

# **Repairs and Maintenance Policy**

## 1. Policy Scope

To set out Bernicia's approach to delivering a tenant focused repairs and maintenance service that offers value for money and fulfils our statutory obligations. The policy applies to all properties where Bernicia has an obligation to provide a repairs and maintenance service. It covers Bernicia's approach to responsive repairs, aids and adaptations, cyclical/compliance servicing, planned maintenance and Estate Services.

The repairs and maintenance policy will be in line with all relevant regulations and legislation including but not limited to:

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Amends the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to ensure properties are fit for human habitation throughout the tenancy.
- Housing Act 1985
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Housing Act 2004
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Consumer Standards (Regulator of Social Housing)
- Safety and Quality Standard 2024
- Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 – "Awaab's Law"
- Heat Network Regulation 2026

## 2. Policy Standards

Bernicia aims to provide timely, tenant-focused repairs and maintenance services which offer value for money and fulfils our legal, regulatory and statutory obligations.

Our aim is to be proactive in maintaining our stock in advance of problems emerging, through our Asset Management strategy and stock investment (Planned improvement) programmes thereby reducing the number of responsive repairs required.

We believe providing efficient, cost-effective and tenant-focused repairs and maintenance services will contribute to tenant satisfaction levels and protect the condition and integrity of our housing stock.

### Standard 1: Repair Priorities

Bernicia will provide property maintenance services to effectively maintain our stock and ensure the safety of our tenants and stakeholders. We are committed to providing a repairs and maintenance service to ensure that our tenants are satisfied, the condition

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and integrity of our housing stock is protected and maintained and in doing so value for money is achieved for tenants.

Bernicia will keep in good repair the structure and exterior of all our dwellings and communal areas together with the components that make up each property. We will ensure installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity, sanitation and heating are in working order and will service communal equipment supplied by Bernicia in accordance with current legislation, regulation and/or best practice.

Bernicia will provide a range of ways for tenants to report repairs, including by telephone, in writing, in person, by email, fax and via online platforms. In addition, Bernicia colleagues will also identify, and report repairs arising from home visits and estate walkabouts or inspections.

A 365-day out-of-hours emergency service will be available where there is an immediate risk to the health and safety of the tenant or the security of their home and to meet defined regulations e.g. Heat Networks Regulations 2026.

Information on Bernicia's repairing responsibilities will be given to all tenants and form part of their tenancy agreement and will be published on our website and dedicated literature and from time to time in newsletters.

Where a repair is reported that is the tenant's responsibility, we will inform the tenant of this at the time of reporting.

If a repair is reported that has been caused through damage or neglect by the tenant, a member of their household or invited visitor, we may recharge for the cost of the repair. This is covered in our Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

## **Standard 2: Responsive Repairs**

We have three categories for responsive and routine repairs which are emergency, standard and batched. All repairs will be delivered in line with all statutory, regulatory and Approved Codes of Practice.

- **Emergency** – for those repairs that fall within the emergency category we will aim to attend within 24 hours, where there is a serious and immediate risk to the health and safety of the tenant we will aim to attend within 2 hours.
- **Standard (Routine)** – all other jobs will be booked on the next available appointment that is agreed with the tenant with a target timescale for completion of 80% complete within 30 working days. Where a further visit is required, we will endeavour to complete the repair within 3 days if the repair is categorised as a tenant, right to repair or within a further 30 days if the follow-on work is not of an urgent nature. Where possible we will arrange and agree the additional visit with the tenant whilst still at their home. Where this is not possible, we will endeavour to contact the tenant within 5 days offering a new appointment time.

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- **Batched repairs** - those repairs that are larger in scope or require full component replacements that have a longer lead in time, examples of which are the replacement of doors, windows, kitchens, large areas of plastering, external brickwork, paving, hardstands and fencing etc. Where these repairs do not present a risk to Health and Safety, we will aim to respond to these repairs and complete them within 90 working days.

Repairs related to dampness / mould and associated timescales are defined within the Damp and Condensation Management policy and procedure. Requirements under Awaab's Law and associated timescales are included in these separate documents. Damp / Mould repairs are aligned to the timescales set out in this policy and are prioritised based on risk and vulnerability, in line with Government guidance.

Further defined timescales associated with the Heat Network Regulations (2026) have further timescales associated with a regulatory response for repairs and maintenance which are clearly defined within the Repair & Maintenance Procedure.

Appointments will be offered for the majority of responsive repairs and we will endeavour to make an appointment at a date and time to meet the needs of the tenant and that fall within the target timescales associated to the repair. Guidelines for colleagues will set out how they manage appointments to consider specific circumstances relating to age, disability or vulnerability.

## **Right to Repair**

Bernicia tenants will have a right to repair on terms that reflect as much as possible section 96 of the Housing Act 1985 and all amendments. This provides the right to have certain minor urgent repairs done quickly at no cost to the tenant where the repair may affect health, safety, or security. We will provide full details of the Right to Repair Scheme including a schedule of qualifying repairs upon request.

## **New homes**

Where repairs arise in a new property where a defects liability is still in operation then the contractor associated with the defect is obligated to return and make good on the defect within timescales associated with the contractual defects liability period as denoted within each specific contract.

Where a repair arises, within the defects liability period, that has a hazard identified that falls within the guidance and timescales as set out within Awaab's Law then the repairing obligation still rests with the contractor, however, to ensure the safety of our tenants Bernicia will ensure that the repair is completed in time via its in house Repairs & Maintenance Teams.

## **Aids & adaptations**

We recognise that adaptations may be required to properties to meet the needs of tenants who are or become disabled or otherwise experience difficulties living in their

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home. We recognise that the main obligation to fund and carry out aids and adaptations rests with local authorities via the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), where appropriate. As a landlord, we will not normally apply to the statutory bodies for an aid or adaptation but will collaborate with residents to support them if they need to make an application for a DFG.

Bernicia will undertake minor aids and adaptations as outlined within Bernicia's Aids & adaptations policy.

## **Estate Services (Pest control)**

General pest control and eradication remain the responsibility of the tenant such as certain insects (wasps, ants etc.) and vermin such as rats and mice that may from time to time nest in or around the vicinity of the property and create a nuisance or disturbance within the home.

We will, however, deal with timber infestations of woodworm within the home.

Where any defect within the property is enabling the infestation to enter or nest within the property it is Bernicia's responsibility to repair the defect in line with this policy and procedure and will do so once the infestation has been eradicated or as directed by the pest control service prior to or upon completion of the works to eradicate the infestation.

Where pests and vermin exist within any communal area of a property, including garage blocks owned by Bernicia, we will arrange for pest control services to attend to deal with the issues. Timescales for dealing with pest such as wasps nest, rats etc. will be within two working days. Please call 0344 800 3800 or email [contact@bernicia.com](mailto:contact@bernicia.com)

Assistance to eradicate pests can also be sought from the Local Authority in which the property exists. To report this please visit <https://www.gov.uk/reportpest-problem>.

Charges may apply for some or all pest control services.

## **Standard 3: Planned Maintenance**

In addition to the Repairs and Maintenance service, Bernicia deliver a programme of planned improvements and investment across the housing portfolio, which is set out in the Asset Management Strategy. This strategy outlines our approach to designing and delivering our planned improvement works. It sets out the framework that enables us to undertake a range of activities to ensure our assets are well maintained and deliver the best returns for Bernicia, its tenants, and stakeholders, in regards to economic performance and economic/social sustainability. It considers not only the condition of our stock but also the overall environment within which our estates are located.

It seeks to support the development of a shared understanding between Bernicia, its tenants, and key stakeholders on the outcomes required from Bernicia's assets. It demonstrates that we have detailed understanding of our assets, high quality and accurate data on the condition and compliance of our stock, and that we use our

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understanding to make informed investment decisions that ensure the safety of our tenants and compliance with statutory requirements and our own service standards.

High quality accurate data and tenant involvement are at the core of everything we do, enabling the Board and the wider organisation to make informed decisions on the priorities for investment in our tenants' homes and the neighbourhood in which they live, with a full understanding of the associated risks, tenant expectations and opportunities.

Our planned investment programmes are developed from our comprehensive stock condition data, which includes information on the condition of components, component life cycles, the installation dates of components, thermal efficiency, tenant/building safety, repair history and trends, and tenant feedback.

These programmes form the basis of our overall 30-year investment plan, as well as our detailed 5-year and annual investment plans, with the major works programmes delivered based on condition, with consideration of age and repair history.

Prior to the commencement of each individual year, detailed surveys are carried out on the works planned as a final check and balance, thereby ensuring that the final programme of work accurately reflects the needs of the stock, thus always ensuring best use of resources.

Our investment plans are procured in accordance with legislation, our Financial Regulations, and following the requirements of our procurement strategy. We adopt a mixed economy approach, utilising traditional procurement and existing national/regional/local frameworks, with these contracts offering longevity where practicable to enable the building of successful relationships with our contractors/framework partners and gaining efficiencies from collaborative working, long term planning, economies of scale and added social value, providing compliant procurement with the flexibility to respond to the opportunities within the market.

Our properties will be measured against the Decent Homes Standard and government standards. In addition, we will work to Bernicia's own improvement Standard, which sets more aspirational targets for our stock.

We have and will continue to improve the energy efficiency of our tenants' homes, raising the average SAP rating of our stock, and therefore reducing fuel poverty, carbon emissions, and our environmental impact.

Up-to-date plans will be available to inform tenants at appropriate times of forthcoming work to their homes.

Where remedial works cannot be undertaken within one of the repair target timescales because they require a longer lead in time (e.g. they are of a specialist nature or are affecting multiple properties) they will be delivered as part of a planned improvement programme, and customers will be kept informed of expected timescales for works.

#### **Standard 4: Cyclical Maintenance and Compliance**

The safety and wellbeing of our tenants is a core priority.

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We regularly review building and tenant safety to monitor and mitigate risk, including that to our higher risk assets, and deliver timely and relevant plans to clearly demonstrate our achievement of all existing and emerging compliance standards and legislation, including the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Bill.

Our Asset Management Servicing and Inspection module uses our high level of comprehensive data to produce robust programmes for cyclical inspection, servicing, testing and risk assessments, both within our tenant homes and communal areas.

The inspection and maintenance of components will include the main areas of landlord health and safety compliance as follows:

- gas safety and other heating (including solid fuel),
- electrical testing,
- water hygiene,
- lifting operations and equipment,
- Asbestos management,
- Fire safety
- damp & mould. (Including compliance with Awaab's Law in respect of emergency repairs)

In addition, we will inspect and maintain other areas such as automatic doors and door entry systems, lightning protection, air conditioning, specialist medical equipment, and drainage systems.

## **Standard 5: Communication**

Bernicia is committed to providing clear, timely, and accessible communication throughout the repairs and maintenance process. Effective communication is essential to delivering a tenant-focused service and meeting regulatory requirements, including Awaab's Law and the Consumer Standards.

Tenants can report repairs and receive updates through multiple channels, including telephone (including out-of-hours emergency line), email, online portal and in-person visits. These options will be clearly publicised on our website, tenancy agreements, and tenant information packs. Tenants will be informed of the repair category inclusive of emergency, standard, batched and further specialist repairs guided by regulation e.g. Damp and Mould/Heat Networks regulations and the expected timescales. Updates will be provided at key stages: appointment booking, pre-visit reminders, and completion confirmation. Appointments will be agreed at a time convenient for the tenant. Where follow-on work is required, we will aim to agree the next appointment before leaving the property or contact the tenant within **5 days**.

Communication will consider tenant needs relating to age, disability, language, or vulnerability. Alternative formats (large print, audio, translation) will be available upon request.

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Tenants will be informed of planned maintenance, and improvement works well in advance. Where delays occur, tenants will be notified promptly with revised timescales and reasons.

## **Emergency and Damp/Mould Repairs**

Clear guidance on reporting damp/mould issues will be provided to tenants through our website and regular publicity and information. Tenants will be informed of inspection dates and remedial actions, ensuring compliance with Awaab's Law as described in the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy and Management Plan.

## **Standard 6: Codes of Conduct**

All internal Bernicia employees engaged in the delivery of the Repairs and Maintenance service will be expected to adhere to a code of conduct. Similarly, external contractors will have a code of conduct that they are required to work to. These codes will be reviewed on a regular basis and all operatives and employees engaged in the delivery of repairs and maintenance will be made aware of what is expected and sample testing of delivery against these standards will be undertaken.

## **Standard 7: Training and Competency**

Bernicia will ensure that all those involved in the delivery of repairs and maintenance either directly or indirectly are provided with appropriate training in the application of this and other relevant supporting documents, including all legislative, regulatory and Approved Codes of Practice. All training and awareness activities will be logged on an appropriate training matrix.

Where external contractors are engaged to undertake work on our behalf, we will ensure they are using trained operatives and that they have the necessary skills, training, and competence to undertake work to the expected standard. Bernicia will ensure that all colleagues and stakeholders associated with the delivery of the repair and maintenance service are trained and regularly updated and assessed to ensure their understanding of and adherence to this policy and any associated procedures.

## **Standard 8: Customer complaints, satisfaction and continuous improvement**

Tenants will be treated with dignity and respect, and we will effectively engage with our tenant focus groups to ensure the tenant voice is heard and services are shaped accordingly.

Tenants who are dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service will be encouraged to follow the complaints procedure. We will listen to our tenants and take complaints seriously and use the opportunity to learn from complaints to drive service improvements.

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## 3. Definitions

<b>Word/Phrase</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Responsive repairs</b>	Repair or replacement of faulty or broken facilities (including emergencies) at the tenants' request where the responsibility lies with Bernicia.
<b>Right to repair</b>	A contractual right to compensation for certain small urgent repairs not completed within prescribed timescales
<b>Aids &amp; adaptations</b>	Minor adaptations to properties that make the home more accessible and safer
<b>Planned improvements</b>	Replacement of kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, rewires etc. These will be undertaken according to the life cycle and/or current condition set out in the 'Bernicia Standard'
<b>Cyclical maintenance</b>	Periodic testing, inspection and maintenance of components and/or installations such as electrical installations, domestic and communal heating and hot water systems
<b>Rechargeable repairs</b>	Repairs that are the result of damage or neglect to the property and/or its fittings and fixtures internally or externally caused by a tenant. This also includes damage caused by a member of the tenants' household or an invited visitor to the property and/or communal area.
<b>Tenant Responsibility Repairs</b>	Repairs that would be the responsibility of the tenant to carry out
<b>Tenant Improvements</b>	Works to a property that a tenant may request. Permission for any work would need to be obtained from Bernicia.

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**Version Number: V5.2**

**Effective From: January 2026**

**Applicable To:** This policy applies to Bernicia and all properties where Bernicia has an obligation to provide repairs and maintenance service.

**Associated Documents:**

The following resources support the repairs and maintenance policy and Bernicia colleagues to deliver the services outlined in this policy:

- Aids & adaptations Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Compensation Policy
- Tenant Service Excellence Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Gas Safety (Plus) Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Repairs & Maintenance Procedure
- Damp and Condensation Policy
- Damp and Condensation Management Plan
- Heat Networks Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Value for Money Strategy

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion:** An ED&I Assessment was completed in January 2026. Please contact the Governance team if you require a copy.

**Approved By:** Investment Committee January 2026

**Policy Author:** Managing Director, Property & Construction

**Policy Owner:** Executive Director Asset & Growth

**Next Review:** December 2027

**Reference Number:** POL-0059

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## 4. Change Control

Version Number	Effective Date	Amendment made by	Version approved by	Description of changes
V5.2	June 2026	Policy & Governance Advisor	Assistant Director, Business Change	Minor – amended sentence in Standard 2 about our standard responsive repairs.
V5.1	March 2026	Managing Director, Property & Construction		Minor - Addition of Estate services paragraph in Standard 2.
V5.0	January 2026	Managing Director, Property & Construction	Investment Committee January 2026	Updated to reflect new policy format and included section on New Homes.

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