

# Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy

This policy affects:

Tenants	X	Leaseholders	X	Other
TMO tenants	X	TMO leaseholders	x	
PF11 tenants		PF11 leaseholders		

Related policies / procedures:

Good Neighbourhood Management Policy Fair and Equitable Services Commitment Policy
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# Islington Council Repairs and Maintenance Policy

## 1.0 Introduction

This document aims to set out the main aspects of the Repairs policy, to provide definitions and explanations and to sign post to other relevant maintenance policies affecting the repair service.

1.1 “Responsive repairs” is a term used to describe day-to-day repairs to or around council housing properties. It covers repairs required to ensure the safety and well being of tenants and/or the building to fix a defect.

1.2 In circumstances where there is a significant threat to persons or the building, an emergency repair will be raised.

1.3 Repairs that are more complex or less urgent will also be carried out as ‘Programmed Repairs’

1.4 Cyclical repairs are those carried out on a regular timed basis, often annually such as gas safety checks.

1.5 A planned repair is one where a defect has been noted but is best addressed as part of a package of work rather than individually.

## 2.0 Scope and standards for the policy (Ensuring fair access to our services)

2.1 Islington Council aims to provide a responsive repairs service that:

- Meets the agreed standards of customer service
- Tailored to tenant needs
- Is reliable
- Is value for money
- Considers the impact our service has on the environment

2.2 To achieve this, the council will:

- Carry out repairs in one visit if possible within agreed appointment slots
- Agree appointments to inspect and carry out work where necessary
- Regular communication with residents through the journey of a repair
- Set high standards for quality of work for our staff and our contractors
- Consult with residents and mitigate impact of repairs issues
- Set, publish and regularly monitor key performance targets
- Manage the budget
- Mitigate the stress and impact of repairs on tenants

2.3 Islington Council are committed to delivering equitable services to residents. We seek to make our standard services suitable for a wide range of our residents. We recognise that fair access requires services that can flex to individual needs, when our standard service offer do not align with the particular needs of a resident or their household, because of their particular circumstances, mental or physical health conditions or communications needs. Our 'Fair and Equitable Services Commitment' sets out our approach to adapting our services to meet specific needs of our residents and their households and will influence the way this policy is delivered, where residents have particular needs or experience specific barriers. There will be constraints to our ability to adapt our services, related to available resources, such as financial resource, availability of alternative or temporary accommodation and support services for vulnerable people, as local government and the voluntary sector work within a constrained financial environment.

2.4 Examples of circumstances where we may flex our service delivery model to support a resident with particular needs include:

- Supporting a resident with significant mental health needs to access support with engaging with their neighbour about a dispute, if they are not able to do this directly or offering specialist mediation services.
- Supporting a resident to bid for an alternative home, where they would find this difficult to do for themselves, if they decide this solution is best for them in resolving a long term dispute with their neighbour.
- Supporting a resident access an essential estate service, where they have a temporary incapacity.
- Supporting a resident through major works project, where for instance a lift replacement left them without a service they were more reliant on due to a medical need.
- Support residents who have children with special needs with communicating this to their neighbours, to help manage neighbour disputes.

## 3.0 Legal and regulatory framework

3.1 The council's repairs policy is based on our legal obligations as a landlord and the Tenancy Conditions.

3.2 The main legislation related to this policy are:

- Landlord & Tenant Act 1985,
- Environmental Protection Act 1990,
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- Section 9 of the Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System).

3.3 The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right-to-Repair) Regulations 1994 place an obligation on landlords to carry out 'qualifying repairs' in accordance with set timescales. As a social landlord we are also bound to comply with these regulations, these timescales are outlined within section 8.0.

3.4 The policy is also drafted to reflect the recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report on Damp and Mould. See 26.0

3.5 The policy will be reviewed continually to ensure it is adapted to include any future legislation.

## 4.0 Council's repair responsibilities

4.1 Islington Council is responsible for keeping the structure and outside of the property in repair, including:

- External walls, external doors, external window frames, handles and sills;
- Drains, gutters, external pipes;
- Paths and steps to individual properties;
- The roof and chimney (but not sweeping);
- Internal wall plaster
- Internal timber fixtures (skirting boards etc)
- Stairs and balustrades
- Floor to wet areas, i.e. bathrooms only
- Loft access hatches and loft insulation.
- Mechanical extraction equipment
- Ceramic tiling
- Kitchen worktops
- Sanitary fittings
- External decoration
- Installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation. The service up to and including the gas and electrical meter is the responsibility of the utility provider, unless the mains supply outside the home is owned by the council
- Installations for room and water heating fitted by the council
- Lifts, rubbish chutes and shared lighting serving the building or estate.
- Fences and gates which are the council's responsibility to maintain (usually where they are adjacent to a public boundary).
- Boundary walls, fences and gates which are confirmed to be the council's responsibility to maintain.

4.2 Efforts will be made to match style and colours where appropriate, for example in kitchens, but an exact match cannot be guaranteed. Items in good order or that are repairable will not be replaced simply to ensure all items match.

4.3 Without prejudice to its repair responsibilities, where there is a potential trip hazard, the council may repair floor tiling or covering that it has installed in kitchens, bathrooms and toilets.

4.4 Where items are repaired, these will be carried out in a professional manner to a reasonable standard. Repairs cannot always match the equivalent standard of new work.

4.5 The age of an item or element of a building will be taken into account when considering what action to take, but age alone is not a reason to replace. For example, old plaster walls with hairline cracking but which are sound will not be addressed.

4.6 Any works will be attempted with tenants in occupation. In some cases, this may cause inconvenience, but care will be taken to minimise this. Floor coverings will be protected.

4.7 At the end of each working day, the property will be left with basic services, i.e. water, cooking facilities, lighting and, in the heating season, a source of heat.

4.8 On occasion, it may be necessary to move tenants on a temporary basis, generally for a few nights. In these instances, bed and breakfast accommodation suitable to the tenants needs will be provided and provisions will be made to ensure any valuable items are stored safely.

4.9 If a defect is such that it will require major works resulting in a property being inhabitable for 5 days or more, a permanent move will be required and this is outlined in the council's major works transfers procedure

4.10 In order to help the council comply with its repair responsibilities, as set out in your tenancy conditions, you must tell us as soon as possible about any maintenance problem in your home or in communal areas in your block or on your estate that the council is responsible for fixing.

4.11 In the first instance, the council will endeavour to carry out repairs, if a repair cannot be made, a decision will be made to renew.

## 5.0 Tenants' duties and responsibilities

5.1 The repairs that the tenant is responsible for are defined by the Housing Act 1988 and the council's Tenancy Conditions.

5.2 In accordance with the tenancy conditions tenants are responsible for the following inside the property:

- Internal doors and catches, including cupboards
- Internal glazing
- Internal fittings, door and window frames, bath panels, toilet seats, plugs and chains to sinks and baths, curtain rails and pelmets
- Internal decorations and finishes
- Plumbing to washing machines, dishwashers and so on, unless these have been fitted by the council
- Doors and drawers to kitchen units
- Letter boxes (unless part of a fire door)
- Items the tenant, their family or visitors have damaged

- Repairs to their own improvements
- Replacing light bulbs and fluorescent tubes (unless no able bodied person is available)
- Lock changes and replacing keys/fobs
- Replacing batteries in alarms where they are easily accessible.
- Maintenance of front and back gardens

5.3 Tenants are also responsible for maintaining and repairing elements to the outside of the property including:

- Their own equipment, such as TV aerials (unless provided by the council), satellite dishes and electrical sockets
- Repairs to timber sheds

5.4 The tenant is responsible for any damage, caused by the neglect or carelessness of the tenant, a member of their family or visitors.

5.5 Tenants must report any defects with their home to Housing Direct in a timely manner.

Tenants have responsibility to minimise or avoid loss that may be suffered as a result of a defect. For example, if experiencing water penetration or dampness the tenant would be expected to move items of furniture and/or possessions away from the affected areas so they do not get damaged.

## 6.0 Repairs to communal areas and equipment

6.1 The council is also responsible for carrying out repairs and maintenance to parts of the external fabric of our housing blocks and estates; including communal equipment and areas you share with your neighbours like shared fire protection measures, shared staircases, balconies and walkways and other shared services like lifts and door entry systems.

6.2 Dependent on the cost of the repair, by law, the council has a duty to consult in advance with leaseholders who own a property in a block or estate that will be affected by these types of repairs. In certain emergency situations the council has the authority to proceed with works prior to consulting in advance with leaseholders.

## 7.0 Reporting Repairs

7.1 In order to ensure the service is accessible for all tenants, the council will maintain a range of ways for repairs to be reported. These include:

- By phone
- Online
- Via any council employee or representative



7.2 Tenants are responsible for reporting repairs to the council and must allow access to their homes for any work, inspections, or surveys to be carried out by the council or any of its contractors or representatives. If a repair is causing damage to another property or the building the council will take relevant steps to force entry which are outlined within the council's access procedure.

7.3 All requests for repairs reported by tenants will be assessed against the council's repairing obligations, as outlined in this policy.

7.4 The council may charge for undertaking repairs where damage has been caused by the tenant, members of their household or visitors to the property.

7.5 Details of how recharges will be applied can be found in the council's housing repairs guide.

7.6 The council endeavours to ensure all repair queries are actioned however there are occasions when service demand can mean it may take longer to report or a repair or receive a response. An automatic message will be added to the start of the phone options when this takes place as well as an auto response e-mail explaining a response will take longer than usual.

7.7 Officers will ensure they are clear in communicating when this is likely to happen. When this does happen, the council prioritizes the most vulnerable of service users and these work orders are escalated to the senior management team so they can be managed and completed as soon as possible.

7.8 Council Officers will also use services available to them. For example, If we know a resident who is deaf or hard of hearing. Officers would work with them to meet their particular translation needs and also ensure Operatives in attendance have appropriate software to communicate with the resident.

## 8.0 Repairs priorities and response targets

8.1 The following repair priorities are used to decide how urgent a repair is and how long it can take to fix.

These priorities comply with Right to Repair regulations:

<b>Repair priority</b>	<b>Repair code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Response target</b>
<b>Lift</b>	E.5	When someone is trapped in a lift during working hours	Within 30 minutes
	E01	When someone is trapped in a lift outside of working hours	Within 1 hour
<b>Emergency</b>	E02	Used when there is an immediate danger to a person or risk of serious ongoing damage to the property.	Within 2 hours

		Service will respond and make the area or appliance safe. If they can fix the problem they will but if they can't e.g. they need parts they will make an appointment to visit again to complete the repair.	
<b>Urgent</b>	U24	Used for repairs that affect a tenant's day-to-day living including no heating or hot water.	Within 24 hours
<b>Recall</b>	R5	This category is assigned to any works which are believed to be a recall job. A recall is raised for work that needs to be repeated due to a problem with the work done originally or a failure of a part used. See Recalls section	Within 5 working days
<b>Routine</b>	R20	This category covers non-urgent repairs e.g. minor repairs to plasterwork or resealing around a bath. The service will attend on the next available appointment. Some jobs will need an inspection first.	Within 20 working days
<b>Planned</b>	R60	This category is used for high value repair jobs which are often complicated to complete. Examples include works linked to a legal case or works requiring leaseholder consultation	Within 60 working days
<b>Adaptations</b>	A10	The target time for urgent installation to a property of simple equipment to be used by a disabled person e.g. grab rails, specialist window locks and restrictors	Within 10 working days
	A20	The target time for installation to a property of simple equipment to be used by a disabled person when additional safety checks, inspections or other works need to be done first.	Within 20 working days

	A40	The target time for the installation in a property of more complex equipment to be used by a disabled person e.g. fitting a new level access shower.	Within 40 working days
<b>Damp</b>	DAM24	The council will carry out damp and mould washdown works within 24 hours of being raised by officers.	Within 24 hours
	DAM20	The council will respond within 20 working days and an appointment schedule will be handed to residents following the Diagnostic surveying inspection.	Within 20 working days

## 9.0 Appointments

9.1 An appointment will be agreed for repairs that are in the routine category at the point at which the order is raised with Housing Direct. Currently, several appointment slots are available. The choices are:

- AM – 8-12pm – These appointment slots can be attended anytime between 8am and 12pm.
- PM – 12-3pm – The appointment slots can be attended between the hours of 12pm and 3pm
- Late PM - 3-6pm – The appointment slot can be attended between the hours of 3-6pm
- Evenings – 6-8pm – The appointment slot can be attended between 6-8pm however this slot is more for core trades such as Plumbing, Carpentry and Electrical.

9.2 Housing Direct are contactable from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM on weekdays, and 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Saturdays.

9.3 Outside of these times, calls are managed through Contact Islington. Only emergencies will be addressed. Any abuse of this system will result in costs being recharged.

9.4 More complex repairs requiring access over several days will require a programme of work providing timescales and a work schedule setting out the actual work to be done. Copies of these will be provided to affected residents once agreed and will also have contact details for the officer overseeing the completion of these works.

9.5 In some instances, the initial appointment will be for an operative to take measurements, or if a defect cannot be diagnosed over the phone an inspection will

be raised, this will be outlined in the initial call and plans to carry out any repairs following this initial inspection will be communicated to the tenant.

9.6 If for any reason an operative cannot carry out the repair first time the operative will clearly break down what the council's next steps will be and will leave a 'what happens next card' with the resident where a further appointment will be booked with the resident on site over the phone with Housing Direct. The operative will log the reason why this repair cannot be completed on the system used by the council along with uploading photographs of the repairs.

9.7 The Operative's supervisor has instant access to these notes and photographs and in situations where an operative needs additional support and advice the supervisor can provide this to mitigate any further appointments being required.

9.8 The repairs team endeavours to keep to all agreed appointments and follows an escalation process internally to ensure mitigation is in place when this is likely to happen. If an appointment cannot be kept, tenants will be called following mitigation to explain what the problem is and to agree a new appointment at the earliest convenience of the resident. Any rebooked appointment due to a council issue they will be marked as a priority.

9.9 A repair could be allocated to Direct Works or to a contractor, but the service quality will be the same.

9.11 If a repair is issued to a contractor the council will clearly communicate this to the resident and inform them that the contractor will make contact with them to book an appointment. If this does not happen within 3 working days residents are advised to call Housing Direct so this can be escalated and resolved promptly. The council will record when contact is not made with the resident and these occurrences will be taken up with the contractor within their monthly meetings with the council.

9.12 All Direct Service staff will wear Islington branded clothing. Contractors should wear their own branded clothing.

9.13 Tenants must ensure that Identification Cards are shown before anyone enters their home. If in doubt, ask the operative to wait outside, close the door and contact Housing Direct during working hours or Contact Islington out of hours to establish that the operatives are genuine.

9.14 If a tenant misses an appointment for a routine repair, the repairs team will follow the no access procedure and will attempt to contact the tenant via different communication methods and endeavour to rebook the appointment with the tenant. The operative will take a photograph of the front door and leaves a missed appointment card. If no contact can be made and all steps have been taken within the no access procedure, the job will be cancelled and closed without further contact with the tenant. Only in cases where it is essential to gain access for Health and Safety issues or where a defect is affecting other homes, or where the fabric of the building is being damaged will access be pursued as highlighted within the council's No access procedure. This includes ongoing leaks, damp and mould and legal disrepair cases.

9.15 If the council miss an appointment without any prior contact, a formal apology will be provided and an appointment suitable to the tenant rearranged. If two or more

consecutive appointments are missed, loss of earnings will be reimbursed following the submission of proof of losses from the tenant.

9.16 The council endeavours to ensure all appointments effectively resolve repair issues first time and operatives are closely monitored by their supervisors. If an operative cannot resolve a repair on the first visit the procedure, they follow ensures they contact their supervisor and have this reason agreed.

9.17 The operative will leave a card which has the next date of attendance to ensure the resident knows when the next appointment will be attended.

9.19 The council has an internal team that provides data on the productivity of the repairs team and data on appointment effectiveness is provided to the Direct Works Management team who address any issues to improve.

## 10.0 Find my Operative (Localz)

10.1 If tenants provide the Repairs team with a number that can accept SMS messages the tenant will receive a text message on the day of the appointment showing them when the operative is on their way to their property on a map. The resident will be able to message the operative via this link to communicate any additional information as well as providing repairs with feedback following this appointment. Islington monitors this feedback and any issues reported via residents through this will be addressed and the resident contacted within 1 working day to resolve any subsequent issues.

## 11.0 Online repairs

11.1 A provision to order some repair issues online without having to speak to Housing Direct is available on the council's repairs webpage. Tenants are required to enter their eAccount number or their rent account number. Tenants will be able to arrange appointments and track their repair request as well.

11.2 Complicated or specialist repairs involving different trades, or issues involving renewals of building elements will not be available online.

11.3 Tenants can also use the online form located on the repairs section on the council website to raise a repair where someone within Housing Direct will contact the resident within 24 working hours.

11.4 Additional work is being carried out to the online repairs model to enhance the digital experience for residents.

## 12.0 Gas Appliance Safety Checks

12.1 Every year, by law, the council must ensure all gas appliances and flues are maintained in a safe condition by carrying out an annual Landlord Gas Safety Check. These checks are recorded and the tenant will be given a copy of that Landlord Gas Safety Certificate.

12.2 The annual check by our contractor will involve:

- A full check of gas pipe work, radiators and gas appliances
- A visual inspection of the tenant's own gas appliances e.g. cooker

12.3 If any appliance is found to be immediately unsafe it will be disconnected from the supply and a warning notice will be served. During the heating season, temporary heaters will be provided sufficient to maintain a temperature of 18 degrees in the living room of homes. Tenants will be provided with guidance on the running cost per hour of the temporary heater but are responsible for the fuel costs.

12.4 The council will arrange works to repair gas pipe work and appliances which are its responsibility to maintain. If you have installed your own gas appliance e.g. a gas hob or your own boiler in your home, you are responsible for repairing or replacing these at your own cost. Any repairs you arrange to be carried out to your own gas appliance must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

12.5 As stated in your tenancy conditions, you must give access to our gas engineers to carry out your annual gas safety check. Failure to provide the council with access will result in court action being taken against you and will ultimately lead to the council forcing entry to your home to carry out this essential safety check. You will be liable for the council's costs of any legal action or additional work needed in the event the council has to force entry to your home to carry out these safety checks.

12.6 If you have failed to provide access to the council to complete their gas safety check you may have a service interval timer fitted to your gas appliance. This device acts as a reminder for you when your safety check is due each year by temporarily interrupting the operation of your gas boiler until our gas engineer has completed their annual safety check.

12.7 If a tenant replaces the gas boiler provided by the council with their own boiler, the council remains legally responsible for carrying out annual safety checks of this gas installation.

12.8 If defects are identified in a gas appliance which has been installed by you the council will inform you of the list of defects it has identified. The council will give you a reasonable timeframe for the defects to be rectified by a qualified Gas Safe engineer you choose to commission to do the works. The council will require for its records a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Certificate you are given by your gas engineer following completion of their work. Failure to carry out these works to the satisfaction of the council will result in the council completing the required works for you and recharging you its costs related to the works.

## 13.0 Leaseholder Obligations

13.1 Leaseholders should refer to their lease for details of repairs and maintenance responsibilities.

13.2 The leaseholder will be responsible for repairing any damage due to neglect or carelessness caused by them, a member of their family, tenant or visitor.

13.3 The council will invoke the Recharge Policy if there is evidence that damage is the fault of a leaseholder or their household or visitors.

13.4 The landlord retains responsibility for block services which may run through their home, such as above ground drainage, communal ventilation systems, water pipes or cabling. Such items are often in ducts provided with access panels. Where improvements are carried out, it is essential that the access arrangements into such ducts are maintained.

13.5 If a leaseholder property is the source of a gushing leak, forced entry may have to be made and temporary or permanent repair to stop the leak will be carried out.

13.6 Leaseholders are to keep access points within their properties so communal repairs can be carried out when required.

## 14.0 Tenant Management Organisations (TMO)

14.1 Tenants who live within an estate that is managed by a Tenant Management Organisation/Board/Co-operative should contact their TMO Office about their repair first.

14.2 There are some repairs that remain the council's responsibility and these are outlined in the TMO handbook. The tenant may report these directly through to Housing Direct or via their TMO office.

14.3 Where the council has to carry out repairs which should have been the responsibility of the TMO, consideration will be given to recharging the TMO. See Recharge Policy.

## 15.0 Rechargeable Repairs

15.1 Rechargeable repairs are those repairs which the Landlord is obliged to carry out for Health and Safety or welfare reasons following damage caused by a tenant when such repairs that do not fall under landlord obligations, according to law and the tenancy conditions.

15.2 The council charges for repairs in the following circumstances;

- the work is needed because of damage caused by the tenant, their family or visitors to their property

- The council has to force entry to a tenant's home due to their negligence, for instance if the tenant loses front door keys or the council has to enter the property to carry out an emergency repair that is the tenant's responsibility
- The council have to repair the property, or remove rubbish or belongings, after the tenant moves out
- the tenant provided a false or unrelated crime reference number for a repair they reported as a result of a crime
- lock changes and lumber removal from garages
- Unauthorised DIY that has been carried out which has to be made safe or put right.
- Reinstating damage in adjacent homes caused by the negligence of a tenant.
- Unapproved alterations

15.4 A list of works and their cost has been agreed and will be reviewed annually.

15.5 Where the tenant is given the opportunity to complete the work themselves or arrange for the repair to be completed by a competent contractor, depending on the nature of the repair, the council will ask to inspect the work afterwards. The Tenants' Alterations procedure must be followed if the tenant is carrying out improvement works.

15.6 Works involving gas or electrical installations must be undertaken by a Gas Safe or NICEIC registered contractor. The council must be provided with the original certificate(s) issued by the contractor(s).

15.7 If the work is not completed and the council decides to do the repair, the council may recharge the tenant for this and any other work required as a result of the repair not being completed.

## 17.0 Redecorating service for older and disabled tenants (Assisted Decorations Scheme)

17.1 The assisted decorations scheme is offered to tenants who for reasons of age or disability find it difficult to keep their home in good decorative order.

17.2 The council will redecorate up to two rooms of your choice, within an allocated budget.

17.3 There is a waiting list for the scheme. Application forms to apply to join the waiting list for the scheme are available on request from your local Area Housing Office.

## 18.0 Handyperson service for Islington residents

18.1 The council provides a Handyperson service which is available to all older or disabled residents in Islington or carers registered with the Islington Carers Hub regardless of your landlord and even if you own your home. There is a small charge



for the use of this service. Many different types of small repair and improvement jobs around the home can be provided through the service, for example: repairing an electric light, fitting a curtain rail, assembling flat pack furniture, fitting minor security improvements etc. More information about the service and details of the eligibility criteria and charges are available on the council website:

[www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/home-safety/additional-repairs-for-older-people](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/home-safety/additional-repairs-for-older-people)

## 19.0 Flooding incidents

19.1 Where homes are flooded, LBI will assist in restoring the home to a condition it can be lived in, both during working hours and out of hours, and for leaseholders and tenants. The emergency response team will have access to equipment to suck up water within a home and provide dehumidifiers to dry out the property. Where lights have had to be disconnected due to being affected by water, temporary lighting will be available, as will temporary heaters and 'Baby belling' type cookers.

19.2 The council will follow up with residents once they try to reconnect electrics once safe, but leaseholders will need to arrange such reinstatement work themselves, potentially through their Insurer

19.3 If the flood involves foul water/sewage, floors will be disinfected where feasible and deodoriser applied. If also required a decant will be offered to the resident.

## 20.0 Insurance

20.1 It is the tenant's responsibility to insure their contents.

20.2 The tenant is responsible for any loss or damage to their home due to theft, flooding or accidental damage. The tenant may also be responsible for damage caused to another property, for example, caused by flooding from their property.

20.3 The council routinely advises tenants to take out home insurance to cover:

- Furniture and fittings
- Personal belongings
- Clothes
- Food and drink
- Jewellery and other valuables
- Rented equipment
- Internal Decorations

20.4 The council provides its own home contents insurance scheme which provides adequate cover at an affordable cost to local residents. You are free to make your own insurance arrangements which the council recommends tenants should, as a minimum, match the cover provided by the council's scheme. More

information about the council scheme is available on the council website:  
[www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/your-tenancy](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/your-tenancy)

## 21.0 Adaptations to properties

21.1 The council will carry out repairs to any adaptations that have been fitted by the council or renew them if required. If the person for who the adaptation was originally fitted no longer resides in the property, or the adaptation is no longer required, the council reserves the right to decide on an appropriate solution, which may be removal.

21.2 Any tenant requiring an adaptation to their home needs to initially contact their tenancy officer.

## 22.0 Fire Safety

22.1 The council has a responsibility to ensure that any common parts of blocks of flats or converted houses have an up to date Fire Risk Assessment.

22.2 To help reduce fire risk, our properties will be fitted with suitable front doors which resist the travel of smoke and fire for specific periods of time. For this reason, front doors must not be replaced without prior approval from the council in order to ensure the fire safety of the block is maintained. If you are interested in changing your front door you must follow the tenant alterations process prior to starting any works.

22.3 Many front entrance doors will also have been fitted with a self-action closing devices which is designed to limit smoke in the event of a fire. It is essential to maintain the fire safety of a block that you do not remove these devices and they operate correctly. The council will repair these devices if they are broken.

22.4 Whilst the council appreciates the security concerns of residents, under the conditions of your tenancy or leasehold agreement you are not permitted to install security gates or grills without permission from the council. If you can demonstrate that a proposed installation is safe i.e. it will not unduly delay an escape in the event of a fire and complies with current building regulations, then the council may decide to grant permission. If you install security gates or grills without permission from the council as it risks delaying the safe escape of people from your or another property or communal area in the event of a fire or other emergency, it is likely to be removed immediately by the council. You will be charged the council's costs for this work.

22.5 Smoke alarms connected to the mains electricity also have a long life battery in case of power failure. The life of such batteries is designed to exceed 10 years, but they will ultimately require replacement. The council will be responsible for the replacement of such smoke alarm batteries located in your home.

22.6 Some blocks of flats and converted street properties will be fitted with interlinked heat detectors in each flat in order to support a simultaneous evacuation

strategy in the event of a fire. The council needs to carry out periodic safety tests and maintenance of these systems. You must also report any identified faults so these can be rectified as soon as possible. Access to your home may be required from time to time to carry out tests or repairs to these systems.

22.7 If your flat forms part of a block where there is no caretaker service provided for your own safety and those of your neighbours it is particularly important that you report any defects affecting facilities in communal areas, for example, broken lights in communal stairways and corridors.

22.8 You are advised to test your smoke/heat detectors weekly and Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms on a monthly basis.

22.9 You are reminded it is a condition of your tenancy that you must keep clear and available for use at all times all alternative means of escape routes in or through your home or communal areas that could be used by you. This includes any alternative means of escape which will be used by any other people during a fire or other emergency incident.

22.10 It is also a condition of your tenant that you should not remove or interfere with any fire door or route in any way. If you are aware of any defects to equipment linked to means of escape routes, for example inoperable thumb turn locks/push bars on exit doors, you should report these immediately to the council and it will ensure these repairs are completed.

## 23.0 Asbestos

23.1 Asbestos is a naturally occurring material that was added to some building materials in the past. When building materials containing asbestos are in good condition and not damaged there are no risks to health. There may be a risk to health when these materials are disturbed or damaged in such a way as to release asbestos fibres into the air. Do not tamper with or touch any materials in your home which could contain asbestos. Always refer to your tenancy conditions before carrying out any improvements, repairs or DIY - you may need to get permission from us first.

- Don't drill, sand or scrape anything you think may contain asbestos when you are carrying out any home improvements or DIY
- Always soak wallpaper before removing and then gently peel away the paper before redecorating
- Don't try to remove textured coatings from ceilings. Wash any areas of flaking paint before repainting
- Don't try to remove old floor tiles or linoleum. Leave them in place and lay new floor coverings over them

23.2 What to do if you think you have found or damaged materials containing asbestos

- Report this immediately to the repairs team

- Do not attempt to clean it up or repair it yourself
- Do not brush or vacuum any dust as this risks spreading the fibres into the air
- You can find out more about asbestos safety in your home on the HSE website  
[www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/member-of-public.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/member-of-public.htm)

## 24.0 Defects liability period

24.1 All works carried out as part of a planned improvement or new build property are covered by a defects liability period. This will start from the date of completion. The defects liability period is normally but not exclusively:

- 12 months for building repairs
- 12 months for electrical or mechanical works

24.2 During the defects liability period, any repairs covered by it will be the responsibility of the original contractor. The council will monitor the contractor for completion of any repairs reported to them during the defects liability period.

24.3 The conditions and timeframes for the contractor to respond to us during the defects liability period will often be different to our standard repairs priorities and response times listed later in this policy. This sometimes means it takes longer to get the problem fixed during the defects liability period.

## 25.0 Making Good

25.1 'Making good' means that after completing a repair the council will prepare the surfaces in the area around the repair so they are ready to be redecorated. Usually this is done after there has been a leak.

25.2 For more extensive damaged caused to a wall or ceiling in a room or if the current surface of the affected area is damaged to such an extent that making good is not possible, the council will prepare the affected walls or ceilings ready for redecoration and repaint with emulsion paint. You will be offered a choice between two standard colours of emulsion paint to complete the redecoration of the affected areas. In some circumstances the council may, as an alternative, offer you a decoration pack enabling you to redecorate the affected room in your own choice of paint colour.

25.3 The council is not able to match your existing decorations or fittings e.g. paint colours, wallpaper patterns, matching your own tiles, or flooring when making good surfaces or redecorating affected areas following a repair. The council may be able to consider using spare materials e.g. wall tiles which you have and can provide to complete a job. However, this decision will be made at the sole discretion of the council following consideration of issues including the quantity and current condition of these materials and any health and safety concerns linked to their use.

25.4 The council will not be able to 'make good' access panels, hatches, ducts or ducting affected by the repair if you have covered these previously with wallpaper, tiles, carpet, wood, laminate or other finishes as these need to be left accessible. The council will not re-cover this equipment.

25.5 Where damage to your decorations has occurred and this is not the fault of the council or its contractors you should claim against your home contents insurance policy to cover your costs to redecorate the affected area.

## 26.0 Damp and Mould

26.1 To ensure that the group meets the Spotlight on Damp and Mould Guidance as set out by the Housing Ombudsman Service in October 2021. The Housing Ombudsman requires Social Housing Providers not to dismiss reports of dampness stating, 'it's not lifestyle'

26.2 Islington Council has taken a zero tolerance approach to apportionment of blame and will take all reasonable measures to remove any cause of damp whilst supporting our tenants in managing condensation mould.

26.3 Islington Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our homes are free from damp and our tenants are able to manage condensation in their home to a level where it does not lead to condensation mould.

26.4 Islington Council will take all reports of damp and mould seriously and wherever possible seek to ensure the tenant's reports are investigated quickly by a surveyor.

26.5 Islington Council will use language in all of our communication that does not place blame on tenants and seek to establish a culture of collaborative working showing our tenants respect and empathy.

26.6 To deliver this service we will ensure all communications and content for tenants is continually reviewed.

26.7 The council has taken a pro-active approach to identifying instances of damp and mould in its properties and is not just relying on tenants reporting by:

- Continually encouraging and enabling employees, contractors and partners to quickly and easily report cases of damp and mould as they encounter through a single reporting system.
- Taking the opportunity at the point a property becomes a void to investigate and ensure that all these properties are free of damp and mould and are provided with necessary facilities such as an adequate heating and ventilation to keep them this way.
- Tenancy audit checks

26.8 Tenants can report cases of damp and mould in multiple formats such as telephone, in writing and through referrals from external partners such as GPs

26.9 All reports of damp and mould will be acknowledged and logged on the council's system and will remain open and only closed when the following occurs:

- The tenant confirms that the damp and condensation issue has been resolved, a follow up call is also made 12 weeks after the tenant confirms the issue has been resolved. If any subsequent issues reoccur the repairs team will make arrangements to reattend.
- The council have taken all reasonable steps to address damp and mould.

26.10 All frontline non-technical employees who deal with tenants or access their homes are provided with damp and mould awareness training annually.

26.11 The council endeavours to keep tenants informed of progress and confirm actions after each stage of the process.

26.12 The council monitors the volume and timescales of addressing all damp and mould cases weekly and adopts a risk-based approach with escalating levels of proactive interventions when required.

26.13 Through the investigation process, surveyors and other officers may identify tenant and/or housing related issues that are a contributory factor in the severity of any condensation mould cases, these could be things such as:

- A physical or mental health issue which is preventing the tenant from reasonably being able to operate the equipment in the home to manage condensation. In these cases, the surveyor will seek to identify minor adaptations that could be provided in accordance with the Aids and Adaptations team.
- A mental health issue that cannot be resolved through the provision of an adaptation such as hoarding. In these cases, the surveyor will make a referral to the tenancy management team who will work with the tenant and any support team.
- A potential fuel poverty issue which is preventing the tenant from operating the mechanical and electrical systems in the property essential for managing condensation. In these cases, the surveyor will, with the permission of the tenant, make a referral to the SHINE team who will provide budgeting support and signpost to other agencies who can provide help and support.
- Housing related issues such as overcrowding or under occupation. In these cases, the surveyor will again make a referral to the tenancy team who will support the tenant to access the housing register and local lettings processes to move to a more suitable property, if available.

## 27.0 Damp and Mould – Remediation

27.1 Where damp exists within a home where there are no reasonable measures, this is entirely the council's responsibility and will take all necessary steps to identify the cause and carry out remedial measures. Depending on the works within the property this may require the tenant to be temporarily decanted if the conditions or loss of facilities is deemed to be a health risk to the tenant.

- Where mould exists an appointment with a Diagnostic Surveyor will be arranged and booked in to take place within 20 working days.

- Surveyor will attend the property to identify and remediate any damp to ensure the property is free from both rising and penetrative damp.
- Check the plumbing installations to ensure there are no leaks.
- Ensure heating appliances are fully operational and the system covers all habitable parts of the building, and the emitters are appropriately sized for the room.
- Check windows are watertight and opening casements are working.
- Ensure that the kitchen and bathroom have extraction.
- Where necessary use a sensor to record the climate within the property to help identify timing and cause to inform a discussion with a tenant.
- Discuss the condensation issue with the tenant in a collaborative manner to understand if there are issues and provide help and support to better control condensation within the home and prevent mould and provide residents with a copy of the tips for tackling damp and mould leaflet.
- Where it is identified that a tenant is in fuel poverty they will be signposted to SHINE who will provide budgeting support and signpost to other agencies who can provide help and support.
- The surveyor will record clear and accurate notes of discussions and agreements made by them and the resident.
- The completed report is made available to the tenant in the form of an e-mail and can be requested to be sent out in the post if the tenant has no access to e-mail.
- The council stores copies and associated photographs on their system for future reference.
- If the works are not deemed as urgent, in which case the council attends within 24 hours to carry out a mould wash, the surveyor has 3 working days to raise the works.
- The remedial works have a priority within 20 working days to be completed.
- Following the completion of these works officers will make a quality phone call to the resident 12 weeks after to if any issues have reoccurred.

27.2 Where there are remedial works that could take several weeks to complete and a, the surveyor will communicate this and consider if it is appropriate to provide temporary measures to help manage condensation until works are complete such as arranging the delivery of a dehumidifier.

27.3 Where surveyors encounter damp because of poor design that could also effect other properties with similar design features the council will proactively inspect those properties and consider a solution that resolves the issue for all.

27.4 If a resident is unhappy with the content of the initial damp report or with the advice given during the survey or is not resolved within 2 months of the inspection the resident can escalate this to the team and this will prompt a stage 2 repeat service.

- The stage 2 survey will be carried out within 10 working days by ideally the same surveyor and another. The surveyors will reconsider all steps previously covered to ensure no steps were missed.



- The resulting revised survey will be checked and countersigned by the second surveyor.
- Any wider training identified as being required following the stage two survey will be discussed with the supervisor.

27.5 If following a stage 2 survey and the tenant remains unhappy or the problem remains unresolved the case will be reviewed within 10 working days by the Supervisor, Disrepair manager and the Group Leader for Contract Performance.

- Following the review, the resident will be informed of the outcome and decision by the Disrepair Manager. Details of this discussion will be confirmed in notes on the system.

27.6 If the resident remains dissatisfied, they will have to log a complaint through the complaints process.

27.7 The council endeavours to ensure all priorities are attended within the timeframes specified however there are occasions when service demand can mean these timeframes will be longer. Officers will ensure they are clear in communicating when this is likely to happen. When this does happen, the council prioritizes the most vulnerable of service users and these work orders are escalated to senior management team so they can be managed and completed as soon as possible.

27.8 Where a case is identified as complexed from the surveyor the officer has a duty of care to escalate this to the supervisor and disrepair manager and the case will be logged as high priority and added to a weekly tracker until completion.

## 28.0 Damp and mould – Exceptions

28.1 The council cannot cure condensation and the appearance of mould. In some cases, it is unreasonable to attempt remedial action as it would be ineffective, for example:

- Where internal conditions within a home, for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongings are influencing health and wellbeing of the occupants or preventing inspections or remedial works being carried out.
- Where the repairs team cannot resolve damp and mould due to building design this is highlighted with colleagues within our Capital team to be incorporated within any major works projects moving forward.
- Overcrowding occurs when a living space is occupied by more people than it can comfortably accommodate. This leads to reduced ventilation and increased humidity levels.
- Excessive hoarding occurs when there is an accumulation of items in a living space that could potentially obstruct airflow and prevent ventilation as well as hiding damp patches or mould growth.

28.2 In these cases, the council will provide guidance, support and assistance to residents to review their options such as moving to more appropriate alternative



suitable accommodation or ceasing a particular activity. Effective remedial action may not be practical in these instances until situations have been resolved or the activity stopped.

28.3 The surveying team will provide guidance on how to ventilate and heat the property, offer advice on best maintaining suitable living environment to prevent damp and mould growth. In these scenarios, cases will be referred to tenancy officers who will be able to assist and support through the process as well as offering potential information on financial assistance and support through SHINE and guidance on how to heat your home to prevent damp which contributes to humidity issues. More information on damp and mould and support mechanisms can be found <https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/home-safety/damp-and-mould> as well as further information on overcrowding, here <https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/moving-home/help-with-overcrowding>

28.4 The surveying team will consider various possible solutions including the installation of mechanical ventilation systems if deemed necessary. In cases where there are ongoing challenges with damp and mould the council also may use environmental sensors to monitor and track humidity issues to help maintain safe, healthy homes ensuring issues are resolved pro-actively when data thresholds are consistently high over a period of time.

## 29.0 Drains and wastes

29.1 Care needs to be taken over what items are poured down sinks. Dispose of fat and oils in alternative ways and minimise foodstuff entering the drainage system. LBI are responsible for ensuring drainage stacks and underground drainage flow properly, but blockages to internal waste pipes are a tenant/leaseholder responsibility.

29.2 Residents must ensure that gullies on balconies etc are kept clear, particularly in the autumn when leaves may block them.

## 30.0 Tenants Improvements

30.1 A secure tenant has a legal right to make alterations and improvements to their home provided they obtain written permission from their local Area Housing Office before they carry out any works. You may also have to get permission from the council's Planning and Building Control departments before the Area Housing Office can consider your request.

30.2 The council will not unreasonably withhold consent when you make a request to carry out alterations or improvements to your home. However, the following points must be given careful consideration:

30.3 If you commission alteration or improvement works involving gas installations these must be undertaken by a registered Gas Safe contractor and work to electrical installations by a Competent Person registered and assessed by a UKAS accredited Certification Body. You must provide the council with the original certificate(s) issued by the contractor(s) on completion of their work.

30.4 You should not cover over existing access panels, hatches, ducts or ducting present in your home as part of any alteration or improvement without provide adequate access to them so they can continue to be used for inspections, repairs or servicing activities.

30.5 Where any proposed alterations involve penetrating through fire compartments, these must be suitably 'fire-stopped' to prevent the spread of smoke/fire. An alteration which reduces the structural fire protection of your home has a detrimental impact on the overall fire safety of your home and those living around you. An example of such an alteration may be the creation an open plan living space. Such alterations must be carefully considered by the council prior to any such alteration being permitted.

30.6 You will be responsible for any costs associated with asbestos testing, identification or removal works needed as part of your alteration or improvement project.

30.7 The council is not liable for any loss or damage of any improvements or alterations carried out by a tenant with or without the permission of the council to proceed with the works.

30.8 You will be responsible for any repairs, maintenance or replacement of the improvement or alteration that may be necessary. To complete a repair the council may have to remove or damage your improvement to gain access to an area behind your alteration. The council will not be liable for replacing your improvement or alteration as a result of this work.

30.9 At the end of your tenancy you may claim compensation for eligible improvements carried out with the council's consent.

30.10 At the end of the tenancy if unauthorised improvements are identified in your home you may be liable for the costs to the council of works needed to reinstate the property to its original condition.

30.11 For more information and guidance please refer to your Tenancy Conditions and always speak to your local Area Housing Office before starting any alteration or improvement works.

## 31.0 Inherited Improvement

31.1 Islington Council use the term 'inherited improvement' to describe an alteration or improvement that was made in your home by a previous tenant which you, as the current tenant of the property, signed to accept responsibility for when you moved into your home or took over the tenancy.

31.2 By signing to accept the alteration or improvement you become responsible for all repairs and maintenance related to the alteration or improvement or for its replacement if it is beyond repair. Without confirmation in writing the inherited improvement will be deemed the tenant's responsibility by the council.

## 32.0 Domestic Violence

32.1 The Home Shelter scheme is provided to residents suffering domestic violence regardless of their landlord or if they own their own home. As part of this scheme the council provides survivors of domestic violence with additional security measures and repairs which are related to incidents of domestic violence.

32.2 If you or someone you know needs to access the Home Shelter scheme you should contact the Housing Aid Centre or Islington Council tenants and leaseholders can access the scheme through their Area Housing Office. More information about support available for victims of domestic violence is available on the council website: [www.islington.gov.uk/policing-safety/how/domesticviolence/affected/breakthesilence](http://www.islington.gov.uk/policing-safety/how/domesticviolence/affected/breakthesilence)

## 33.0 Repairs service for residents affected by Anti-Social Behaviour

33.1 If your home has been damaged as a result of domestic violence, anti-social behaviour or harassment you must speak to your local Area Housing Office for advice and support. The council will need a valid crime reference number in order to complete at no cost to you repairs needed as a result of criminal damage caused to your property. More information about the support available to residents suffering domestic violence, anti-social behaviour or harassment is available on the council website: [www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/your-tenancy](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/council-tenant-services/your-tenancy)

## 34.0 Repairs service to properties managed by Islington Lettings

34.1 The council offers elements of the repairs service to private landlords that let their property through Islington Lettings, the council's social lettings agency. Landlords are charged for this service. More information about the repairs service offered is available on the council website: <https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/landlords>

## 35.0 Tenant Complaints and feedback

35.1 When things go wrong the repairs service aims to get them sorted quickly. If you are unhappy with the service you have received you can make a complaint by following the council complaints process. Information about the process is available on the council website: [www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-and-complaints-info](http://www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/comments-and-complaints-info)

35.2 Islington Council also like to hear when things go well. If you wish to make a complement about the service you receive or wish to make any other comments about our service you can also do this through the above page on the council's website.

35.3 The council uses learning from complaints, complements and other feedback received from residents to improve its service.

## 36.0 Safeguarding children and adults

36.1 All staff have a duty to report in timely way any safeguarding concerns about adults at risk or children at risk of being abused, neglected or exploited.

36.2 Staff have been instructed to:

- Dial 999 if the situation is urgent and the resident is at immediate risk of harm
- Deal with the immediate needs of the residents if they can
- Inform their line manager so that there is a record of what happened and what actions have been taken.
- The Line Manager/Team Leader will report safeguarding concerns to the Adult Social Service Access Team or Children's Services as soon as possible, but at the very least, on the same day.
- If the council think a crime has been committed, we will report this to the Police and it may be necessary to preserve evidence.
- Islington will refer non-urgent concerns to the Tenancy Management team at the relevant Area Housing Office.

## 37.0 Legal Disrepair

37.1 Tenants have rights and landlords have responsibilities in relation to the repair of a home and its surroundings. If a tenant has reported a repair that is deemed to breach a landlords responsibility (only some repair items are covered), and the landlord has failed to properly deal with it in a reasonable time frame, a tenant may lodge a claim of disrepair against the council.

## 38.0 Security

38.1 The council is obliged to ensure that an individual home is secure at all times. This means that all windows should be capable of being secured internally and that external doors can be closed and locked. This on occasion may mean that temporary arrangements are put in place pending the manufacture of new frames or doors.

## 39.0 Guarantees and warranties

39.1 Contractors the council use have guarantees and warranties for particular types of works they carry out for us, examples of types of work which are likely to come with a guarantee or warranty include installation of new roof coverings, windows or fire doors. The guarantees or warranties apply for a period after the new equipment has been fitted as set out in the contract the council have with the contractor.

39.2 If a defect or problem with the equipment or works that are covered by the guarantee or warranty happens before the guarantee or warranty expires the council will ask the contractor or supplier to fix the problem under the guarantee or warranty.

39.3 The conditions and timeframes for the contractor to respond to us will often be different to our standard repairs priorities and response times listed later in this guide. This sometimes means it takes longer to get the problem fixed under a guarantee or warranty.

## 40.0 Planned Programmes of Work

40.1 Islington Council aims to develop cyclical, planned maintenance and planned improvement programmes that minimise annual expenditure on responsive repairs and maintenance. Planned works often take place as routine preventative maintenance including within the area/Estate based approach and at defined time intervals. This is not covered by this policy however, information on such works is available on <https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/repairs-and-estate-management/major-works-and-improvements>

## 41.0 Data Monitoring

42.1 Equality data monitoring is used to assess the impact of council policies and practices upon different groups of residents, service users and staff. By gathering information on service users, the council can analyse the experiences of different groups and then take appropriate action. This information is used to inform the EQIA process.

## 43.0 Resident Engagement

43.1 Consultation with residents has been carried out to help form this policy. However, resident consultation is an ongoing process and feedback on this policy is welcome at any time. If you have any feedback, please send it through to [service.development@islington.gov.uk](mailto:service.development@islington.gov.uk)

### Explanation of key terms

**Appointment** - The service offers appointment slots during standard working hours during which we will attend to complete a routine repair. When you ask us to complete a routine repair we will offer you the next appointment slot we have available. For some repair jobs we need to join a number of appointment slots together because some jobs take longer to complete, for example installing a new bath. When we have to do this we are unable to provide much choice in the appointment slots we can offer you.

**Call agent** – these are the council staff that take the details of your initial report of repair problem. You can help them to diagnose the problem by explaining clearly what is broken or defective and where your home the problem is located. See the section on tips for other ways you can help.

**Contractor** – We work in partnership with a number of companies to deliver our service. Some contractors carry out specialist maintenance which our service cannot do itself, for example repairs to specialist equipment installed for disabled residents. Other contractors provide general back up for our service for example when we have high levels of demand.

**Cyclical maintenance** - is used to describe maintenance jobs and safety checks we carry out as part of a set programme, for example annual inspections of communal water tanks or lightning conductors attached to blocks of flats.

**Emergency repairs** - are repairs needed when there is a significant risk to the safety of residents or severe damage is being caused to the building due to an ongoing maintenance problem, for example a resident is trapped in a lift or there is a serious water leak.

**First time fix** – we aim to visit your home and fix your repair problem in one visit. We call this first time fix. We know this won't always be possible to achieve because repairs aren't always straightforward.

**Make Safe** – this means when we can only complete a temporary fix to an emergency problem on our first visit e.g. board up a broken window; turn off the

water supply to a leaking pipe. When we can only make safe, we will arrange an appointment to return and fully complete the job at a later time.

**Out of hours** - refers to the service the repairs and gas service provides outside of our standard working hours. During out of hours we provide an emergency repairs service only. For emergency repairs reported out of hours we will attend and “make safe”. If we are unable to fix the problem on the first visit we will arrange an appointment to return to fully complete the job during our standard working hours.

**Planned maintenance** - This is work that does not need to be carried out straight away, but which is beneficial for the long term upkeep of our buildings. Our ability to carry out this work is dependent on whether we have funding available. Examples of this type of maintenance is an external redecoration or gutter clearance programme.

**Repair operative/Gas engineer** – these are the council staff that will visit you to complete a repair job or servicing appointment.

**Responsive repairs** - is a term used to describe day-to-day repairs made to or around council housing properties.

**Routine repairs** – are repair jobs which are considered non-urgent as they do not pose a risk to health and safety. These repairs will be completed by appointment. We aim to complete these repairs on the first visit. There may be some circumstances when this is not possible.

**Scheduler planner** - these are the council’s staff that helps to co-ordinate how the service responds to your repair problem.

**Standard working hours** – for the repairs and gas service are 8am-8pm Monday-Friday, 8am-12pm Saturdays (excluding bank holidays).

**Surveyor/Gas quality assurance officer** – these council staff may have to visit your home to complete a survey before we can start a repair job when the cause of the problem is not clear or to check work which has been done.

**Urgent repairs** – are raised for problems that have a significant impact on a resident’s day-to-day living, for example no heating or hot water or total loss of drinking water.

**Void** – this is used to describe a council property which is currently empty and awaiting a new tenant. Our Voids Team are responsible for carrying out repair work to these properties to bring them up to our agreed voids standard so the property can be re-let. For the first 8 weeks following the start of a new tenancy the voids team and their contractors are responsible for any repairs to the property.