



Clydesdale Housing Association Limited

Repairs and Maintenance Policy Review Focus Group Report – 26 August 2019

1. Introduction

This report summarises the key findings of a focus group discussion convened to review the Association's repairs and maintenance policy.

2. Methodology

The focus group was held in Lanark Memorial Hall at 6:30pm on Monday 26th August 2019.

The group was attended by 4 tenants, two of whom were from Lanark, one from Carnwath and one from Braidwood. Three tenants were male and one was female. Two were retired and two were in employment.

The focus group was facilitated by Lorna Shaw of Research Resource.

3. Key findings

The discussion reviewed the key principles of the repairs and maintenance policy section by section.

3.1 Aim of the repairs policy

In order to set the context for the discussion, it was highlighted to tenants that the aim of the repairs policy was as noted below:

We will carry out all repairs, which are necessary to:

- maintain the property in a wind and watertight condition;
- ensure that there is constant provision of services such as water, gas and electricity; and
- Maintain fixtures and fittings installed by us.

All tenants felt that this was appropriate and reasonable as the aim of the policy

3.2 Arranging Access

It was discussed that the policy was for:

Our contractors will arrange access, to carry out reactive repairs, on working days. A choice of morning or afternoon timeslots will be offered. Morning timeslots will cover 8am to 12noon and afternoon timeslots will cover 12noon to 5pm. They will contact tenants within 24 hours of the repair being reported.

Where more than one trade is required to repair a defect, the contractor will co-ordinate the work required and contact the tenant direct to agree suitable access arrangements.

If due to unforeseen circumstances a contractor is unable to keep the appointment, they will contact the tenant before the specific appointment time to explain the difficulty and to make an alternative appointment or access arrangements.

All tenants felt that this was appropriate and satisfactory. It was noted that the arrangement of repairs was a positive experience with contractors attempting to meet tenant requirements and being flexible within these, for example, one tenant was in employment so requested as early a time slot as possible. She was allocated the 8am time slot and the contractor had turned up as arranged.

Positive feedback was provided about the Association's current contractor and they felt that the attendance at repairs, within agreed time slots was good, with no experience of appointments having to be rearranged.

Tenants noted that they did feel that the policy could be enhanced by adding additional responsibility on the contractor to do the following when attending a repair:

- Show identification/ ID Badge
- Confirm why they are there
- Ask the tenant to confirm repair is complete and 'sign them out'

It was also recommended that contractors could have logos on their shirts and vans to help identify them and encourage tenants' feeling of security.

3.3 Prioritising Repairs

Repairs classification and timescales were highlighted to tenants:

Category	Type of repair	Overall timescale
Emergency repairs	To make safe or repair any defect/s that may deteriorate quickly into a health and safety issue or cause significant damage to the property if not attended to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend within 5 hours and make safe
Urgent repairs	To repair any defects that significantly detract from the tenant's use of the property and which would cause rapid deterioration if not attended to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and complete within 2 working days
Routine repairs	Any repairs which are identified as responsive repairs and which cannot be delayed until a future cyclical maintenance programme or planned programmed renewal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and complete within 7 working days
Right to Repair	Qualifying repairs as per legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1, 3 & 7 working days

Tenants were very happy with these timescales and felt that they were as they would expect.

The repairs policy contained a list of emergency and urgent repairs. These were felt to be reasonable with the exception of 'loose or detached banister or handrail' which it was felt should be an emergency repair in circumstances where the tenant was elderly or vulnerable as this could be a risk and result in a fall which could be serious for the tenant.

The discussion went on to note that there should be flexibility in the classification of emergency and urgent repairs with elderly and vulnerable tenants given priority and repairs which would be 'urgent' for most tenants, should perhaps be seen as 'emergency' for those who were more vulnerable.

3.4 Pre and post inspections

The criteria for pre inspections were all believed to be reasonable

The criteria for post inspections were generally believed to be reasonable although it was noted that the criteria of 'all completed repairs costing in excess of £750' being inspected was quite high and it was suggested that this could be lowered to £500. However, it was recognized that there could be a good reason for the £750 excess and that this should only be lowered after an evaluation of the cost of repairs compared to the cost of having someone coming out to inspect these repairs. This should not be done at further expense to the tenant.

3.5 Right to repair

Tenants were aware of their right to repair but had not had to use this. This was felt to be testament to the good and prompt repairs service provided by the Association.

3.6 Right to compensation for improvements

Tenants were aware of this as some had made their own improvements to their property and had been informed of this by Association staff. They felt this was a positive thing.

3.7 Repairs involving neighbouring homeowners

The policy on this was felt to be very important and it was welcomed that Clydesdale would carry out emergency or essential works first and then recharge homeowners afterwards.

3.8 Repairs Responsibilities

Appendix 2 of the policy which outlined Association and Tenant responsibilities for repair was reviewed. Generally tenants were happy with these with the exception of draught proofing. It was felt that this should be within the landlord responsibilities and not the tenant responsibilities. This was believed to be particularly important with a view to ensuring that Association homes are warm and affordable to heat and in line with the aim of ensuring that Association properties were wind and watertight.