

Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Date Written: September 2013

Date(s) reviewed: June 2016, June 2018

Purpose: To set out Bernicia's approach to delivering a tenant focussed repairs and maintenance service that offers value for money and fulfils our statutory obligations.

Scope: All properties where Bernicia has an obligation to provide a repairs and maintenance service. It covers Bernicia's approach to responsive repairs, cyclical and planned maintenance.

Definitions:

Responsive repairs: Repair or replacement of faulty or broken facilities (including emergencies) at the tenants' request where the responsibility lies with Bernicia.

Right to repair: A contractual right to compensation for certain small urgent repairs not completed within prescribed timescales.

Planned improvements: Replacement of kitchens, bathrooms, rewires etc. These will be undertaken according to the life cycle set out in the 'Bernicia Standard'.

Cyclical maintenance: Periodic testing, inspection and maintenance of components and/or installations such as domestic and communal heating and hot water systems

Rechargeable repairs: 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.

Associated Documents:

Tenancy Agreements

Asset Management Strategy

Value for Money Strategy

Health and Safety Policy

Domestic Heating Appliance, Smoke, Heat and CO² Detector Servicing and Safety Policy

Customer Care Policy

Complaints Policy
Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy
Asbestos Policy

Date For Review: June 2018, June 2020

Responsibility:

Managing Director Property & Construction

Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Bernicia aims to provide relevant, tenant focussed repairs and maintenance service which offers value for money and fulfils our statutory obligations.
- 1.2 Our aim is to be proactive in maintaining our stock in advance of problems developing thereby reducing the number of responsive repairs required.
- 1.3 We believe by providing a relevant repairs and maintenance service this will contribute to tenant satisfaction levels and protect the condition and integrity of our housing stock.

2 Policy statements

- 2.1 Bernicia will provide a day to day responsive repairs service and proactive planned maintenance programmes to effectively maintain our stock.
- 2.2 We are committed to providing a relevant repairs and maintenance service to ensure that our tenants are satisfied, the condition and integrity of our housing stock is protected and in doing so value for money is achieved.
- 2.3 Bernicia will keep in good repair the structure and exterior of all our dwellings and common 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 and/or best practice.
- 2.4 Tenants who are dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service will be encouraged to follow the complaints procedure to give us the opportunity to put things right and learn from tenants' experiences.

Responsive repairs

- 2.5 Bernicia will provide a range of ways for tenants to report repairs, including by telephone, in writing, in person, by email, fax and online. In addition Bernicia staff will also identify and report repairs arising from home visits and estate walkabouts.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 Information on Bernicia's repairing responsibilities will be given to all tenants in their tenancy agreement and will be publicised on our website and from time to time in newsletters.

- 2.8 Where a repair is reported that is the tenant's responsibility, we will inform the tenant of this at the time of reporting.
- 2.9 If a repair is reported that has been caused through damage or neglect by the tenant, member of their household or invited visitor, we will recharge for the cost of the repair. Prepayment will be required for non-emergency works. This is covered in our Rechargeable Repairs Policy.
- 2.10 We have two repair categories which are emergency and standard.
- Emergency – where there is a serious and immediate risk to the health and safety of the tenant or the security of their home we will aim to attend within 24 hours.
 - Standard – all other jobs will be booked on the next available appointment that is agreed with the tenant.
- 2.11 Guidelines for staff will set out how they manage appointments to take into account specific circumstances relating to age, disability or vulnerability.
- 2.12 Appointments will be offered for the majority of responsive repairs. Tenants will be able to choose from a number of different appointment slots.

Right to Repair

- 2.13 Bernicia tenants will have a right to repair on terms that reflect as much as possible section 96 of the Housing Act 1985. This provides the right to have certain urgent minor repairs done quickly at no cost to the tenant where the repair may affect health, safety or security and where the repair has not been completed within a specified timescale. We will provide full details of the Right to Repair Scheme including a schedule of qualifying repairs upon request.

Planned maintenance

- 2.14 Bernicia's Asset Management Strategy drives our approach to planned maintenance, value for money and energy efficiency.
- 2.15 Our planned investment is developed from our stock condition database which includes information on construction dates, component life cycles, actual condition (based on sample inspections rather than life cycles), repair history and trends and customer feedback.
- 2.16 Expenditure on planned maintenance will be incorporated into the financial business plan. A realistic programme of works will be produced balancing the requirements of the stock against affordability.
- 2.17 We will build effective and enduring partnerships with high performing contractors, consultants and suppliers who, together with our own internal planned maintenance contractor will deliver our planned programmes.

- 2.18 The procurement of building works and services will be undertaken in accordance with legislation and our Financial Regulations.
- 2.19 Our properties will be measured against Decent Homes Standards. In addition, we will work to Bernicia's own Decent Homes Plus Standard, which sets more aspirational targets for our stock.
- 2.20 We have improved our average SAP rating and have tackled properties with relatively low thermal efficiency and will continue to do so. This will help reduce costs for our tenants whilst improving our stock.
- 2.21 Detailed planned maintenance programmes will be produced every 5 years but may be subject to change. Up-to-date plans will be available to inform tenants at appropriate times of forthcoming works to their homes.

Cyclical maintenance

- 2.22 The safety and wellbeing of our tenants is a fundamental objective. We will undertake periodic inspections, testing and maintenance both within our tenants' homes and in communal areas of flats and retirement housing schemes.
- 2.23 Bernicia will undertake cyclical testing. Where applicable, inspection and maintenance of components including communal and domestic gas, oil and solid fuel heating and hot water systems; passenger, stair and through floor lifts and hoists; automatic doors and door entry systems; fire extinguishers, hose reels, fire and smoke alarms; emergency lighting, electrical periodic inspections, white goods (where provided as part of fixtures and fittings) and lightning protection; air conditioning and mechanical water hygiene equipment and legionella monitoring; special medical equipment and flood defence systems.

3 Responsibility for implementation

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Managing Director Property and Construction, Director Housing Services and Assistant Director Technical Services to ensure the effective implementation of this policy.

4 Actioning the policy

- 4.1 This policy will be actioned in relation to requests for repairs and instances of cyclical and planned maintenance schemes.

5 Monitoring the policy

- 5.1 Performance for responsive repairs, planned and cyclical maintenance will be monitored to check if targets for cost, quality and operational outputs are being met.
- 5.2 Performance will be reported to Bernicia's Board on a quarterly basis and to the tenants' Check & Challenge Panel.
- 5.3 Bernicia will carry out an appropriate percentage of post inspections suitable to particular categories of work.
- 5.4 Action will be taken where performance is unsatisfactory.
- 5.5 Value for money will be assessed through externally validated benchmarking and market testing.
- 5.6 We will monitor customer feedback to check satisfaction levels and to learn from informal and formal complaints.

6 Resources

- 6.1 There are no resource implications as a consequence of this policy. Adequate resources will be available to deliver responsive repair, cyclical and planned maintenance responsibilities.

7 Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 An equality and diversity impact assessment has been undertaken on this policy. In carrying out our services, we are committed to:
 - Treating all customers and employees positively regardless of any personal characteristics including gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender reassignment or religion.
 - Taking seriously all complaints and investigating and responding accordingly.
 - Using plain language and providing information in other languages, large print, audio and Braille on request.

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