Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy

The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy sets out Dartford Borough Council's approach to the housing repairs and maintenance service provided to Council tenants and leaseholders.

Update 2026

DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Policy covers the housing repairs and maintenance service provided by Dartford Borough Council ('the Council') to tenants and leaseholders. It applies to works in individual properties and communal areas of housing land.

1.2. The development and update of this Policy was undertaken in consultation with representatives of the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum (see Section 18 for more information about the Forum).

1.3. The Policy aims to ensure that tenants and leaseholders continue to receive a high standard of service focused upon the main areas of repairs, maintenance and safety compliance that the Council undertakes. The Policy also identifies areas of repair that are the responsibility of tenants and leaseholders.

2. RELEVANT LEGISLATION, REGULATION, AND POLICY

2.1. Legislation and regulation

This policy and its delivery is intended to be compatible with the Council's obligations consequent to all relevant legislation and regulation, but not limited to:

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Technical Guidance HSG 274 - Legionnaires Disease
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 & HSG 264 Asbestos: The Survey Guide
- Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System)
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Safety and Quality Consumer Standard 2024
- The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025

2.2. Policy

This policy is intended to be compatible with the following Council housing policies:

- Housing Statutory Maintenance and Compliance Policy

- Fire Safety Policy
- Asbestos Management Policy and Plan
- Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy for Council Tenanted Properties
- Water Safety Management Plan and Policy
- Compensation for Improvements Policy
- Disabled Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants
- Housing Recharge Policy
- Major Works and Service Charges Policy for Leaseholders
- Neighbourhood Management Policy
- Vulnerable Adults Housing Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

3. REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. What tenants can expect when they move in

General and property standards – the Council maintains and lets properties to certain minimum standards of condition (see Appendix A for a list of general and property standards).

In some cases, repair works may not have been fully completed at the time a property is let. In such cases, any outstanding repairs that are required will be completed within an agreed timescale.

A member of the Council's Housing Team will contact new tenants to make a follow up visit once the tenancy has started to ensure that tenants have settled into their new home and to resolve any outstanding issues and obtain feedback on the standard of the property.

During the tenancy – the Council has a statutory duty to undertake certain areas of repair works in accordance with Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. The Council's responsibilities for repairs are further set out in the Tenancy Agreement along with the repair responsibilities of tenants (see Appendix B for a full list of Council and tenant repair responsibilities).

3.2. Council and leaseholder repair responsibilities

The Council is the landlord of the block and estate for leasehold properties and is responsible for keeping the structure of the building, the common parts of the block and any external communal areas in a good state of repair.

Leaseholders are responsible for all repairs to the inside of the property as set out in the Lease Agreement.

The Council will consult leaseholders about contracts (qualifying long term agreements), and certain works and/or major repairs (qualifying works), for which the leaseholder will be charged a proportionate amount. The Major Works and Service Charges Policy for Leaseholders sets out the policy to payment methods, advice and help available for leaseholders who receive a Major Works invoice.

If a leaseholder sub-lets a property, they should inform the Council of this, as it is legal requirement to ensure the gas equipment within the property receives an annual safety check (see Section 5).

3.3. Contents and buildings insurance

The Council recommends that tenants and leaseholders obtain contents insurance to cover their personal belongings in the home against deliberate, malicious, criminal or accidental damage. Buildings insurance is covered by the Council.

4. THE REPAIRS SERVICE

4.1. The Council's Housing Repairs Team is there to assist tenants and leaseholders with queries about housing repairs and arrange for contractors to carry out those repairs that are the responsibility of the Council.

4.2. The Council will aim to deal effectively with requests for those repairs that are the Council's responsibility. Once the Council has decided what works are required, a date for completion of works will be agreed with the tenant. Most repairs should be completed first time but there may be cases where a repair will need to be inspected by a Council Technical Officer beforehand to determine the scope of works. Examples of these types of repairs are ground works, specialist works and structural repairs.

4.3. Reporting repairs

Tenants and leaseholders are responsible for reporting any repairs, which fall within the Council's responsibility. Repairs can be reported by telephone, in person, via email and online, and in writing (see Appendix C for contact details for the Repairs Team).

4.4. Repair priorities

Every repair reported to the Council is given a priority rating. This indicates the urgency of the repair and the timescale for completion (see Appendix D for the priority categories and timescales).

Timescales for certain repairs are set using the Government's Right to Repair Regulations 1994.

4.5. Appointments

The Council offers an appointment system for all routine repairs which includes appointment slots on Saturday mornings and Wednesday evenings to maximise choice for tenants.

4.6. Keeping residents informed about repairs

The Council sets out to communicate clearly, and respond quickly to requests for repairs. The Council acknowledges repairs requests promptly, giving confidence that the issue will be managed.

Both of the Council's main contractors for reactive and planned works in respect of repairs and gas have processes in place to keep tenants up to date and informed of repairs, including appointment letters/emails/SMS text messages, as well as SMS reminders 72 hours and 24 hours before appointments.

The Tenant Portal also allows tenants to check the progress with their repair requests.

4.7. Out of hours emergencies

The Council operates an emergency out of office hours service on 0345 634 1212. The service is provided between 5.15pm on a normal working day and 8.00 am the next working day from Monday to Thursday, and on Friday from 4.45pm to 8.00am on Monday. The service is provided 24 hours a day at weekends and during public holidays.

The out of hour's service has two fundamental aims:

a) The making safe of services and securing properties
b) The re-commissioning of those essential services where practically possible, dependant on the availability of resources, with a particular emphasis on prioritising heating repairs for elderly and vulnerable tenants

In some situations it may only be possible to attend and make the problem safe and the repair will need to be completed during normal working hours.

Where a call is received which does not meet the criteria for an out of hour's emergency visit, tenants will be advised that they will be contacted the next working day in order that a repair can be logged and an appointment agreed.

4.8. Communal repairs

The Council will undertake a rigorous repairs regime of all of its communal areas and estates. In undertaking repairs to communal areas, the Council will use its best endeavours to ensure that best value is achieved in maintaining these areas. This may involve some works being packaged and dealt with on a planned maintenance basis. All repairs which are identified as being required to avoid causing or likely to cause a health and safety problem will be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

The Council will carry out regular estate inspections and ensure that any repairs needed are raised on relevant priorities for that type of repair.

4.9. Contractors Code of Conduct

All repairs and maintenance contractors are required to adhere to the Council's Contractor's Code of Conduct (see Appendix E). The Code of Conduct outlines the standard of service that all contractors are expected to deliver to residents when visiting properties to carry out repairs and maintenance works.

5. COMPLIANCE CHECKS AND WORKS

5.1. The Council must identify and meet all legal requirements that relate to ensuring that homes and communal areas have risk assessments for statutory health and safety compliance, and where relevant an identified programme of remedial actions.

5.2. **Gas safety**

The Council appoints a Gas Safe registered contractor to maintain and service all gas appliances within the Council's own housing stock. A three star contract provides fully comprehensive cover for boilers and systems and includes an annual service and gas inspection.

The Council has a statutory duty under the provisions of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out safety checks on a minimum 12-month cycle. Tenants are **legally required** to allow access into their homes for these works to be carried out.

5.3. **Electrical safety**

All engineers working on electrical installations will be NECEIC registered and must provide proof of their registration prior to undertaking works for the Council. All engineers visiting residents' homes must show both their personal identification card and NICEIC registration card prior to starting works.

The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 requires landlords to ensure electrical systems are maintained safely throughout a tenancy but does not state the duration of inspection intervals.

BS7671 Requirements for Electrical Installation, recommends inspections of domestic electrical system not later than 10 years since the last inspection. The Council will meet this standard as a minimum. However, although not a legal requirement, the Council has adopted the approach of undertaking inspections no later than 5 years from the date of the last inspection and a programme of 5 year testing is underway.

Where the electrical test identifies category 1 and 2 failures, (those which pose an immediate risk), the engineer will either;

- Rectify the issue whilst on site or;
- Plan these works with you urgently
- Decommission the system and immediately report to the Council

Electrical testing and remedial works are a mandatory requirement.

5.4. **Fire safety**

The Council carries out the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and ensures that Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's) are carried out.

Fire safety is a joint responsibility and residents need to ensure that communal areas are kept clear, and that sensible precautions are taken within the home to prevent accidental fires.

The Council completes person centred fire risk assessments where appropriate. Information regarding emergency access and evacuation will be discussed in detail to determine if additional support or assistance is required.

If living in a block of flats, a fire action notice will be displayed in the communal area, setting out what action tenants should take in the event of a fire. Tenants should prepare and have a clear plan of what to do if a fire occurs.

There are a number of fire safety measures installed by the Council to protect residents, these include; alarm systems, fire doors, emergency lighting, signage and smoke ventilation. These are serviced and maintained regularly but tenants must report repairs to these where identified.

5.5. **Alarms**

Fire alarms inside flats – Smoke detectors are vital to keeping tenants safe if a fire occurs. Alarms will detect the presence of heat or smoke and will sound loudly to let tenants know that they may need to evacuate the home.

The Council will provide a smoke detector on each level of the home as a minimum, however a 5 year programme of enhancement is well underway and as a result all homes will benefit from an additional smoke detector in the most habitable room (often the lounge) and a heat detector in the kitchen.

Communal fire detection and alarm systems – A number of housing scheme buildings have a communal alarm system, with smoke detectors in the communal area, as well as manual call points. The alarm will alert residents of a fire in the communal area, and any residents in the communal area must immediately evacuate the building and not re-enter until told it is safe to do so.

Tenants will receive fire safety advice and specific guidance on the alarm system to their home, during the tenancy sign up and viewing process.

5.6. **Water management**

The Council carries out regular water risk assessments for all hot and cold water systems to ensure it is maintaining a hygienic water supply to prevent waterborne diseases such as Legionnaires' Disease. All assessments will be undertaken by qualified assessors who are members of the Legionella Control Association.

The purpose of each assessment is to identify any potential sources of risk and their potential harm, reflecting on the use of the building and its occupancy type.

All actions identified will be programmed as part of the Councils Scheme of Control.

Tenants are encouraged to regularly run taps and showers to allow a good turnover of water to prevent bacteria increasing, and to report any concerns about water hygiene or if the hot water system is not working correctly to the Repairs Team.

5.7. Asbestos

In common with most other authorities and private sector landlords, the Council owns properties, which may contain asbestos.

The Council carries out asbestos surveys on all of its residential housing stock. In addition to the above, asbestos surveys to all of the communal and common areas of low rise properties have been completed. The asbestos surveys were carried out by an independent asbestos consultant in line with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 & HSG 264 Asbestos: The Survey Guide.

All asbestos removal works are carried out by a fully licensed asbestos company in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

Tenants must not undertake works or alterations to Council properties without permission (as covered under section 11). Asbestos containing materials pose no risk unless they are damaged or disturbed in such a way that asbestos fibres become airborne. The Council will need to review its asbestos register prior to any works or alterations being approved.

If there is any reason to suspect that there is any damaged asbestos in a property the Housing Repairs team should be contacted immediately.

5.8. Communal lift safety

All works and servicing to lifts will be undertaken by qualified lift engineers who hold an NVQ3 in lift engineering as a minimum.

All lifts will have a working emergency call system and will be programmed to return to ground automatically in the event of a fire or alternatively fireman switches will be installed which allow for manual intervention by the fire brigade to ground the lift.

All lifts will be serviced annually, and a maintenance check will be undertaken every 6 months. All breakdowns, including out of hours, which involve a person trapped in a lift will be attended within 4 hours.

Where a lift breakdown is reported, but no one is trapped, contractors will attend within 4 hours to identify the fault.

All lifts are subject to a 6 monthly inspection regime by the Council's insurer. This is in line with LOLER (Lifting operations and lifting equipment regulations) 1998 regulations.

5.9. **Damp, mould and condensation**

The Council's Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy for Council Tenanted Properties sets out how the Council will address and respond to reports of damp, mould and condensation.

Tenants should report any issues of damp, mould and condensation to the Council where the following questions may be asked:

- Are rooms ventilated by opening windows or trickle vents and keeping doors closed whilst cooking or drying clothes?
- Are there tide marks along the skirting boards?
- Where are the damp and mould areas, are they high or low?
- Is there water pooling on the windows or sills?
- Are airbricks or vents unblocked and open?
- Is there a constant low background heating?
- Do you have working extractor fans in the bathroom and kitchen?
- Do you have any leaks in the property?
- Is there constant airflow around the room by removing furniture away from the walls?

The Council will then assess the answers given and check the property history and previous reports to see if the problem was visible during the summer months. A pre-inspection of the property will be arranged to diagnose the cause of the issue.

Where mould has grown, caused by condensation, the Council will provide tenants with mould and wash kits to clean the area. Where tenants may need assistance to carry out this task because of, for example, age or disability the Council will instruct its contractor to complete the mould wash for them.

Tenants will also be provided with an advice leaflet and directed to the Council's website at https://www.dartford.gov.uk/maintenance/damp-condensation where there is a link to a helpful video: 'Help Reduce Mouldy'. The video will take tenants through the steps to help minimise damp and mould in their home.

If, after all investigations and the pre-inspection find the problem is not caused by condensation and is a structural issue, the necessary repairs and interventions will be arranged.

5.10. **Allowing access to carry out works**

The Council, under Section 240 of the Housing Act 2004, can apply to the Magistrates Court for a Warrant of Entry should a tenant not allow access to the property to carry out the works to ensure that the property is safe and compliant under the corresponding legislation. The Warrant remains valid until all works are undertaken and can be granted in connection with the following areas:

- Annual gas servicing

- 5 yearly electrical installation check
- Installation of a fire door in a block of flats
- Installation of smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms
- Access to a loft space for a Legionella water risk assessment (the property with the loft hatch will be accessed).

6. AWAAB'S LAW

6.1. The Council must comply with the requirements introduced under Awaab's Law, which states social landlords must address all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants in fixed timeframes.

6.2. An emergency hazard is defined as a hazard that poses an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety of the occupier and which could cause immediate harm to the mental or physical health or safety of tenants if not addressed quickly. Under Awaab's Law, emergency hazards must be fixed within 24 hours.

6.3. Emergency hazards include, but are not limited to:

- Gas or carbon monoxide leaks
- Broken boilers
- Total loss of water supply
- Electrical hazards such as exposed wiring
- Significant leaks
- Broken external doors or windows that present a risk to home security
- Prevalent damp and/or mould that is having a material impact on a tenant's health
- Significant structural defects or disrepair

6.4. The Council's Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy sets out in further detail the specific requirements regarding damp and mould hazards which the Council must comply with.

6.5. Full guidance on the current requirements of Awaab's Law can be found on the Government website.

7. PLANNED MAINTENANCE

7.1. As part of the Council's ongoing commitment to investing in its properties, a programme of home improvements is delivered across the borough.

7.2. The Council aims to continue to maintain the government's Decent Home Standard by focusing on bathrooms, rewires, roof and boiler replacements.

7.3. The Council also carries out smaller programmes of work which will include internal redecoration, structural repairs, fascia and soffit replacements and door entry systems.

8. COMMUNITY PROTECTION WARNINGS AND NOTICES

8.1. The Council has an obligation to ensure all of its properties are safe, habitable and fit for purpose. To do this effectively, tenants have certain obligations contained within their tenancy agreements, which must be adhered to.

8.2. The Council, under Section 47 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 can issue Community Protection Warnings (CPNs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs) to tenants and leaseholders. The following list gives some of the reasons why the Council may issue these.

- If a tenant uses violent or threatening behaviour to Officers of the Council or their contractors
- If access is not allowed to clear rubbish that is a health and safety hazard
- If a tenant carried out unauthorised alterations to the property that may breach health and safety or building regulations
- If a tenant does not report a repair that may have a detrimental effect on the property, e.g. a leaking roof.

8.3. If a tenant or leaseholder is in receipt of a CPN for any of the above, the Council can carry out works without the tenant or leaseholders' consent, on any land that is open to the air (i.e. an overgrown garden, dumped rubbish in communal space/locality etc.). The Council's contractors have a right to enter the land to the extent reasonably necessary for the works and charge for the cost. On completion of the works, the tenant or leaseholder will have to pay for the related costs. This can include staff time and administration costs.

8.4. Where the work is inside the property, the Council must obtain the consent of the tenant or leaseholder. Where the Council can evidence that it tried, but failed, to contact the tenant or leaseholder, consent is not necessary. Where this situation arises, the Council may gain forced entry to the property under legislative or other powers available to them.

8.5. Before any indoor work is carried out, the Council will issue a Notice to the tenant or leaseholder giving details of the work to be carried out and the estimated cost.

9. CHARGEABLE REPAIRS

9.1. Where wilful damage or neglect of the Council's property by a tenant, their family or a visitor results in the Council having to replace or repair items, the tenant will be charged the full cost of the repair. This sum will need to be paid in full to the Council before any repairs are undertaken, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

9.2. The following are examples of work where a charge could be made. The list is not exhaustive.

- The property is not left in an acceptable state when the tenant leaves. For example substantially damaged or missing fixtures and fittings

- Removal and replacement of kitchen units, worktops and tiles when the tenant leaves, as a result of the application of vinyl wrapping to which tenants are advised against using on surfaces
- Replacing broken glass (unless a crime number has been provided)
- Forced entry into a property and/or changing the locks (unless a crime number has been provided)
- Clearing of rubbish from a property or from council land where it can be shown as belonging to a current or former tenants
- Sending a contractor to carry out a repair where the tenant with instructions could have easily resolved the repair over the phone.

9.3. If a chargeable repair is carried out, an invoice will be raised and the following administration charges will be added to the total amount payable.

Recharge costs £	Administration charges £
0-100	10
101-250	20
251-500	40
501-750	50
1001 and above	100

9.4. Further information regarding rechargeable repairs can be found in the Housing Recharge Policy.

10. RIGHT TO REPAIR

10.1. Tenants may be entitled to claim compensation if a repair is on the list of qualifying repairs which the law states have to be completed within certain timescales and those timescales are not met, as set out in the Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994.

10.2. Qualifying repairs, up to a value of £250, are urgent works that can affect health, safety or security.

10.3. Urgent qualifying repairs are normally fixed within 48 hours.

10.4. Appendix D sets out further information on the right to repair categories and timescales.

11. LIKE FOR LIKE REPAIRS

11.1. If an item is beyond repair and needs to be replaced, this will be carried out on a 'like for like' basis unless there is a more financially viable option. There are occasions where the Council may not replace on a like for like basis due to a particular item no longer being available or if there is a more practical solution. This will be discussed with the affected tenant before the work is carried out.

11.2. If a part of a tenants' kitchen or bathroom needs to be replaced, the Council will attempt to match it with what the tenant already has. If this is not possible,

the Council will seek to provide the nearest possible match. The Council will not replace all of a tenants' kitchen units or bathroom suite in the event that an exact match is not available.

12. RIGHT TO BUY

12.1. If a tenant applies to buy their home through the Right to Buy (RTB) scheme, the Council has a legal obligation to maintain their property during the RTB application process. However, works will be restricted to mandatory and emergency repairs only.

12.2. Once a RTB application has been submitted by a tenant and until the sale of the property is completed, the Council is required under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 to carry out the following:

- Emergency repairs.
- Urgent health and safety repairs.
- Repairs required to meet statutory obligations.
- Gas, electrical, fire safety and compliance works.
- Repairs needed to prevent damage to the property.
- Works required under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
- Right to Repair qualifying repairs where applicable.

12.3. Tenants will be removed from any upcoming cyclical and planned maintenance programmes once a RTB application has been submitted. Non-urgent repairs such as dripping taps, loose internal doors or cracked plasterwork will generally not be carried out and only at the Council's discretion.

13. IMPROVEMENTS AND ALTERATIONS

13.1. Tenants on secure and existing flexible tenancies[1] can carry out improvements to their home, but only secure tenants may be compensated for any improvements made. Introductory tenants do not have the right to carry out improvements to their home.

13.2. All tenants must contact the Council first to ask for an 'Alteration Request Form' for permission to carry out alterations before any works take place (these can be obtained from the Housing Officer). Failure to obtain the Council's permission to carry out works may result in tenants paying for the cost to rectify works or asked to return the property to its original condition.

13.3. Some improvements may also need planning permission or building regulations approval from the Council and the tenant is responsible for obtaining these. Any permission given by the Housing Officer for planned works is not planning or building regulations permission and this may still need to be sought.

[1] The Council ended the granting of flexible tenancies in June 2021

Important: Please note that any agreed improvements or alterations to a property will then be the responsibility of the tenant, not the Council, for any future maintenance and repairs that are required.

13.4. Any value that is added to the property as a result of major improvements will be excluded from the price paid if tenants exercise the Right to Buy.

13.5. If tenants go ahead with works after permission has been refused, they will be breaking the conditions of their Tenancy Agreement, which may result in court action.

13.6. **Secure tenant's right to compensation for improvements**

A statutory 'Right to Compensation' came into effect on 1st April 1994 and the Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994 applies to improvements carried out by secure tenants after this date. Tenants with secure (lifetime) tenancies may be able to claim compensation for certain improvements that have been made when the tenancy ends.

The compensation is calculated to take into account wear, tear and depreciation.

Tenants can claim compensation for the cost of materials (but not appliances such as cookers or fridges) and labour costs (but not their own labour). Internal decoration (such as painting or wallpapering) does not qualify for compensation. Compensation cannot be claimed for professional fees (such as architects), or the cost of any relevant planning permission or consent under Building Regulations.
All claims must be made not more than 28 days before or 14 days after a tenancy ends. Compensation will not be paid if written consent from the Council, for the improvement work(s), was not given/obtained.

Further information regarding compensation for improvements can be found in the Compensation for Improvements Policy.

14. DISABLED ADAPTATIONS

14.1. Recommendations for any new adaptations are made to the Council by the Occupational Therapy Bureau and decisions are made in accordance with the Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants.

14.2. The Council will maintain any adaptation of fixed equipment providing that it is still required to meet the needs of the disabled household member for whom it was provided. This only applies to equipment supplied by the Council.

14.3. Semi-portable equipment supplied by the Council will be removed where it is no longer required but structural alterations will remain and will be maintained as part of the property. Where a repair is required to a minor or semi-portable adaptation that is no longer required by a household member, the adaptation will be removed.

15. DECORATION SCHEME

15.1. The Council operates a Decoration Scheme which is open to tenants where all members of the household are 65 years or over, or to tenants who are physically disabled and living independently.

15.2. The Council will provide the labour to complete the decoration of one room every five years. All materials must be provided by the tenant. Where a property is under occupied the main bedroom, living area, kitchen and bathroom and hallway will be considered by the Council for redecorating. Spare rooms will not be considered. Tenants can apply for the scheme by contacting the Repairs Team.

16. HANDYPERSON SCHEME

16.1. The Council operates a Handyperson Scheme which is a free service to tenants who are 65 years or over, or tenants who are disabled, or tenants who are living in housing schemes. Where there is an occupier in the home that could carry out the work, then the tenant will not be eligible for the scheme.

16.2. The scheme offers help with small DIY works. All materials must be provided by the tenant. Tenants are allowed a 1 hour slot per month for the handyperson service. This time cannot be built up or backdated. The handyperson will do as many different jobs as they can do in a 1 hour slot however these must be specified when booking the appointment. Tenants can apply for the scheme by contacting the Repairs Team.

17. CHAPERONE SCHEME

17.1. The Council operates a female Chaperone Scheme, which enables tenants to have a free chaperone to attend and oversee repair works if required. Requests for the Chaperone Scheme can be made by contacting the Repairs Team.

18. VULNERABLE PERSONS

18.1. The Council aims to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access and benefit from its services, but realises that, for some tenants who are vulnerable, barriers may exist which may prevent participation.

18.2. The Council aims to prioritise non-emergency repairs for elderly and vulnerable tenants wherever possible (for example heating and hot water) where the nature of the repair could risk the health or well-being of that person or household.

18.3. Further information on how the Council's Housing Service supports vulnerable residents can be found in the Vulnerable Adults Housing Policy.

19. SAFEGUARDING

19.1. Dartford Borough Council is committed to meeting its statutory and moral duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people under 18 years of age and adults at risk who are the recipients of its services and/or activities. Further information about the Council's role and approach to dealing with safeguarding issues can be found in the Safeguarding Policy (Children and Adults).

19.2. The Council's contractors or staff members will report any safeguarding concerns to the team and/or manager to take the appropriate action. This may include referrals to key partner agencies such as Social Services, Police and other agents. The aim is to support the individual and/or household members to enable them to maintain their tenancy.

19.3. Where a tenant or a member of the household is potentially putting the household, neighbours or community at risk of harm from works undertaken with or without the Council's permission, the Council can take immediate action to remedy the issue.

20. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

20.1. The Dartford's Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum works in partnership with the Council to monitor and improve the delivery of its housing services. The Forum attends monthly contract monitoring meetings and acts as a consultative body for various aspects of the Council's services. (For more information, call the Resident Involvement Officer on 01322 343682 or email rio@dartford.gov.uk).

21. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

21.1. To help achieve the Council's aim of ensuring continuous improvement in the services it provides and to ensure that it meets all statutory obligations, the Council has put in place systems and processes which will allow it to monitor and evaluate the performance of its contractors.

21.2. The Council regularly monitors service standards and the performance of its contractor and appropriate action will be taken if the service works are not performed to the required standard.

21.3. The Council collects transactional satisfaction survey data following the completion of a repair. The following tenant satisfaction measures are also collected and published on an annual basis, which include measures on performance on keeping properties in good repair, maintaining building safety, and responsible neighbourhood management:

Keeping properties in good repair
(RP01) Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
(RP02 - 1) Proportion of non-emergency repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale

Keeping properties in good repair
(RP02 – 2) Proportion of emergency repairs completed within the landlord's target timescale
(TP02) Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service
(TP03) Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete most recent repair
(TP04) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that the home is well maintained
Maintaining building safety
(BS01) Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out
(BS02) Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out
(BS03) Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out
(BS04) Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out
(BS05) Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out
(TP05) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that the home is safe
Responsible neighbourhood management
(TP10) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained

22. COMPLAINTS

22.1. If a tenant or leaseholder is not satisfied with the level of service they have received, the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure can be followed. Complaints leaflets are also available from the Council offices.

22.2. The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted if further advice and support is needed on making a complaint to the Council.

23. DATA PROTECTION

23.1. The Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR regulate the processing of information relating to individuals, which includes the obtaining, holding, using or disclosing of such information.

23.2. The Council needs to collect and use certain types of information about its service users in order to carry out its everyday business and to fulfil its objectives and its statutory functions.

23.3. The Council's:

- Data Protection Policy sets out how it will protect special category and criminal convictions personal data; and

- The Housing Services (landlord and tenant) Privacy Notice explains that the Council collects personal information to administer these services.

24. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

24.1. The Council is committed to welcoming and valuing diversity, promoting equality of opportunity and tackling unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The Council, in delivering this policy, will have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and ensure that no individual is discriminated against based on their sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, race, religion, belief, disability or age.

24.2. The Public Sector Equality Duty is a duty on the Council and that responsibility cannot be delegated to a contractor/service provider and is a continuing duty.

24.3. A Customer Access Review has been undertaken to assess the equality impact this policy will have on affected persons with protected characteristics. The review concluded that the Policy will have an overall positive impact as it provides a transparent, proportionate, fair and consistent approach to the repairs and maintenance service that reflect the Council's commitment to equality of access for all tenants and leaseholders and takes account of the needs of vulnerable people.

25. REVIEW

25.1. This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.

APPENDIX A

List of Dartford Borough Council's general and property standards (applicable to empty properties made available to let)

In general

- The outside of the property will be clean, tidy and secure
- The property will be structurally sound, weather tight and in a safe condition
- Gullies will be cleared and repaired where required
- Windows and doors will be secured and handles will work properly. Keys will be provided where applicable
- New locks will be fitted to the front and back doors
- Communal door keys/fobs will be provided
- Boundary walls, fencing and gates will be safe and secure
- Sheds will be cleared and keys provided

Inside the property

- Safety checks on the electricity and gas will be carried out
- Interior of the property will be cleaned to a basic level
- The property will have full central heating
- Balustrades, handrails and stairs will be left secure
- Plasterwork will be in sound condition
- All pipework will be sound and free from leaks
- Polystyrene tiles will be removed
- All flooring will be safe and in a fair condition

Decoration

- The condition of the decoration will vary by property. The Council may provide decorating vouchers (dependent upon the condition of the existing decoration) to contribute towards the cost.

The kitchen

- The property will have a cooker point and a gas bayonet fitting
- Cupboards will be cleaned and in serviceable condition
- Units will be installed if there is less than one wall unit and one floor unit

- Where possible, space will be available for a fridge/freezer and a washing machine with plumbing and drainage. Due to space restrictions, standard white goods may not be suitable and the tenant may have to use slim line appliances
- Four double sockets with a minimum of two located above worktop height will be provided

The bathroom

- All fittings will be left clean and in a fair condition
- The toilet will be cleaned and de-scaled and there will be a new toilet seat
- Tiling and grouting will be left clean and sound
- Seals around the bath and sink will be left clean and in a fair condition

APPENDIX B

List of Council and tenant repair responsibilities (tenant responsibilities highlighted in yellow)

REPAIR	Council's responsibility	Tenant's responsibility
Bath panels	√	
Baths, hand basins and toilets	√	
Bath seals and three rows of splashback tiles	√	
Bathroom – repairing cracks or chips in sinks, bath below water line	√	
Bleeding the radiators	√	
Blocked sinks, basins, baths & WCs	√	
Carbon monoxide detectors (electrical mains supply only)	√	
Carbon monoxide detectors (testing and battery replacement)		√
Concrete floors (not including floor tiles)	√	
Cupboard drawers	√	
Cupboard door catches, handles and hinges, and drawer handles	√	
Damp and mould (see Section 5 for areas of responsibility)	√	√
Deliberate damage that you, or people living with you, have caused		√
Disconnecting and reconnecting cookers unless part of the Council's Planned Works Programme		√
Doors (communal only)	√	
Door entry systems	√	
Doors – internal doors, door furniture and carpet strips		√
Door frames	√	
Doors – external doors	√	
Drainage - gully drains which conventionally serve kitchens and bathrooms (except private sewers and lateral drains which are the responsibility of the water companies)	√	
Electrical consumer unit (fuse box)	√	
Extractor fans	√	
Electric storage heaters	√	
Electrics – standard electrical wiring, sockets and light fittings	√	
Fencing – to match existing if previous is Council owned. Where no fencing exists, the boundary will be marked using 1.2m high on concrete posts for back and front boundary and the same for back garden side boundary incorporating 2 no. 1.8m gossip fence. For rear side fences adjacent to public roads or footpaths, 1.8m high close board fencing on concrete posts will be used.	√	
Fireplaces and fire surrounds (if specified by a Gas Fitter, in poor condition which is likely to be a hazard to the tenant or household or the old back boiler has been removed)	√	
Floor tiles unless confirmed as containing asbestos. Vinyl sheeting unless fitted as part for the Decent Homes Programme or as part of a disabled adaptation.		√
Foundations	√	
Garages and outbuildings (Council owned)	√	
Gardens (communal only)	√	
Garden ponds		√
Gas fires (Council owned only)	√	
Gas meter and the gas supply		√
Gas pipework inside the home	√	
Gas servicing (yearly landlord safety checks)	√	

REPAIR	Council's responsibility	Tenant's responsibility
Gates (communal only) (tenants are responsible for their own gates)	√	
Gate posts	√	
Glazing (unless a crime number has been provided)		√
Guttering and downpipes	√	
Hard standings unless provided as part of the Council's Disabled Adaptations Programme		√
Hot water cylinder jackets		√
Immersion heaters	√	
Internal decorations unless part of the Older Persons Decoration Scheme		√
Keys – additional or replacement to home		√
Keys – additional or replacement to shared doors		√
Letterbox	√	
Light bulbs – all bulbs including kitchen and bathroom (unless Council LED fittings have been installed to the kitchen or bathroom)		√
Lighting to communal areas	√	
Locks – additional security		√
Locks – replacement if a crime number is provided	√	
Overflows	√	
Paths and steps	√	
Pest control – prevention and eradication (communal areas only)	√	
Pest control – eradication and treatment within the property (the Council will assist in shared/flat accommodation, where the issue is suspected to be more widespread)		√
Plasterwork	√	
Plumbing in of kitchen appliances		√
Radiators – including valves, timers and thermostats	√	
Roofs	√	
Security – spy holes and security chains		√
Sheds (brick built)	√	
Sheds (wooden)		√
Shed locks (unless a crime number has been provided)		√
Shower, rails, shower hose and shower head	√	
Shower curtains (unless part of the Disabled Adaptations Programme – maximum of two new curtains including initial one)		√
Shower trays	√	
Shower units – electric	√	
Sink plugs and chains (the Council does maintain pop up plugs to kitchen sinks and basins)		√
Smoke alarms – mains operated	√	
Smoke alarm testing and battery replacement		√
Soil and vent pipes	√	
Splashbacks and tiling – up to four courses using 150mm white glazed standard tiles	√	
Staircase. Bannisters and handrails	√	
Structure walls inside the home	√	
Structure and covering of the roof, the chimney, gutters, drainpipes and their clips, and wood or plastic boards on the outside of the building	√	
Supplying and changing lightbulbs in the home		√
Taps and stopcocks	√	
Toilet cisterns and pans	√	
Toilet seats – unless disabled		√

REPAIR	Council's responsibility	Tenant's responsibility
TV Aerials (communal only)	√	
Walls – outside walls and rendering	√	
Washing lines – communal only	√	
Washing line posts (make safe only)	√	
Water pipes, overflow pipes and water tanks	√	
Water tank jackets		√
Window catches and handles	√	
Window frames and outside window sills	√	
Window vents	√	
Worktops	√	
Important: Please note that any non-standard items fitted by tenants, or accepted by way of mutual exchange, are the tenant's responsibility to maintain <u>at all times</u>.		

APPENDIX C

How to contact the Repairs Team

If you need to report a repair or fault in your property, then contact the Repairs Team immediately to prevent any serious damage occurring.

Repairs can be reported in any of the following ways:

- Telephone 01322 343800 during office hours – Monday Thursday 8:45am to 5:15pm, Friday 8:45am to 4:45pm
- Emergency repairs out of office hours 0345 6341212
- On line via www.dartford.gov.uk/housing - using the online reporting form
- Email to repairs@dartford.gov.uk
- Write to Housing Services, Repairs Team, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1DR
- Personal visit to the above address (opposite the Dartford railway station)

Health and safety lead

The Council takes very seriously the health and safety of tenants in its homes and associated communal areas, and has a health and safety lead whose role is to:

- Monitor compliance with health and safety requirements
- Assess risks of failure to comply with health and safety requirements
- Notify the responsible body of any risks of material failures and material failures of compliance with health and safety requirements
- Advise on steps to ensure that the Council addresses these risks and failures with health and safety requirements

The health and safety lead is Lee Gilbert, Housing Maintenance Manager.

Email: lee.gilbert@dartford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01322 343623
In writing: Health and Safety Lead, Housing Services, Dartford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Home Gardens, Dartford, Kent, DA1 1DR

APPENDIX D

Repair categories and response times

The Council categorises repairs into 6 priorities (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6).
The Council also has to fix repairs within certain timescales under the Right to Repair Scheme, which are set out into 3 priority categories (RTR1, RTR3 and RTR7).

TYPES OF WORKS AND RESPONSE TIMES			
CATEGORY	TYPE	RESPONSE TIMES	EXAMPLES OF WORKS
Priority P1	Emergency	To be commenced immediately and no later than ***2 (two)*** hours, made safe immediately and completed within the same Business Day	• Fire damage • Severe water leaks • A total loss of water • Unsafe gas or electricity • A gas leak in the home • Blocked toilet or drain (when only one WC in the property) • Making a property safe after a break-in • Gaining access after tenant has lost keys • Jetting of drains • Complete loss of communal lighting
		To be commenced immediately and no later than ***2 (two)*** hours, made safe immediately for tenants registered as vulnerable. To be commenced immediately and completed within the **same Business Day**, made safe immediately for tenants **not** registered as vulnerable.	• A total loss of heating and hot water (sometime between November and March)
Priority RTR1	Right to Repair - Urgent	To be commenced and completed within ***1 (one) Working Day***	• Total loss of electrical power • Unsafe power or light socket or electrical fitting • Total or partial loss of gas supply • Blocked flue to open fire or boiler • Toilet not flushing (if there is only one toilet in the property) • Leak from a water pipe, tank or cistern • Insecure external windows, door or lock

TYPES OF WORKS AND RESPONSE TIMES			
Priority P2	Urgent	To be commenced and completed within ***2 (two) Working Days***	• Partial loss of water or electricity supply • Complete loss of heating and hot water sometime between • April and October • Partial loss of heating and hot water at any time of year • Minor plumbing leaks • Partly blocked sink • Blocked bath or basin • Running overflows • Leaking hot taps when boiler fired up
Priority RTR3	Right to repair – Urgent	To be commenced and completed within ***3 (three) Working Days***	• Tap cannot be turned • Loose or detached bannister or hand rail • Rotten timber flooring on stair tread
Priority P3	Urgent	To be commenced and completed within ***5 (five) Working Days***	• Communal lighting (only one or two lights affected) • Minor repairs to external doors and window frames • Minor plastering • Running overflows in the spring and summer months
Priority RTR7	Right to repair – Urgent	To be commenced and completed within ***7 (seven) Working Days***	• Leaking roof • Door entry phone not working • Mechanical extractor fan not working
Priority P4	Routine	To be commenced and completed within ***10 (ten) Working Days***	• Small renewals e.g. WC pans, cisterns and taps
Priority P5	Routine	To be commenced and completed within ***20 (twenty) Working Days***	• Loose or broken gutters • Cracked windows • Dripping cold taps • Re-glazing of windows
Priority P6	Non Urgent	To be commenced and completed within ***40 (forty) Working Days*** or such other specified period on the Order	• Kitchen renewals • Badly fitting front and rear entrance doors (not internal doors) and windows • Electrical rewiring • Replacement gutters and down pipes • Replacement paths and fences

APPENDIX E

Contractor's Code of Conduct

Identification
All operatives must be of smart appearance and wear an identification card, which shows their name and photograph and the name and telephone number of the contractor they work for.

Access
All appointments made between the customer and the contractor must be kept. Operatives must ensure that they adhere to the arrangements that have been made and that they are punctual.

Formal on-site arrangements
The customer must remain on site at all times when the operative is present in the home. Operatives must ensure that they are never left alone with minors. Operatives must not seek to obtain private work from their customers.

Protection of property
Operatives must treat the homes of customers with respect and ensure that suitable protection is arranged for the customer's property and that delicate or valuable items are removed from the work area.

Disruption
Operatives must ensure there is minimum disruption to the customer and that work is limited to one room at a time if possible.

Damage to property
Any damage to a customer's property resulting from negligence of operatives must be compensated for by the contractor.

Services
Electric and gas supplies may only be used with the resident's permission and satisfactory payment, where appropriate, must be made to the customer prior to use.

Reconnection and testing of the customer's services such as water, gas and electricity are to be undertaken at the end of each day.

Health and Safety
The site must be kept safe at all times. Fire exits, lifts staircases, corridors and doorways must be kept clear and not blocked by the contractor's tools or materials.

Site clearance
On completion of work, the site must be cleared of all debris, dust, waste materials and tidied at the end of each day.

Absolute respect
Operatives must be polite and courteous to the customer at all times. Racist or sexist remarks or innuendos will result in the operative being removed from the site immediately.

All contractors are required to deal with customers promptly and show patience, understanding and sensitivity at all times.