



St George Housing
REPAIRS POLICY
April 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy sets out St George Housing's (SGH) responsibilities and approach to the delivery of responsive repairs services to our customers.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The repairs service is one of our most important functions as a landlord and we need to do it well to achieve high satisfaction ratings from our customers. The responsive repairs service complements our programme of planned and cyclical maintenance to ensure our stock is well maintained, up to date and meets the needs of our customers.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 SGH is committed to its responsibility in maintain our homes to a decent standard for all our customers. keeping Customers, Staff, Contractors and Service Delivery Partners safe from harm is vital and we pledge to ensure that our properties are kept in adequate repair.

4. RELATED POLICIES

- Tenancy management
- Complaints
- Whistleblowing.
- health and safety
- GDPR
- Safeguarding
- No access policy

5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 Government legislation has an impact on how SGH manages repairs. Listed below are the key Acts which inform this policy approach to delivering our service.
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
 - Defective Premises Act 1972
 - Environmental protection Act 1990
 - Localism Act 2011
 - Equalities Act 2010

- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Party Wall Act 1996

- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 2004
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Sections 2, 3 and 4
- Occupiers Liability Acts of 1957 and 1984.
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

- 5.2 We comply with relevant statutory regulations covering construction, asbestos, water hygiene, electrics, gas safety and health and safety more generally. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System, introduced under the Housing Act 2004, is an important part of the regulatory framework governing our responsive repairs service.
- 5.3 We make sure that our homes comply with the Decent Homes Standard (as a minimum). This Standard was introduced by the Government in 2000 and updated following the Housing Act 2004. To meet the standard, homes must have modern facilities, be in a reasonable state of repair and be warm and weather proof.
- 5.4 We will therefore seek to replace and/or improve components and/or services to ensure properties continue to meet the Decent Homes Standard when we undertake responsive repairs on them.
- 5.5 This policy and associated procedures also comply with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Tenancy Standard.

6. **SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 This Policy applies to all SGH residents. It is also an over-arching policy, covering the whole business. It is important that all residents, staff, contractors and support provider partners are aware of their responsibility to report any incidents of disrepair to SGH.

7. **CUSTOMER AND LANDLORD RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 7.1 SGH tenancy and licensee agreements set out the contractual responsibilities for SGH and our customers. Reference should be made to individual tenancy agreements as these set out the specific contractual responsibilities for SGH and our tenants.
- 7.2 Appendix A details the respective repairs responsibilities of SGH customers living in social, housing homes with assured, secure tenancies, assured short hold tenancies or licenses. This should be considered as the SGH minimum standard for landlord and tenant responsibilities.
- 7.3 In cases where more than 6 repairs have been reported for a single property within a 6-month period, SGH may decide to instruct a surveyor to inspect the property prior to raising further works orders.
- 7.4 Where staff have reason to believe there are concerns for a customer's wellbeing in relation to a repair call, we take appropriate action in accordance with the relevant policies, such as safeguarding and domestic abuse policies.
- 7.5 Where we fail to meet our repairing obligations, we may face a disrepair claim. When dealing with such claims we will follow our disrepair policy and the Government's pre action protocol which sets out how claims should be dealt with.

8. **REPORTING REPAIRS**

- 8.1 All repairs can be reported by telephone during normal office hours. Repairs can also be reported at any time via our website or by email.
- 8.2 We operate an 'out of hours' emergency service every day of the year accessed via telephone or online.
- 8.3 We encourage customers to report repairs to us as soon as they have become aware of a problem. In scheme based services, where staff members are regularly present on site, repairs can be reported to a member of staff when they are on duty.
- 8.4 If a member of staff is made aware of a repair need, they will ensure that it is reported as soon as possible.

9. **REPAIR APPOINTMENTS**

- 9.1 All repairs, except communal repairs, are made by appointment with the customer at the time they report it, or sometimes through member of staff in scheme based services. We aim to minimise the time between a request for a repair and its completion.
- 9.2 The repair appointment will be at a time and date convenient for the customer, in line with our appointment offer below. We offer appointments for the completion of repairs and for any inspections required. The following options will be given as arrival times (not repair completion times):
 - **Morning:** Between 8am and 12pm
 - **Afternoon:** Between 1pm and 5pm
- 9.3 Customers will be informed about progress with their repairs through an agreed channel convenient to them including telephone, text messaging and email. .
- 9.4 If we are unable to keep to an appointment, we inform the customer as soon as possible and agree an alternative date.

- 9.5 We expect customers to provide us with access to carry out a repair at the appointed time. If the appointment cannot be kept, customers are asked to inform us at the earliest opportunity.
- 9.6 If there is no access and no contact from the customer, and after all methods of contact have been exhausted, the job order will be closed.
- 9.7 Where there are concerns for a customer's wellbeing and we can't gain access to the property, we take the appropriate action in accordance with our no access policy – see section 12 below.
- 9.8 In cases where a repair can be more cost effectively carried out as part of a programme of planned or cyclical works, we will consider this option and inform customers accordingly.

10. COMMUNAL REPAIRS

- 10.1 Communal repairs are carried out to entrances, halls, lifts, stairways, passageways, rubbish chutes, lighting, door entry systems and other parts provided for common use.
- 10.2 They may also be carried out on fencing and to other external structures which are the responsibility of SGH as the landlord. In supported housing schemes, this will also include any fixtures, fittings or facilities provided to residents as part of the service contract.
- 10.3 Some communal repairs in the same scheme/group of properties might be collated to be completed together (i.e. 'batched'). In such cases they would not be completed within the usual target. We will inform customers when we do this and the revised timescale for completion.

11. INSPECTION VISITS

- 11.1 Some jobs, including communal repairs, may require an inspection visit before the repair is arranged. These include:
- 11.2 where investigations to identify the problem are required
- 11.3 where previous repairs have not resolved the problem
- 11.4 where there are boundary or ownership issues
- 11.5 where there are potential policy implications (e.g. where a generic problem has been identified)
- 11.6 Inspections may also be necessary in other cases (for instance, as part of a stock condition survey)

12. EMERGENCY ACCESS

- 12.1 We have a no access policy and procedure in place which will be followed when we require emergency access to a property. This may be in order to carry out essential emergency repairs, to remedy a serious health and safety risk, or where there is reason to believe the customer is incapacitated or has died in the property.

13. EXCEPTIONS POLICY

- 13.1 SGH staff are required to follow this policy when assessing all requests for repairs to be completed. However, where it has been identified that a customer has a need that directly impacts on their ability to carry out a repair themselves, or if there are circumstances, conditions or risks that would require a quicker response, we will assess the case on its merits, and may agree to carry out the repair on their behalf or as an emergency.
- 13.2 Decisions to divert from the responsive repairs policy in these cases requires authorisation from the Operations/Scheme Manager or CEO.

14. REPAIRS CATERGORIES

14.1 Repairs categories are as follows:

CATERGORY	RESPONSE TIME
Emergency repairs - where there is an immediate danger to life or limb, major damage to the property, flooding, major electrical fault, heating (during October to March only) or hot water failure, or the property is not secure.	Make safe within 4 hours (for life threatening emergencies); All repairs completed within 24 hours
Routine repairs – non urgent work where the repair does not cause immediate inconvenience or pose any danger to occupants or the public.	20 working days from the date of report (excluding joinery, new windows and specialist works)

15. SERVICE QUALITY

15.1 We aim to consistently deliver our high quality responsive repairs in accordance with this policy. We operate a quality assurance framework to test compliance.

15.2 All staff delivering our repairs service whether employed or not by SGH will be identified as SGH and are expected to work in accordance with this policy. All our repairs staff will demonstrate strong customer care skills.

15.3 Our complaints policy allows customers to raise a complaint with us where our service fails to meet our standards.

Inspections carried out on completion of work (post- inspections)

15.4 We carry out a minimum of 10% of post-inspections of all jobs undertaken as part of the quality control of the service. They are carried out on a random sample basis and prioritised according to cost.

- 15.5 They are also carried out when a customer is dissatisfied because they believe:
- the repair carried out has not rectified the problem;
 - the quality of workmanship is not acceptable.
 - Completing repairs on the first visit
- 15.6 We aim to complete repairs on the first visit and will monitor our performance against this measure. Sometimes, during the course of a repair, additional works might be required.
- 15.7 We have procedures in place to ensure the repair is completed with our target timescales (see 14) and to the satisfaction of the customer. These procedures give us the flexibility to complete the repair in the first visit where possible without the need to make a new appointment.
16. **CODE OF CONDUCT**
- 16.1 SGH operates a code of conduct for our own operatives and external contractors who carry out repairs on our behalf. In addition, we take seriously any action by customers who harass or threaten to harass or use or threaten violence towards SGH staff, agents or contractors. We always take action to protect our staff where such circumstances arise. In extreme circumstances this may involve police action.
17. **IMPROVING THE SERVICE**
- 17.1 Feedback from customers on the quality of the service received is important to us to help in the continuous improvement of this service.
- 17.2 We are committed to working in partnership with our customers to achieve improvements in service delivery and performance. We will do this by tracking and analysing the performance of the repairs service, and by working with customers through a range of involvement initiatives for instance, mystery shopping, regional committees, satisfaction surveys, repairs and maintenance forums etc.
- 17.3 We will consult customers and external stakeholders on any revisions to this policy. Regular customer satisfaction surveys will be carried out following the completion of a repair.

17.4 We aim to deliver an efficient and effective business, demonstrating value for money to our customers with a high standard of service delivery provided at reasonable cost. We have a range of mechanisms in place to demonstrate and improve our service delivery, including benchmarking cost and performance data; market testing of the responsive repairs service against other housing associations and external providers; and undertaking internal business reviews.

18. **INSURANCE**

18.1 We are responsible for insuring the properties which we own. Any works that SGH is obliged to carry out as the landlord may be covered by the buildings insurance.

18.2 Customers, both tenants and licenses, are responsible for insuring their own contents.

19. **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

19.1 We are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination against customers. We will design and deliver our repairs service to remove barriers and meet the individual requirements of customers, for instance those who are vulnerable or living in Supported living accommodation.

20. **CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT**

21. Customer feedback will be used to provide insight into how we can improve our services. We will listen to our customers views to help shape a consistently effective repairs service.

22. **CONSULTATION**

23. 13.4 This policy will be reviewed in consultation with SGH Housing residents.

24. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

25. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years as required to consider changes in legislation.

Responsible officer: Operations Manager

Policy Author: Director of Governance

Policy version:1.0

Date of Board Approval: April 2023

Date the next review is due: April 2025

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26. **Appendix A- repair responsibilities for rental tenants**

- 26.1 This section applies to all properties owned and managed by SGH. In addition, some of our properties we own and manage may have a superior landlord, in this case some or all of the repairing responsibilities will be down to that landlord.
- 26.2 **Landlord Responsibilities:** we are responsible for keeping in repair the structure and exterior of a customer's home and the building in which it is situated.

This includes:

Exterior property

- Foundations
- Roof
- Outside walls and doors
- Window sills
- Window catches
- Repair or renewal of window fasteners on windows (both uPVC and timber)
- Repair or renewal of window locks on windows (both uPVC and timber)
- Sash cords
- Glazing putties
- Window frames

- Glass including necessary painting, for instance to frames (we will only replace glass if it is as a result of a crime and there is a crime reference number)
- Drains
- Gutters
- External pipes
- Chimneys
- Pathways, steps or other means of access
- Fence panels connected to a communal area or public right of way
- Garages and stores that are part of the property

INTERNAL PROPERTY STRUCTURE

- Internal walls
- Skirting boards
- Internal kitchen and bathroom doors and door frames, if there is a risk to health and safety
- Internal fire doors
- Catches for kitchen units
- Door jambs
- Thresholds
- Heated towel rails
- First three rows of wall tiles, including fire surrounds, grouting and mastic
- Post boxes (in a block of flats)
- Floors (but not floor coverings)
- Ceilings and plasterwork (excluding minor cracks, painting and decorating)
- Overhauling leaking or dripping taps (including mixers) to wash hand basin, bath and kitchen sink
- Pests. Where point of entry has been proven to be as a result of a design fault or damage to the exterior of the property
- Pests. Where an 'Environmental Health Notice' has been threatened or issued to SGH
- Pests in communal areas

26.3 Gas, water and electricity: We are responsible for repairing all leaks and will make good any damage in the surrounding area caused by a leak as part of the repair, including minor decorations if damaged. We are responsible for keeping in repair and working order installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity.

- Basins
- Sinks
- Baths
- Toilets
- Flushing systems and waste pipes
- Taps and washers
- Electrical wiring
- Gas and water pipes and taps
- Re-lighting boilers
- Water and space heaters
- Fireplaces
- Fitted fires
- Sockets
- Provision of additional electrical sockets
- Sealed LED lights
- Light fittings

26.4 Communal areas: We will ensure that the communal areas are kept in reasonable repair and are fit for use. This includes keeping communal area lighting and entry phones in working order.

27. **TENANTS RESPONSIBILITIES**

27.1 The We expect our tenants to.

- keep the inside of their home clean and in good condition.
- keep gardens and communal areas clean and tidy. This includes maintaining grass, plants and tree branches within the property boundaries so as not to cause a nuisance to other customers. It also includes not using communal

corridors, hallways or cupboards for storing personal items or dumping unwanted items.

- undertake minor repairs and avoid doing anything which may result in blockages to pipes and drains (e.g. disposing of fat, oil, sanitary ware, nappies etc. down toilets or in sinks)
- take responsibility for pest control, including vermin removal (rats or mice in the dwelling), wasp/bees nests, bed bugs and disinfestation, except where point of entry has been proven to be as a result of a design fault or damage to the exterior of the property.
- make lifestyle changes to resolve instances of condensation. Where condensation is the likely cause of any reported dampness, SGH will advise tenants of the action they need to take to deal with the problem and prevent further incidences.
- Interior and exterior of a property Door furniture
- Door locks and keys (we will only replace front door locks if the damage is the result of a crime, crime reference number must be provided)
- Fitting extra locks and catches
- Replacing damaged locks and the keys if you lose them
- House numbers, letter plates, letter boxes (to individual properties) and door knockers
- Draught exclusion, provided doors/windows fit reasonably
- Adapting doors to accommodate carpets
- Ease and adjust, and overhauling internal doors

Interior fittings

- Cupboard and wardrobe catches, hinges and doors
- Fitting extra catches and safety devices
- Kitchen units, unit doors, , hinges, drawers and runners
- Internal painting and decorating
- Internal window glass (unless it is a hazard to children or it is SGH' responsibility under fire regulations)
- Shelving, coat and hat rails
- Minor gaps between skirting and floors
- Plumbing in washing machines or dishwashers
- Maintenance of customer installed smoke detectors

Bathroom

- Bath panels
- Any wall tiling above the first three rows, including fire surrounds, grouting and mastic
- Shower heads
- Renewal of sealant around bath, wash hand basin, kitchen sink and showers
- Bath and basin plugs, chains and handles
- Bathroom cabinets, towel rails, toilet roll holders
- Mirrors
- Toilet seats and lids
- Cleaning and descaling of toilets, wash basins, baths and showers
- Clearing blocked sinks, basins, bath or shower waste pipes – unless a shared pipe
- Clear blockage located on tenant's side of waste pipework before entry to stack

Property maintenance

- Clothes lines, posts, tidy-dryers and rotary dryers
- Curtain rails
- Provision/replacement of dustbins
- Minor cracks to wall or ceiling plaster
- Tenant floor coverings. Where any floor covering needs to be removed when access is required to access pipework or other repair works, the customer must arrange for this to be removed, lifted and/or relayed
- General fixtures and fittings
- Pest control, e.g. vermin removal (rats or mice in the dwelling), wasp/bees nests, disinfestation (refer to general provisions above)
- Replace or repair any items (such as white goods, gas or electrical appliances) gifted to the tenant
- Cleaning of communal parts, except where specified as part of a service charge

Heating

- Maintenance of any fixtures and appliances not fitted by SGH

- Maintenance of any gas appliances not fitted by SGH
- Any tenant's fittings/appliances e.g. gas cooker, washing machine
- Setting heating controls on boilers
- Bleeding radiators
- Supplying and fitting cylinder jackets

Electrics

- Fitting TV aerials
- Plugs, lamps and tenant's own light fittings
- Changing light bulbs, tubes and fuses, unless sealed LED lights.
- Doorbells, doorbell wiring, batteries and bulbs (except in communal areas and entry phones)

Garden/exterior

- Drain gratings
- Gates, hinges and latches to gates serving individual dwellings
- Rubbish clearance
- Tenants own fences and sheds
- Cleaning basements and front areas
- Gardening at individual properties
- Garden maintenance including tree branches, hedges and lawn cutting (for individual properties)
- Refixing or replacing any type of fence panel to existing post and/or gravel board (except where the fence panel is connected to a communal area or public right of way)
- Chimney sweeping

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