 - The maintenance of all installations provided for space heating, water heating, sanitation and water supply.
 - The maintenance of external drainage, gutters and down pipes (excluding blockages caused by tenant negligence).
 - Pathways, steps or other means of access/egress.
 - Boundary walls and fences (where erected by the Council).
 - Drying poles and communal television aerials (where installed by the Council).

8 Reporting Repairs

- 8.1 North Ayrshire Council will ensure that tenants are able to report repairs easily and that action to remedy the fault is taken as quickly as possible.
- 8.2 Tenants can report repairs using the free phone facility within local Housing Offices, by telephone, by email, by letter, by fax or by completing the repairs notification form on our website.
- 8.3 The Council provides an “out of office hours” service for emergency repairs. Details of how to contact this service are available on the Council’s free phone repairs helpline number and are also published in our newsletters, leaflets, social media and on our website.

9 Service Standards, Customer Satisfaction and Complaints

- 9.1 North Ayrshire Council is committed to providing a quality repairs service and wants to make sure tenants are satisfied with work carried out. We have a number of standards which tenants can expect in relation to the repairs service. These standards are published on our website (<http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/housing-and-homeless-standards.aspx>) along with details of how we are performing. Performance is also reported annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator and to tenants through the tenants’ newsletter. If our service does not meet the standard expected, it is important that tenants let us know as quickly as possible so that we can put things right.
- 9.2 If tenants are not satisfied with the service that they have received, they can let us know by informally contacting staff at our Contact Centre. The Council can normally resolve issues quickly at this stage. However, if tenants are still

unhappy with the service, they can make a formal complaint by completing a complaints form which is available online and is also available from any Council office.

- 9.3 All complaints will be investigated and where appropriate corrective action will be taken. Tenants will receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days and a full response within 20 working days, where possible. Where a tenant is unhappy with the response they can contact the Council again and the complaint will be reviewed.
- 9.4 There is a right of appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for any tenant who has made a complaint and is not satisfied with the Council's final response.

10 Tenant Engagement

- 10.1 North Ayrshire Council recognises how important it is to work in partnership with our tenants to develop and continually improve our services and our standards.
- 10.2 We promote tenant participation and engagement in line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing. Our Customer Involvement Strategy outlines our approaches to involvement and offers tenants a range of opportunities to participate, both collectively and individually.

11 Performance Monitoring and Reporting

- 11.1 North Ayrshire Council recognises how important it is to provide a high quality efficient repairs and maintenance service. The Council will use a range of methods to measure performance and ensure that standards are being maintained. The methods include monitoring the performance of repairs, carrying out quality control inspections of work, and carrying out tenant satisfaction surveys.
- 11.2 The Council will publish details of repairs performance in its annual performance report, in tenant newsletters, on the Council website and in local housing offices
- 11.3 Customer feedback is very important to the Council and tenants are encouraged to contact the Council to comment on any performance matter. Comments will be used to improve performance and provide a better service. Tenants can contact the Council if they wish to do this:
- by [email](#) or [telephone](#)
 - by calling or writing to any [housing office](#)
 - by writing to the Physical Environment Quality and Performance Team at Cunninghame House, Irvine, KA12 8EE

Table 1 – Examples of emergency repairs

Plumberwork/Heating	Electrical
Internal burst pipes with water flooding (not dripping) which cannot be isolated	Complete loss of electric power. Tenant should first disconnect all appliances and reset
Complete loss of heating (where no alternative is available)	Complete loss of lighting
Burst tank (not dripping)	Sparks or burning from electrical outlets
Gas leak	Exposed live electrical cables
Blocked toilets where there is no other toilet in the house	Faulty smoke detector
Joiner	Builder
Safety supports and barriers	Make safe dangerous chimney where practical and safe to do: complete removal where danger seems necessary
Safety/police access to dwellings	Immediate safety works in relation to subsidence
Lost keys	Removing any fabric to make safe where danger exists
Boarding up a broken window	Temporary works to make safe paths & barriers where a clear danger exists to the public
Secure door lock where only 1 is fitted	

Table 2 – Right to Repair qualifying repairs and maximum time for completion

Defect	Maximum period in working days from date immediately following the date of notification of qualifying repair or inspection
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked or leaking toilets, foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Blocked sink, bath or drain	1
Loss of electric power	1
Insecure external window, door or lock	1
Unsafe access path or step	1
Significant leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Loss or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting	1
Loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of electrical power	3
Partial loss of water supply	3
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7

