



RESPONSIVE REPAIRS POLICY

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1. Policy Context

This policy sets out Leeds Jewish Housing Association's approach to the delivery of the responsive repairs service. Repairs are one of our most important functions as it affects the quality of housing stock owned and managed by Leeds Jewish Housing Association (its main financial asset) and accounts for the largest element of our annual revenue budget. For tenants, repairs form one of the main sources of service requests and as a result, consistently high standards of service are required in order to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction. Finally, Leeds Jewish Housing Association have a statutory duty for repairs as they also have important health and safety obligations.

2. Definition

'*Responsive repairs*' are repairs which cannot be planned or included in a longer-term investment programme, such as:

- day to day repairs (usually single jobs to an individual dwelling such as emergency, urgent or routine repairs);
- grouped repairs (non-urgent repairs grouped by street, estate, area or trade);
- void repairs (repairs to empty properties before letting);
- unanticipated major works (extensive repairs such as rectifying fire or flood damage).

3. Aims and Objectives

Leeds Jewish Housing Associations aims to:

- deliver an efficient, effective and value for money responsive repairs service that meets the needs of our tenants;
- comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and meet our contractual obligations;
- ensure that all tenants live in a safe and secure environment.

Our objectives are to:

- provide a prompt and cost effective responsive repairs service that our tenants value;

- provide services which are easily accessible at a time and in a way to suit our tenants and which deliver high standards of customer care;
- ensure tenants are aware of their responsibilities for minor repairs and contractual obligations;
- keep in repair the structure and exterior of our property and its fixtures;
- keep in repair and proper working order all installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, for sanitation and for space and water heating;
- maintain all entrances, halls, lifts, stairways, passageways, rubbish chutes, lighting, door entry systems and other parts provided for common use; ensure that all fire protection systems and fighting equipment is adequate, regularly inspected and serviced.

4. Legislative Framework

Leeds Jewish Housing Association have direct statutory responsibilities to their tenants for their repairs services, and a general duty to ensure that their repairs services do not result in discrimination against people with disabilities.

At all times LJHA will comply with their legal obligation as a landlord to repair and maintain their homes. We will comply with relevant statutory regulations covering construction, asbestos, water hygiene, electrics, gas safety and health and safety more generally. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System, introduced under the Housing Act 2004, is an important part of the regulatory framework governing our responsive repairs service.

5. Regulatory Framework

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are the current regulator of social housing in England. The main regulatory standard which relates to repairs and maintenance is the home standard. The current regulatory requirements, set out in the home standard stipulate that registered providers shall:

- ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard;
- meet the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built, and were required as a condition of publicly funded financial assistance, if these standards are higher than the Decent Homes Standard;

- in agreeing a local offer, ensure that it is set at a level not less than these standards and have regard to section six of the government's Decent Homes Guidance;
- provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time;
- meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.

Registered providers may agree with the regulator a period of non-compliance with the Decent Homes Standard, where this is reasonable. Providers shall ensure their tenants are aware of the reasons for any period of non-compliance, their plan to achieve compliance and then report on progress delivering this plan.

How the regulatory standard is enforced: The home standard is a consumer standard, which means that the regulator's role is limited to setting the standard and intervening only when there is a failure to meet it **and** that failure could cause a serious detriment to tenants.

It is therefore organisations themselves, together with their tenants, who must take primary responsibility for ensuring that they are meeting the requirements set out above.

6. Implementation

6.1 Reporting Repairs

- All repairs can be reported by telephone through our repairs line, or in person to our Housing Support Workers for sheltered housing during normal office hours. Repairs can also be reported 24 hours a day by email (repairs@ljha.co.uk).
- We encourage tenants to report repairs to us as soon as they have become aware of a problem. In some instances, repairs might be reported through the scheme manager or other on-site worker.
- We will operate an 'out of hours' emergency service every day of the year accessed via the contact centre. If the reported repair is deemed not to be an emergency then the customer will be asked to report the repair using one of the options detailed above.

6.2 Repairs Appointments

All repairs, except communal repairs, will be made by appointment with the customer, or sometimes through a scheme manager. We aim to minimise the time between a request for a repair and its completion, unless the repair can be more cost effectively carried out as part of a programme of planned or cyclical works.

We will offer an appointment for the repair to be completed at the time that the repair is reported - this will be at a time and date convenient for the customer. We offer appointments for the completion of repairs and for any inspections required. The following options will be given as arrival times (not repair completion times):

- Morning: Between 8am and 12pm
- Afternoon: Between 12pm and 5pm

Tenants will be kept informed about progress with their repairs through means that are convenient to them including telephone, text and email.

We expect tenants to provide us with access to carry out repair at the appointed time. If the appointment cannot be kept, tenants are asked to inform us at the earliest opportunity. If there is no access and no contact from the tenants, the job order will be closed after five working days.

Similarly if we are unable to keep to a morning appointment we will inform the customer in good time and agree an alternative date.

Some jobs, including communal repairs, may require a pre-inspection visit before the repair is arranged. These will include:

- where investigations to identify the problem are required;
- where previous repairs have not resolved the problem;
- where there are boundary or ownership issues;
- where there are potential policy implications (e.g. where a generic problem has been identified);
- inspections may also be necessary in other cases (for instance, as part of a stock condition survey).

6.3 Emergency Access

Situations may arise whereby we require emergency access to a property. This may be in order to carry out essential emergency repairs, to remedy a serious health and safety risk, or where there is reason to believe the customer is incapacitated or has died in the property. Emergency repairs are normally achieved within 24 hours as a minimum, however shorter response times may be delivered for some types of emergency (e.g. where there is a serious and immediate threat such as flooding from burst pipes).

6.4 Supporting Tenants During Emergencies

Leeds Jewish Housing Association will offer assistance and support to tenants experiencing an emergency. Particularly where tenants may be vulnerable, we will ensure that tenants are provided with temporary heating, we will respond promptly to security threats for victims of harassment and we will assist tenants with cleaning up (for instance after floods) with appropriate equipment. In the most severe cases we may facilitate access to temporary accommodation.

6.5 Abortive Calls

In cases where operatives fail to gain access to a property to undertake a repair, information on abortive visits will be collected and analysed. Repairs operatives will:

- Make use of a calling card which enables tenants to contact the operative directly and to make alternative arrangements;
- Make a charge to the tenant for missing an appointment.

6.6 Communal repairs

Communal repairs are carried out to entrances, halls, lifts, stairways, passageways, rubbish chutes, lighting, door entry systems and other parts provided for common use. They may also be carried out on fencing and to other external structures which are the responsibility of Leeds Jewish Housing Association as the landlord. Some communal repairs might be 'batched' (i.e. jobs in the same scheme/group of properties collated to be completed together). In such cases they would not be completed within the usual target of 28 working days. We will inform tenants when we do this and the revised timescale for completion.

6.7 Performance Monitoring and Review

All staff delivering our repairs service are expected to work in accordance with this policy. Feedback from tenants on the quality of the service received is important to us to help in the continuous improvement of this service. Regular customer satisfaction surveys will be carried out following the completion of a repair.

We will work in conjunction with our tenants to use this information, and other feedback, to track and improve the service performance and quality of our responsive repairs service to ensure it is delivered in an efficient and effective manner to all of our tenants.

We will post-inspect at least 10% of repairs to ensure quality control.

We operate a complaints policy for tenants who wish to use this as a means of feeding back to us where our service fails to meet our standards.