



# Mid-Wales Housing Association - Policy

**Title: PROPERTY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE**

## **Policy Statement:**

Mid-Wales Housing is committed to providing a high standard of accommodation and a customer focused service to its tenants. In order to deliver this commitment in the most practical and beneficial way for the Association and its tenants, this policy document will define the Association's approach to the following:

- Ensuring that our housing stock continues to remain an asset to the Association through a long-term planned maintenance approach.
- That we consider specific requests for repairs on the basis of:
  - The health and safety of occupants of the property.
  - Our statutory and contractual responsibilities.
  - Our Asset Management Strategy and planned maintenance programmes.
  - The need to ensure our housing stock remains fit for purpose.

## **1. Repair and Maintenance Responsibilities**

### **1.1. Legal Responsibilities**

The Association will comply with its statutory<sup>1</sup> and contractual<sup>2</sup> responsibilities for maintaining its properties, which broadly state the Association will be responsible for:

- Keeping in repair the structure and exterior of individual properties.
- Keeping in good repair and working order installations for heating, water heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity.
- Keeping any common parts (e.g. in blocks of flats) in reasonable repair and fit for use by tenants and visitors to the property.
- Keeping the exterior of properties and any common parts in a reasonable state of decoration.

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<sup>1</sup> as contained in legislation.

<sup>2</sup> as contained in the Association's tenancy agreements.

## **1.2. Responsibilities where we have different forms of tenure**

Regardless of the form of tenure on which somebody occupies an Association property (e.g. Assured tenancy, secure tenancy, assured shorthold tenancy, licence agreement etc.) the Association will adopt the same level of repair responsibility.

Sold properties will have the repair obligations of both parties defined within the terms of sale.

## **1.3. Tenants' Responsibilities**

Tenants will be responsible for:

- Keeping the interior of the premises in good and clean condition and keeping the internal parts of the property in good decorative order.
- Making good any damage to the property caused by them or their visitors.
- Ensuring they seek and receive permission from the Association for any improvements or alterations to the property.
- Reporting any disrepair or defect for which the Association is responsible promptly to avoid any additional damage caused by delay.

## **1.4. Rechargeable Repairs**

Repairs for which the tenant is responsible, that are carried out by the Association will be recharged to the tenant in accordance with the Association's agreed "Rechargeable Repairs Policy".

## **2. Types of Maintenance**

### **2.1. Reactive Repairs**

Reactive repairs are repairs which need to be attended to as they arise. The Association will not prescribe any particular method of how reactive repairs are requested but will seek as much information on the nature of the request as possible in order to minimise the potential for unproductive work (e.g. having to visit the property on more than one occasion)

### **2.2. Planned Maintenance**

Planned maintenance works are works that are programmed to be undertaken at defined intervals in order to maintain the property, or to comply with the Association's legal responsibilities. There are three categories of planned maintenance.

#### **2.2.1. Programmed replacements and upgrades**

Repairing or improving properties in a pre-planned way – e.g. windows, kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, roofs etc. The Association will maintain a database of all scheduled planned replacements which it will use to develop its planned programmes. All replacements and upgrades will be subject to sufficient budgets being available. The replacement programme will link to the process of component accounting and the release of funds to ensure that the Association's stock is maintained in the long term.

### 2.2.2. Cyclical Maintenance

Carrying out repairs which are predicted to arise regularly, e.g. external decoration.

### 2.2.3. Servicing

Carrying out work to ensure that services operate safely and effectively - boilers, fire detection equipment, lifts etc

## 3. Property Maintenance Priorities

In providing a property maintenance service, it is important to prioritise works in order to ensure the following:

- That works involving a risk to the health and safety of occupants and/or that minimise the risk of further damage to the property receive the highest priority.
- That the Association's budgets are spent in the most cost efficient manner.
- That the Association's contractors are not overstretched to the extent that they are working inefficiently to the detriment of the Association and the contractor themselves.

The Association will therefore adopt the following priority order for the funding of its maintenance and repair works:

- Funding Priority 1 – emergency repairs.
- Funding Priority 2 – planned maintenance (including servicing of equipment).
- Funding Priority 3 – more urgent repairs and repairs to relets<sup>3</sup>.
- Funding Priority 4 – planned maintenance (cyclical and programmed replacements/upgrades).
- Funding Priority 5 – routine reactive repairs/estate improvement works

The above is a clarification of funding priorities. This is separate from the prioritisation of reactive repairs below.

## 4. Reactive Repairs

### 4.1. Reactive Repairs Definitions and Response Targets

The Association will adopt the following definitions and response targets for reactive repairs. With the exception of emergencies, the Association will aim to arrange repairs by appointment to suit its tenants. Therefore, meeting timescales for Repair Priorities 2 and 3, work will be of less importance than arranging repairs by appointment to suit the tenant.

<u>Priority 1 Repair - Emergency Repairs</u> <i>Repairs that pose a threat to the health/well-being of the occupants or will potentially cause further damage to the property if they are not attended to very quickly.</i>	Within 24 hours (for the emergency to be alleviated after which depending on the circumstances, the repair may become an urgent or routine repair).
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<sup>3</sup> Relets – properties coming vacant requiring some repair work prior to letting to a new tenant.

<p><b><u>Priority 2 Repair</u></b></p> <p><i>Repairs which could be a health and safety hazard but are not serious enough to be classed as an emergency.</i></p>	<p>Normally within five working days but may be longer by agreement with the tenant, and depending on the appointment to suit the tenant.</p>
<p><b><u>Priority 3 Repair</u></b></p> <p><i>All other repairs that are the Association's responsibility.</i></p>	<p>Within 30 calendar days. From time to time the Association will defer such routine repairs in order to batch works together for efficiency purposes (e.g. fencing etc.). Batched work will be undertaken within 90 days.</p>

#### **4.2. Out-of-hours Reactive Maintenance**

Through its contractors the Association will provide an out of hours emergency repairs service, in order to ensure the necessary works to alleviate an emergency can be undertaken outside normal working hours. The Association will channel these calls through an out of hours repair contact centre.

#### **4.3. Repair Requests**

The Association will not prescribe any specific means by which tenants should request repairs but will employ a range of options for tenants to make repair requests including:

- By telephone to the Association's office.
- In writing.
- By email.
- Via the Association's website.
- In person at the Association's offices.

When making a request for a repair, the tenant will be asked for as much information as possible about the problem in order that the repair can be carried out as efficiently as possible.

### **5. Planned Maintenance**

#### **5.1. Planned Maintenance Replacements**

##### **5.1.1. Planned replacement life cycles**

The Association has adopted a component life cycle replacement schedule which will be reviewed every three years in line with this Policy.

### **5.1.2. Maintenance of Stock Condition Data**

The Association will undertake a stock condition survey of every property every 6 years on a rolling programme. Survey data will be entered onto the Association's property database in the IBS system and will enable the Association to:

- Update stock condition and estimate component replacement dates.
- WHQS (see below).
- Inform future planned maintenance requirements.
- Inform the Association's Asset Management Strategy.

### **5.1.3. Planned Maintenance Programming**

The Association's Asset Manager will be responsible for assessing the scope and priorities for the planned maintenance programme. The Assessment will take into account the following:

- Condition reports and survey data accumulated on property components.
- Consultation with tenants through available systems.
- The collective opinion of the staff in the Asset Management and Housing Sections.
- The views and recommendations of relevant contractors within the collaborative working framework.
- The Associations commitments to meet obligations under any identified quality standards (e.g. WHQS).
- Any budget constraints.

The Asset Manager will produce an annual planned maintenance programme to be agreed by Operational Management Team alongside the annual production of the budget. The annual programme will also be presented to the Tenants' and Residents' Forum for information, and comment.

### **5.1.4. Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)**

The Association will prioritise planned maintenance works between 2008/09 and 2012/13 towards meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard in accordance with Welsh Government requirements.

## **5.2. Planned Maintenance Cyclical works**

The Association will adopt a six-year rolling programme of external and communal areas decoration with an interim "maintenance coat where necessary. All cyclical painting works will be done to such a standard that it will remain in sound condition for the six-year period.

## **5.3. Planned Maintenance Servicing and Safety Checks**

### **5.3.1. Gas appliances**

Gas appliances will be subject to a safety check by a Gas Safe registered contractor in accordance with the current policy.

### **5.3.2. Electrical Testing**

As a landlord we are obliged to provide our tenants with an electrical installation that is in good condition and repair and ensure that periodic inspection and testing is carried out. We will ensure that electrical installations are inspected and tested as follows:

General domestic installations	Maximum frequency of testing	10 years
Commercial installations	Maximum frequency of testing	5 years
Fire alarm installations	Maximum frequency of testing	1 year
Emergency lighting	Maximum frequency of testing	3 years

We will also inspect and test electrical installations every time one of our properties becomes empty and available for reletting.

Following each inspection and test we will ensure that our contractor provides us with a fully completed report.

### **5.3.3. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)**

We will ensure that all Mid-Wales Housing Association owned portable appliances used by members of staff are tested once every 12 months.

### **5.3.4. Fire and smoke detection equipment**

Smoke/heat detectors will receive an annual safety check and service.

### **5.3.5. Fire fighting equipment**

Fire extinguishers will receive an annual check and service.

### **5.3.6. Lifts**

Lifts will be subject to a six-monthly full service, and a six-monthly interim service.

### **5.3.7. Adaptations**

Specialist equipment (hoists, stair-lifts etc.) for which the Association is responsible will be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

### **5.3.8. Play Areas**

For all Association owned play areas, we will obtain an annual "Play Area Safety Inspection Report" from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA). Consideration of the report will include an assessment of potential risks identified. Following consideration of the report by the Asset Manager the Association will:

- Either undertakes any works required to ensure the continued safety of children using the play area.
- Or close the play area until such times as it can be made safe.

All play equipment on the Association owned play areas will be inspected every month by a member of the Association's Asset Management staff. Following each visit to a playground the staff member will complete a playground inspection sheet.

## **6. Use of Contractors**

### **6.1. Collaborative working**

MWHA is a founder member of the Undod Consortium of housing associations which was established to deliver efficiency in construction and maintenance performance through working collaboratively with selected contractors.

#### **6.1.1. Selection of contractors**

Due to the volume of work across Undod, Undod Framework contractors are selected using OJEU Procurement Regulations. Contractors will be selected using criteria agreed by Undod, a key element of which will be the ability and willingness to work in a collaborative manner.

#### **6.1.2. Contractor Code of Conduct**

In addition to the contractual terms that Undod Framework contractors sign up to in the Undod Framework Agreement, Undod contractors are required to comply with the Association's "Contractor Code of Conduct"

#### **6.1.3. Contractor auditing**

Contractor auditing and Inspections on completed works will be undertaken each month by:

- an agreed number of properties where responsive repairs have been completed;
- all void properties handed back for letting; and
- a selection of properties which have undergone cyclical redecoration and planned replacements.

In order to:

- inspect the works carried out to review quality;
- assess the tenant's satisfaction with these works and the contractor's approach,
- to examine contractor records in order to confirm that the charges are supported by the records and are reasonable for the works actually undertaken.

#### **6.1.4. Performance Management and Continuous improvement**

All Undod Framework Contractors are required to sign up to the Undod Framework Agreement within which performance management and continuous improvement are key

elements. The Association will manage the performance of contractors signed up to the Undod Framework as follows:

- A number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been established, which provide the basis on which contractor performance is measured. These may be different for different trades, but will include such aspects as:
  - Tenant satisfaction - (Metric PI11IM001).
  - Average time take to complete a Priority 1 Repair (Emergency) - (Metric PI11IM012).
  - Average time take to complete a Priority 2 Repair – (not Board Metric).
  - Average time take to complete a Priority 3 Repair– (not Board Metric)
  - Appointments made and kept - (Metric PI11IM013).
  - Repairs completed first time - (Metric PI11IM014).
  - Void property turnaround - (Metric PI11IM005 & 006).
- The Association will keep records of performance by which to monitor the KPIs, some of which will be based on information provided by the contractor, which will be verified via the contractor auditing (Section 7.1.3). Tenant satisfaction will be measured by tenants' feedback questionnaires.
- The Association will hold regular meetings with contractors to review contractor performance against the respective KPIs and will discuss any ways in which each other's performance may be improved in relation to future projects. Targets for performance improvement will be agreed at these meetings, as will changes to the KPIs necessary to drive improvement in service delivery.

## **6.2. Use of Non-Undod Contractors**

From time to time it will be necessary to use non-Undod framework contractors for certain works (e.g. for servicing or repair of specialist pieces of equipment in adapted properties), or occasions when it is clearly not in the interests of the contractor or the Association to use an Undod contractor. Occasions when the Association may consider using non-Undod contractors include:

- When the contractor does not have the capacity to undertake the required works.
- When there are performance/capacity issues with the contractor that would mean the Association is not confident in the contractor's ability to undertake the works.
- When there is a clear economic reason to not use an Undod contractor (e.g. when there is defined grant funding available and the Undod cost model exceeds the figure)
- The Association is not satisfied with the price it has received from the framework contractors.

**Non Specialist Work.** The decision to not use an Undod contractor will follow procedures agreed by Undod as follows:

Stage 1 – approach other Undod framework contractors.

Stage 2 – approach contractors who did not make the final Undod framework but were deemed capable of joining the framework.

Stage 2 – approach contractors/seek prices from the open market, following the Association’s procurement policy and tendering procedures.

## **7. Customer Service**

### **7.1. Tenant Participation**

As property maintenance is an area of the Association’s work that has a direct impact on tenants, the Association will provide opportunities for tenants to participate in the following aspects of the maintenance service delivery in accordance with this Policy.

- The policy (and any future amendments to it) will be discussed with the Tenants’ & Residents’ Forum and other representative groups, in order to seek the views of tenants on how the Association proposes to deliver its maintenance service.
- Contractors and Asset Management staff will be invited to attend the Tenants’ and Residents’ Forum meetings when appropriate property maintenance topics are on the agenda.

### **7.2. Customer Feedback**

Tenant satisfaction with the repair and maintenance service will be continually monitored to ensure the high standard expected by our tenants is delivered.

Tenants will be invited to comment on repairs undertaken through a standard tenant satisfaction survey form that will allow the Association to compare its own performance and that of its contractors against our Undod partners, and other benchmarking clubs. The questions used may vary from time-to-time but will seek to assess the quality of the customer experience for tenants.

When a repair is ordered a tenant satisfaction survey form will be sent out with a free post return facility, to maximise the likelihood of response.

When a response is returned showing any dissatisfaction the Association will where appropriate contact the tenant and ensure that poor workmanship is corrected with minimum disruption to the tenant and to resolve any other difficulties experienced reported on the survey form.

Compensation may be paid in line with the Association’s Compensation Policy

### **7.3. Tenant Choice**

Whilst it can be difficult to offer tenants any choice in respect of reactive repairs, where possible the Association will be flexible in relation to opportunities to offer tenants choices in respect of, for example, colour schemes. The Association recognises that for the tenant it is their home and they should be afforded the opportunity to personalise their home.

In relation to planned maintenance works there is more scope for offering opportunities for choices of colour and styles of e.g. kitchen colours and styles. As far as is practicable, the Association will offer a range of colour and/or style options within its standard specification when undertaking cyclical painting and planned replacements of kitchens, bathrooms, external doors, and other elements where there is an aesthetic value in the replacement.

#### **7.4. Decanting**

See separate current Decant Policy.

#### **7.5. Appointments and Customer Care**

In most instances, contractors are required to make an appointment with the tenant prior to calling to carry out the repair, and to avoid “cold calling”.

- Contractors are expected to make an appointment for all repairs except emergency repairs where it would be impractical.
- Contractors may make “same day appointments” where this provides a better service to tenants. For instance when the contractor happens to be in the vicinity of the property and it is convenient for the tenant.

Developing a good appointment system is a major objective for the Association, and it will strive to improve the appointment service during the life of the current contractor framework.

#### **7.6. Vulnerable Tenants**

The Association recognises that some of its tenants are more vulnerable than others, and expects its staff to give priority to repairs requested by more vulnerable tenants where doing so specifically mitigates their vulnerability. The following are examples of where priority will be given:

- Repair of heating systems for the elderly and families with young children (under five years), during cold weather/the winter.
- Repair to locks, doors, windows where the tenant is an individual who has recently fled domestic violence.
- Repairs to physical aids for disabled tenants
- Repairs to emergency call alarms where fitted.

This list is not exhaustive, and should be treated as indicative of the circumstances where a greater priority will be afforded.

### **8. Relets**

#### **8.1. Relet Standard**

The Association will bring all void properties up to its agreed relet standard to ensure customer satisfaction and efficient use of stock whilst minimising rent loss and the need for reactive maintenance. Where possible, repairs will be carried out around the incoming tenant.

#### **8.2. Relet Times**

In order to minimise rent loss the Association will monitor its void property turnaround times, setting targets for the various stages between a tenancy termination and a new tenancy starting.

## 9. Key Performance Areas

### Metrics

- Average Reactive Repair Cost - (I11M007).
- WHQS (Achievement) – (PI11IM015).
- Stock Surveys Undertaken– (not Board Metric).
- Tenant satisfaction - (Metric PI11IM001).
- Average time take to complete a Priority 1 Repair (Emergency) - (Metric PI11IM012).
- Average time take to complete a Priority 2 Repair – (not Board Metric).
- Average time take to complete a Priority 3 Repair– (not Board Metric).
- Appointments made and kept - (Metric PI11IM013).
- Repairs completed first time - (Metric PI11IM014).
- Void property turnaround - (Metric PI11IM005 & 006).

<b>Strategic Aim:</b>	To ensure the Association: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complies with all relevant legal obligations in relation to the maintenance of its housing stock.</li> <li>• Provides a consistent, customer focused and cost effective property maintenance service.</li> </ul>
<b>Reference No:</b>	
<b>Date of Issue:</b>	November 2011
<b>Review Date:</b>	November 2014
<b>Departments/ Sections Affected:</b>	Asset Management/Housing Services and Finance
<b>Approved By:</b>	Board January 2012
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Asset Manager
<b>Statutory Compliance:</b>	<p><b>Relevant Legislation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landlord and Tenant Act 1985</li> <li>• Housing Act 1988</li> <li>• Defective Premises Act 1977</li> </ul> <p><b>Welsh Government Delivery Outcomes</b></p> <p>1.5.1 Associations should ensure that homes are let in good condition.</p> <p>1.5.2 Associations should maintain homes in good condition by ensuring that planned and cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are carried out effectively.</p> <p>1.6.2 Associations should apply all key expectations equitably to customers who require support, tailoring service delivery to meet their specific needs.</p> <p><b>Welsh Government Regulatory Framework 2010</b> We repair and maintain homes in an efficient, timely and cost effective way.</p>
<b>Strategic Risk Factors</b>	<p><b>Risk Area 8 – Property Maintenance</b></p> <p>8.1 Major Repairs Strategy – long term repair planning.</p> <p>8.2 Attainment of WHQS.</p>

	8.3 Tenant dissatisfaction. 8.4 Rectification – value for money.	
<b>Equality Impact Audit</b>	<i>How does/will this policy ensure needs are met fairly, particularly with regard to race, gender, disability etc?</i>	No groups or individuals are expected to be affected adversely.
	<i>Is it felt that this Policy might affect different groups adversely. If so what is the justification for this, and is it legally permissible?</i>	No groups or individuals are expected to be affected adversely.
	<i>Have any representative groups in the locality been asked for their opinion and if so what was the outcome?</i>	No.
<b>Tenant Engagement</b>	<i>How does/will this policy ensure the needs of tenants are met?</i>	This object of this policy is to maintain a safe and well maintained environment for tenants and other stakeholders.
	<i>How is it felt this Policy will impact on the rights and obligations of tenants?</i>	This strategy will not affect tenants' rights and obligations.
	<i>Have tenants been consulted and were the outcomes of that consultation taken into account when considering the introduction of this Policy?</i>	TaRF on 3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2011 and at subsequent meetings with a consultative sub group. The opinion of tenants was that they did not wish to go to just emergency and non-emergency repairs. Therefore, the three categories of priority have been left in the policy.