Cheshire West & Chester Council

Council Housing

Responsive Repairs Policy

Issue date: 30 July 2024
Review date: 29 July 2027



Cheshire West and Chester

1. Management Information

Approval Date:	30 July 2024
Next Review Date:	29 July 2027
Policy Owner:	Janet Lawton, Head of Council Housing Management Service
Responsible Service Area:	Council Housing Management Service
Responsible Director:	Director of Economy and Housing

2. Introduction

This policy sets out the Council's approach to the delivery of responsive repairs and related housing management services. It explains the framework within which the service will operate and how it supports the Council's wider housing responsibilities.

Cheshire West and Chester Council adopts a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and is committed to identifying, investigating and addressing housing hazards that present a significant risk of harm to residents. All reported cases of damp and mould will be inspected and addressed, and any other hazards identified through repairs activity will be assessed and managed in accordance with statutory requirements and Council procedures.

3. Aim of Policy

The aim of the policy is to:

Deliver an effective and efficient responsive repairs and maintenance service to home and communal areas.

Maintain value for money in service delivery

Respond to tenant needs with the objective of completing repairs right the first time.

The policy also responds to

- The Housing Act 2004
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Awaab's Law 2025
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Identify, assess and respond to housing hazards that present a significant risk of harm, ensuring appropriate action is taken to protect residents and maintain safe homes.

4. Strategic context

This policy helps the Council to meet the following local and national strategic aims.

Social Housing Regulations Act 2023 – Consumer Standards

- Quality and Safety Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Awaab's Law

CWAC Borough Plan 2024 – 2028 - sets out how the Council will work with all its residents to build a stronger future where the Council and residents all play their part in creating thriving, caring and sustainable communities.

The Borough Plan has six missions as follows:

- Starting well - The best start for the borough`s children and young people, with improved opportunity, a healthier start, greater resilience in families and the best possible support and care when it is needed.
- Tackling hardship and poverty - More people feel more financially secure as the causes and impact of hardship and poverty are addressed by working alongside residents.
- Resilient people living their best lives - Local people are enabled to flourish, be healthy, happy and independent for longer in supportive communities.
- Opportunity in a fair local economy - Local people and businesses contribute to and benefit from a strong and fair local economy.
- Neighbourhood pride - Residents live in well maintained, connected and safe places with good and affordable homes.
- Greener communities - Individuals, public services and businesses take action to move to tackle the climate emergency, achieve net zero, protect the natural environment and adapt to the impact of climate change.

Together with Tenants Charter | Cheshire West and Chester Council
Council Housing Asset Management Strategy

5. Definition and legislation

Responsive repairs will be responded to according to their level of priority, such as whether they are an emergency, urgent or routine. Where circumstances are appropriate or necessary, such as a tenant with support needs, a repair may be escalated to a higher priority.

Housing Hazard

A defect, deficiency or condition within a dwelling or associated area that may cause harm to the health, safety or wellbeing of an occupier or visitor.

Awaab's Law Hazard

A housing hazard that presents a significant risk of harm to a tenant or member of their household and falls within the scope of Awaab's Law. This includes damp and mould, excess cold, excess heat, falls hazards, structural collapse, fire hazards, electrical hazards and domestic hygiene, sanitation and food safety related hazards.

Definitions and detailed guidance on types of damp and mould are set out in the Council's Damp and Mould Policy.

Awaab's Law

The Council will comply with the requirements of Awaab's Law and associated statutory guidance. Where the Council becomes aware of a housing hazard that presents a significant risk of harm to a tenant or member of their household, appropriate action will be taken to investigate, assess risk, implement any necessary interim safety measures, communicate with residents and undertake remedial works in accordance with statutory requirements.

Relevant hazards may include damp and mould, excess cold, excess heat, falls hazards, structural collapse, fire hazards, electrical hazards and domestic hygiene, sanitation and food safety related hazards.

The Council will ensure that housing hazards identified through repairs, inspections, tenancy management activities, complaints, surveys or other service interactions are appropriately recorded, assessed and escalated in accordance with Council procedures.

In assessing housing hazards, the Council will take account of individual household circumstances, including vulnerabilities, health conditions, disabilities and any reasonable adjustment requirements.

6. How the policy will be delivered

Access

As a standard, three attempts will be made to arrange an appointment for a non-emergency repair. The Council operates a no access procedure for the responsive repairs service which stipulates that a calling card will be left where access is not gained at an appointed time and date. If access is not gained at the agreed appointment slot the card notifies the tenant that the repair job is cancelled and details of how to rearrange are provided. The Council will monitor properties where no access for day-to-day repairs occurs to ensure a property does not fall into disrepair.

Communication

Tenants will receive an acknowledgement by text or letter, sharing the reference number and appointment details. We also send a reminder notification prior to the appointment.
If a repair cannot be completed within the stated timescale, for example, if materials must be specially ordered, large-scale works or to be progressed as investment work outside of this policy, the contractor will inform the tenant.
This policy applies to all Council housing properties and communal areas managed by us.
We repair and/or replace small to medium components on failure due to wear and tear or tenant misuse. To ensure components are not prematurely replaced, regular cycles for the servicing of equipment, inspection and testing required by regulations will be carried out to the decent homes' standard.

External Utility and Infrastructure Failures

The landlord is responsible only for services, installations and assets within its ownership or control. Where a service failure is caused by a utility provider, statutory undertaker, telecommunications provider, or other external infrastructure operator, the landlord's published service standards and repair timescales may not apply. The landlord will provide reasonable assistance and information where practicable but cannot guarantee restoration times, updates, or outcomes that are controlled by third parties.

Reporting Repairs

We want Council repairs reporting process to be easily accessible and simple to follow. Customers and their representatives can report a repair in several ways.

- Via our website
- My tenancy + app
- Contacting the customer service center on 0300 123 7724

Appointments

To accommodate tenants needs a choice of time slots are offered, which includes:

- Morning or afternoon
- All-day
- Appointments that avoid the school run
- Emergency repairs are not arranged, and we aim to attend in 24 hours of the reported emergency

If these times are not convenient, we can arrange a time that works best for the tenant.

Repair Priorities

- **Emergency repairs:** within 24 hours -
- **Urgent repairs:** within 7 working days

- **Routine repairs:** within 20 working days
- **Batched repairs:** as part of our capital investment programme or within 100 working days

In accordance with Awaab's Law time scales for Mould and Damp are as follows

- Staff will investigate any potential emergency hazards and, should the investigation confirm any emergency hazards, the Council will arrange to undertake any relevant safety work as soon as reasonably practicable. Staff will ensure that the investigation and any work arising from the same will take place within 24 hours of becoming aware of the hazard
- An inspection will be booked in within 10 working days, and this will be undertaken by a trained member of staff.
- The Council will produce a written summary of investigation findings - for all standard, emergency or renewed works and provide this to the tenant and leaseholder within 3 working days of the conclusion of the investigation.
- The Council will complete relevant safety works and take steps to begin any further supplementary works to prevent the hazard from reoccurring within 5 working days of concluding the investigation all works must begin within 12 weeks.
- Staff will keep tenants and leaseholders updated at each stage and provide information on how to stay safe
- Staff will keep accurate records of reports, investigations, decisions and works to evidence compliance
- Following the inspection, there are several remedial actions that will be taken to alleviate any issues:

    - Advice and support to remedy the issues
    - Minor repairs to be raised, such as repairing extractor fans.
    - Major works to be raised, such as damp-proof courses

- The Council are committed to addressing minor related issues to damp and mould in a timely manner. All damp work will be completed within 12 weeks.

The Council will maintain appropriate records of reports, investigations, decisions and actions taken to demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements.

The Council will not attribute damp and mould solely to lifestyle and fail to act. Everyday moisture-creating activities are not a reason to refuse investigation or remediation. Where a potential Awaab's Law hazard is identified, an appropriate assessment will be undertaken to determine the cause, level of risk and any action required.

We will endeavour to ensure that responsive repairs are completed in one visit, ‘right first time’ and arrange appointments at the first point of reporting, for all non-emergency internal and external repairs.

Responsive repairs will be responded to according to their level of priority, such as whether they are an emergency, urgent or routine. Where circumstances are appropriate or necessary, such as a tenant with support needs such as a severe disability, terminal illness, children under 2 years of age or residents requiring medical equipment reliant on utilities a repair may be escalated to a higher priority.

Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs can be reported 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Outside of normal working hours the service will as a minimum make the property safe and secure. We will make safe any emergency repairs within 24 hours or one working day.

Emergency repairs include:

- Total loss of electric power
- Unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting
- Total loss of water supply
- Total or partial loss of gas supply
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
- Heating or hot water not working between 31st October and 1st May
- Blocked/leaking foul drain or soil stack
- Toilet not flushing (if there is only one toilet in the property)
- Leak from water pipe, tank or cistern
- Insecure external window, door or lock
- Tap cannot be turned

Urgent Repairs

Urgent repairs will be undertaken within 7 working days and can be reported via online methods 24 hours per day, and non-digital methods between operating hours.

Urgent repairs include:

- Partial loss of electrical power
- Partial loss of water supply
- Heating or hot water not working between 1st May and 31st October
- Blocked sink, bath or basin
- Leaking roof
- Rotten timber flooring or stair tread
- Door entry phone not working
- Extractor fan not working

Routine Repairs

These are repairs that are not unsafe, but if left for a long period of time may get worse and become a hazard. This may include loose taps, faulty guttering, or minor plumbing repairs.

Batched Repairs

Batched repairs are bigger jobs that need extra planning before the work can start. This might include checking the repair first, ordering materials, manufacture of made to measure outside doors and windows, or arranging specialist contractors. Due to this, these repairs can take longer than everyday repairs.

Examples of batched repairs include:

- Replacing windows and outside doors.
- Fitting specially made items, such as custom doors, cupboards.
- Large plastering jobs in several rooms or over large wall and ceiling areas.
- Planned roof repairs that are not urgent.
- Large outdoor works, such as repairing paving or footpaths.
- Other major repairs that need specialist materials, equipment, or contractors.

We will keep you updated on the progress of your repair and let you know when we expect the work to be completed.

Follow-on works

Follow-on works will need to be arranged where a repair cannot be completed because the job evolves into more work than initially anticipated and requires more time to complete or if the materials are difficult to source and need to be ordered.

Contractors

All the contractors we use in our services have been audited to ensure that they have the relevant competencies for the work approved to undertake and where a contractor is undertaking responsive repairs, they will be held to the services standards described in this policy.

Pre-Inspections

The Council will carry out pre-inspections for repair requests for large and high-cost repairs, where the scope of works needs to be clarified such as plastering and roofing.

Where a potential housing hazard is identified during a pre-inspection, the matter will be appropriately recorded, assessed and referred in accordance with Council procedures.

Post Inspections

The Council will carry out inspections to support the quality delivery of the responsive repairs service. We will carry out post inspections on completed work through home visits, telephone calls and the review of photographs at desktop level. We will also post inspect any repair subject to negative feedback.

Where a post-inspection identifies a housing hazard, recurring defect or wider safety concern, appropriate action will be taken to investigate and address the issue.

Right to Repair

Right to Repair under Section 96 of the Housing Act 1985 gives tenants the right to have certain urgent minor repairs carried out where the repair may affect health, safety, or security.

If the Council does not finish a repair within the target time, nor complete the repair after a second request, tenants may be entitled to compensation. Please see our Complaints policy and Compensation policy for further information.

Reasonable Adjustment

The Council committed to providing excellent customer services and ensuring that we better understand and meet the needs and requirements of our customers.

We aim to do this by providing fair, equitable and inclusive services. Where necessary or appropriate, we will make reasonable adjustments if it helps our customers to access and receive an appropriate standard of service to meet their need. Refer to Reasonable Adjustment Statement.

Tenants Responsibility

The Council will publicise repairs and maintenance which are the tenant's responsibility. The Tenant is required to Promptly report repairs, defects or housing hazards that may affect the condition, safety or security of the property.
Where it is identified that tenants have caused damage to the property or undertaken unauthorised alterations, we will proactively seek to recover the costs incurred from tenants to rectify the damage and/or issues identified. We understand that tenants are unable to carry out works and we are flexible, where we are advised a tenant is unable to carry out these repairs, this will be reviewed on an individual basis. Works that are tenant responsibility are updated on our website but include:

- Toilet seats
- Batons to fix curtain rails
- Curtain rails
- Repairs to domestic appliances such as washing machines
- Bath panels
- Sink, basin or bath plugs
- Chips to baths or wash hand basins
- Unblocking of external gullies (except communal)
- Work due to lost keys such as lock changes
- Repairs to internal doors and doorframes
- Skirting boards/tiles
- External meter cupboards
- Floor and wall tiles

- Replacement of electrical fuses
- Current tenants home improvements
- Paths except those to main entrances or required to access bin areas
- Fixtures and fittings installed by the current tenant
- Decoration, including hairline cracks. We also do not carry out redecoration internally following internal repairs

Fencing and Gates

It is your responsibility to maintain any fence that divides your home from your neighbour's as per your tenancy agreement.

- You agree to keep any yards, paths, and garden (where they form part of your home) tidy and in good order and the grass cut and keep any hedges, dividing fences forming part of your home in good order and repair.

A dividing fence as a rule of thumb:

- If it divides your home from your neighbour's, then you are responsible for maintaining it
- If it divides your home from a public area, then we are responsible for maintaining it: a public area is a road, footpath, park, or other area that is open to members of the public.

Rechargeable Repairs

The Rechargeable Repairs Policy sets out the circumstances in which tenants will be recharged for repairs and explains the arrangements for payment and conditions that must be met before works are carried out.

Health and Safety

The Council operate comprehensive and robust policies, procedures, and assurance systems to ensure that all building works it commissions are carried out in accordance with regulatory requirements and best practice. These policies, procedures and assurance systems will be continuously monitored and updated to reflect changes to standards. Information on how we are meeting these will be published separately to this policy.

Works will be completed in accordance with relevant legislation, safety standards and professional practice.

The Council will maintain arrangements for the identification, assessment, monitoring and remediation of housing hazards that present a significant risk of harm. This includes appropriate communication with residents, consideration of vulnerabilities and effective joint working between relevant services.

7. Equity and reasonable adjustment statement

We value diversity and work to create an inclusive environment for customers and staff, where everyone has access to the same opportunities. We welcome our responsibility to comply with equalities legislation and regulatory requirements that relate to equity, diversity and inclusion and aim to do more. Through our activities we aim to remove systemic barriers to equal opportunities and eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within our organisation.

We are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. As such, we will endeavour to understand and make any reasonable adjustments required for customers in line with our Reasonable Adjustment Statement and the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment provided will be recorded and kept under active review.

8. Related Documents

- Legionella Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Tenancy Agreements
- Leases
- Asbestos Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Fire Policy
- Gas Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Reasonable Adjustment Statement

9. Equality Analysis

Results of EA / Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impacts	Inform that this policy can be provided in alternative formats. Inform about the ongoing equality and diversity training for staff in the delivery of this policy.

See appendix 1 for full Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.

10. Consultation and Business Intelligence

The policy was created in consultation with the Council`s tenants leaseholders and staff.

11. Monitoring and review

The Council Housing Management Board has responsibility for the monitoring and review of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years starting from the date it is approved and adopted.

12. Approval and Review History

The approval route for all policies and procedures is via the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning who has delegated powers for policy approval from the Council`s Executive Cabinet.

Date	Version	Approved by
29/07/2023	V1	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
30/07/2024	V2.1	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
22/09/2024	V2.2	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
28/05/2025	V2.3	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
05/11/2025	V2.4	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
22/05/2026	V2.5	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
14/07/2026	V2.6	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
29/10/2026	V2.7	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning

13. Document Revision History

Date amended	Version	Key Changes
	1	Original Version

	1.2	Revision following tenant feedback • Added in cycling for servicing would be to the decent homes standard. • Expanded the ways tenants can contact us. • Added where circumstances are appropriate or necessary, such as a tenant with support needs, a repair may be escalated to a higher priority. Added relevant documents in the 'Related documents Section' to be clearer on tenants' responsibilities and regulatory compliance.
16/06/2024	2	• Deleted clause stating we do not clean mould to reflect change of approach. • Clarification to statement about internal decorations, confirming that redecoration is not carried out following internal repairs. Added timescales for damp inspection and follow on works
20/06/2024	2.2	Revision following tenant feedback- inform on exception of bank holidays within opening hours information
22/09/2025	2.3	Revised version to take into account the insourcing of the housing management service from ForHousing.
05/11/2025	2.4	Revised to take into account Awaab's Law 2025
22/05/2026	2.5	Policy revised following insourcing of housing management services, updates to revised service structure and contact information. No substantive changes have been made to the policy.
10/07/2026	2.6	Amendments to clarify Fence and Gates responsibility in line with the tenancy agreement
29/10/2026	2.7	Updated to reflect Phase 2 of Awaab's Law. Clarified arrangements for identifying, recording and referring wider housing hazards that may present a significant risk of harm and strengthened links to the Council's wider hazard management processes. Additional information added to clarify position for external utility and infrastructure failures.