



Repairs, Programmed Works and Improvements Policy

POLICY NUMBER

POL 08

Purpose of Policy

To deliver continuously improving services for responsive maintenance, planned/cyclical maintenance and capital investment that will bring all properties up to the 'Derwentside Homes Standard' over the next 13 years.

To ensure that once the 'Derwentside Homes Standard' has been reached homes will be maintained to keep them at that standard.

Policy Statement

This policy will be implemented in line with Derwentside Homes's Charitable Objects and the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code and Guidance.

Derwentside Homes will undertake a radical programme of investment to ensure that all homes reach the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 and that by 2019 all homes will have been improved to the 'Derwentside Homes Standard.'

All tenants will be consulted and involved on works to their properties from planning stages through to completion.

Derwentside Homes will encourage partnerships and prime contracting principles to drive and reshape future methods of working.

Continuous improvements in its day to day repairs service will complement the planned/cyclical and major modernisation works being carried out.

Performance Measures

- Percentage of Homes failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard (GNPI17);
- Percentage of emergency repairs completed within target (GNPI18);
- Percentage of urgent repairs completed within target (GNPI 19);
- Percentage of routine repairs completed within target (GNPI 20);
- Percentage of repairs where an appointment was made and kept (GNPI 22);

- Proportion of expenditure on emergency and urgent repairs compared to non urgent repairs expenditure;
- Average time taken to complete a non responsive repair from time reported to practical completion;
- Percentage of urgent repairs completed within time limits where the total cost is less than £250 and the repair is one covered by the Right to Repair scheme;
- Number of urgent repairs expressed as a % of all repairs completed;
- Percentage of pre- and post-inspections carried out as proportion of all responsive repairs jobs carried out;
- Average SAP rating (energy efficiency) of dwellings (GNPI14);
- The proportion of planned repairs and maintenance expenditure on Derwentside Homes dwellings compared to responsive repairs expenditure;
- Increase tenant satisfaction for repairs, programmed works and improvements to include responsive repairs, central heating and rewire schemes, joinery repairs and repainting, paint only programme repairs, kitchen and bathroom replacement and gas servicing;
- Achieve 100% decency of our stock by 2010.

Responsible Officer:

Head of Housing Services

Policy Author:

Head of Housing Services and Performance
Monitoring Officer

Date Approved by the Shadow Board:

Frequency of Review:

Three Years or as dictated by legislation/guidance

Review Date:

File Reference:

Consultees:

LSVT Working Group – Policies and Procedures;
Tenants Forum;
Staff;
Management Team;
Derwentside Homes Shadow Board;

Repairs, Programmed Works and Improvements Policy

1 Statement of Intent

- 1.1 **Repairs and Maintenance.** Derwentside Homes aims to deliver a continuously improving and responsive maintenance service, by ensuring that day to day repairs are carried out quickly, on time and to a high standard that customers can be satisfied with.
- 1.2 **Planned / Programmed Works.** Derwentside Homes will establish an efficient and effective system of planned and programmed maintenance to prevent property disrepair and promote a safe home environment for its customers.
- 1.3 **Cyclical Maintenance.** Derwentside Homes will develop a cyclical maintenance strategy, which will minimise the amount of responsive works it needs to undertake.
- 1.4 **Decent Homes Implementation Plan.** Derwentside Homes will embark upon a radical programme of investment to ensure that all tenanted houses are brought up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 and where appropriate any improvement works will be to the Derwentside Standard.
- 1.5 **Medium/ Long Term Investment Plan.** Derwentside Homes will implement a major investment programme to address the backlog of repairs and improvements which are needed, and many of the other improvements tenants have requested. Derwentside Homes will bring all properties up to the Derwentside standard in 13 years.
- 1.6 **Programme Publication.** Derwentside Homes will publish and inform all tenants of the programmed works and improvements to be carried out on a yearly basis. This programme will include details of proposed work, the area in which the work is to be carried out and the timescales involved.
- 1.7 **Excellence.** Derwentside Homes recognises the need to adopt the Egan principles of “Rethinking Construction” and acknowledges that through improved relationships with all contractors’ increases in efficiency, quality and customer services will be achieved.
- 1.8 **Quality of Data.** Derwentside Homes will, by reference to its asset management data, identify, develop and make adequate financial provision to carry its Programmed Works and Improvements to bring its properties up to the “Derwentside Standard” and increase their average **SAP rating.*** Derwentside Homes will continually update its Stock Condition Survey and this data will generate future planned maintenance programmes, planned programmes and improvement works to minimise spend on responsive repairs and maximise spend on planned maintenance to achieve a 70:30 budget split.

***Standard Assessment Procedure-** the SAP is the Government's recommended system used to calculate the SAP rating of a dwelling on a scale from 1 to 120, based on the annual energy costs for space and water heating. The SAP rating is used to fulfil requirements of the Building Regulations to notify and display an energy rating in new dwellings.

2 Outline of Service

- 2.1 **Improvements / Consultation.** Derwentside Homes will continually look to improve its service to provide a prompt, economic and efficient day-to-day repairs and maintenance service and will regularly consult with tenants to seek their views on the quality of the service and the repairs carried out.
- 2.2 **Cyclical Maintenance.** Derwentside Homes will carry out cyclical maintenance in all tenants' homes to ensure health and safety and to comply with relevant legislation and industry guidelines. Initially the following areas of work will be covered by cyclical maintenance:
- Gas Servicing and Maintenance;
 - Electrical Testing;
 - Solid Fuel Appliance servicing and repairs;
 - Pre-painting repairs and painting (externally);
 - Burglar alarms;
 - Maintenance of communal fire and smoke alarms;
 - Maintenance of fire safety equipment and emergency lighting;
 - Maintenance of Lifts in sheltered courts and homes;
 - Cooker servicing (where provided by the organisation).
- 2.3 **Out of Hours Repairs.** Derwentside Homes will continue to provide an effective out of hours immediate response service, to deal with emergency repairs and to ensure the safety and security of tenants. This will operate through the existing contact point.
- 2.4 **Aids and Adaptations.** Derwentside Homes will carry out minor and major aids and adaptations to tenants' homes. The major adaptations are based on assessed need of the tenant, recommended by Social Services Occupational Therapists and there is a prioritisation scheme in place. Priority is given to tenants who are soon to be discharged from hospital and the aid and adaptation ensures their continued independent living. Derwentside Homes will have regular liaison meetings with Social Services, the Health Authority and representatives from Care and Repair to ensure consistency of service provision. Staff will also encourage tenants to transfer to a home that has already been adapted as an alternative to costly adaptations in their existing home. In such cases Derwentside Homes will offer a relocation package to the tenant.
- 2.5 **Appointments/Repair Reporting.** Derwentside Homes will adopt the Council's appointment system for the completion of all internal repairs.

Furthermore Derwentside Homes will, subject to consultation, extend the appointment system to include some types of external work, and offer early evening appointments up to 8pm from Monday to Friday and on Saturday

mornings. Derwentside Homes will improve access to services and increase the range of options available to report repairs, new facilities will be added to the existing service so that repairs can be reported by using email, internet, website, service access points, by telephone and in writing on a 24 hour basis 7 days a week.

- 2.6 **Handy Van Service.** An centrally based Handy Van service will be introduced to support older or vulnerable tenants, and to offer assistance with, for example, minor Aids and Adaptations, minor repairs such as mending a faulty internal door catch, refixing a loose fitting tile, changing a light bulb or unblocking a kitchen sink.
- 2.7 **Tenants Handbook.** A new Tenant Repair Handbook will be introduced to offer guidance to tenants in all aspects of the repairs service including emergency situations and the reporting of day to day repairs.
- 2.8 **Identifying Repairs.** Front line repairs staff will use a graphical repairs identification system which will seamlessly integrate with the tenant repairs handbook so staff can identify or diagnose specific repairs which are required whilst in discussions with the person reporting the repair. This system will also be made available on the web site.
- 2.9 **Apprentices.** Training and employment opportunities will be identified to increase the number of apprentices on the current apprenticeship scheme.
- 2.10 **Minority Groups.** Derwentside Homes will endeavour to increase the number of Black and Minority Ethnic and female workers involved in the service where possible.
- 2.11 **Technical Staff.** Where technical expertise is required to diagnose a defect, a referral will be raised for a surveyor to make an appointment to visit the property and to recommend any corrective action required.
- 2.12 **Service Standards.** Derwentside Homes will set service standards with tenants' representatives for checking the effectiveness of workmen and contractors and check the overall satisfaction with the service.
- 2.13 **Wilful Damage.** Derwentside Homes will identify and recover the cost of any wilful damage to properties.
- 2.14 **Lettability Standard.** Derwentside Homes will Repair empty properties to a high standard that meets with the requirements of Derwentside Homes' lettability standard. Additionally Derwentside Homes will:
- Only let homes that have had a safety check on the gas and electrical installations;
 - Develop alternative ways of securing empty properties other than unattractive metal screens;
 - Introduce accompanied viewing;
 - Work in partnership to reduce the length of time that properties are empty;
 - Implement new ways to manage properties which would otherwise be difficult to let or could be empty for a long period.

- 2.15 **Post Inspections.** Derwentside Homes will continue to carry out a post inspection on at least 10% of all repairs and maintenance work completed whether in-house or by use of external contractors.
- 2.16 **Information Technology.** Derwentside Homes will use a suitable information technology system which will build upon the existing housing maintenance system to produce a seamless transition with enhanced services.
- 2.17 **Tenants' Rights.** Tenants will still be able to improve their homes with the permission of Derwentside Homes and along with any other planning, building control or highway consents that may apply. Any improvements carried out at the tenants own cost will not affect the level of rent paid. Compensation may be available for qualifying improvements if the tenancy is ended.
- 2.18 **Asbestos.** Derwentside Homes will develop a process to survey and register all properties where asbestos may be present and this information will be used to identify work for inclusion in future capital schemes and/or programmed initiatives that may be carried out.
- 2.19 **Partnering/Egan.** Derwentside Homes will adopt the "Rethinking Construction" agenda in order to improve relationships with all contractors' which will result in increases in efficiency, quality and customer care and add value to the overall operation.
- 2.20 **Local Standards.** Derwentside Homes is committed to delivering the 'Derwentside Standard' which is an improvement over the Governments own 'Decent Homes Standard' which must be met by 2010. If Transfer goes ahead the following works would be scheduled within the first 5 years:
- install replacement central heating to give energy efficient and controllable systems to around 3,800 homes;
 - rewire around 2,000 homes;
 - install high quality 'Secured by Design' double glazed windows and high quality front and back doors to around 3,600 homes;
 - replace around 600 roofs;
 - design and install new kitchens in around 2,500 homes;
 - design and install new bathrooms with showers in around 2,500 homes;
 - improve the space and layout of around 300 homes;
 - improve storage space in around 2,250 homes;
 - install around 1,000 burglar alarms;
 - carry out environmental improvements covering over 2,400 homes;
 - carry out structural repairs, where identified by survey, to around 300 non-traditional homes;
 - carry out improvements to guest rooms, laundries and communal kitchens at sheltered housing schemes. Install fans or air conditioning in communal rooms, improve car parking, provide paved sitting out areas and attractive garden areas, erect boundary fencing to increase residents' privacy and site security where necessary. Install new kitchens and bathrooms in around 160 sheltered homes;
 - spend more than the Council's current level of expenditure on aids and adaptations to provide an annual budget of around £1 million per year up to 2011;

- set aside around £6.5 million to tackle any exceptional extensive works identified such as wall tie failure and major structural works necessary for individual properties.

2.21 **Continued Investment.** The repairs and maintenance programme would not stop after 2011. Between 2011 and 2018 Derwentside Homes will spend around £50 million on the following works:

- install replacement central heating to around 2,200 homes;
- rewire around 4,000 homes;
- install high quality Secured by Design double glazed windows and high quality front and back doors to around 2,400 homes;
- design and install new kitchens in around 3,300 homes;
- design and install new bathrooms with showers in around 3,300 homes;
- improve the space and layout of around 450 homes;
- improve storage space in around 3,750 homes;
- install around 2,000 burglar alarms;
- carryout environmental improvements covering over 3,600 homes;
- invest around a further £4 million in aids and adaptations during this period.

2.22 **Sheltered Courts.** With respect to sheltered accommodation Derwentside Homes will consult tenants on individual schemes and aim to provide:

- Improved access - including lifts to upper floors where necessary;
- Improved security measures to include door entry systems, security lighting and fencing;
- A full survey of the courts with a view to remodelling bedsits where possible to provide modern housing units which would include individual bathroom and kitchen facilities;
- Regular decoration and upgrading of communal areas and facilities.

2.23 **Tenants Choice.** Where a property is to be improved or refurbished as part of a major capital scheme, tenants will be able to select from a choice of fixtures and fittings. Derwentside Homes will re-model kitchens and bathrooms to try and create extra space where needed and if appropriate. Tenants will be given a choice of kitchen and bathroom fixtures wherever possible, which would be designed around existing appliances such as washing machines, fridges, cookers, freezers etc.

2.24 **Tenant Consultation.** All tenants will be consulted on works to their properties starting when works are identified right through to when works are completed. Tenants' representatives will be invited to sit on panels and will be part of the preparation and planning process. Derwentside Homes will hold exhibitions and open days to keep tenants informed on the type of works that are being planned. Where a list of works has been prepared for a property, tenants will be able to select what work to have done, and may choose to have no work done unless there are health and safety issues involved.

2.25 **30 Year Business Plan.** Approximately £226 million will be spent on modernising and maintaining properties over the 30 year life of the Business Plan to ensure homes are kept up to modern decent standards.

- 2.26 **Energy Efficiency.** Derwentside Homes is committed to increasing energy efficiency in all its homes and will work with other agencies to ensure that it is up to date on various energy efficiency initiatives and funding opportunities. Where central heating systems are installed or upgraded, Derwentside Homes will improve loft insulation at the same time, where required, and this may help to make homes as energy efficient as possible and to reduce fuel bills for tenants.
- 2.27 **Complaints and Compensation.** Derwentside Homes will accept claims for compensation under the:
- Right to Repair Scheme (where the second contractor fails to do the work on time);
 - Right to Compensation for Improvements (at the end of tenancies for certain qualifying improvements made with the consent, and to the satisfaction, of Derwentside Homes);
 - Missed Appointments. (where an inspecting officer or a repair operative fails to keep an agreed appointment at the tenant's property and has made no contact with the tenant to re-arrange the appointment for the inspection / repair to be carried out within the next working day).
- 2.28 **Major Works.** A dedicated project officer/tenant liaison officer will be appointed to each scheme of work to act as a link between contractors and tenants. During major modernisation work Derwentside Homes will ensure that tenants, wherever possible, remain in their homes. It is unlikely that any tenants would need to move out of their homes while any of the major repair and improvements works were taking place. But if tenants do need to leave their homes on a temporary basis, for instance if there was a health and safety issue, they would be given help to do this, including suitable temporary accommodation. Derwentside Homes would pay authorised removal costs as well as for the disconnection and reconnection of plumbed in and electrical appliances.

3 Implementation

- 3.1 **Repair Responsibility.** Derwentside Homes will ensure that the responsibilities for the repair and maintenance of its properties are clearly detailed in the Tenancy Agreement and Repairs and Maintenance Handbook contained in the Welcome Pack
- 3.2 **Repair Categorisation.** All repairs will be assessed for urgency when reported and placed into one of four categories:

Category A - Urgent repairs outside of normal working hours requiring immediate attention to make safe or secure- response time within 3 hours or less –complete within one day.

Category B - Urgent repair inside normal working hours- response time and completion as above.

Typical examples of Urgent Repairs (A and B Priorities) are:

- Total loss of electrical power;
- Unsafe power or lighting socket;
- Blocked or leaking foul drain or soil stack;
- WC not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling);
- Insecure external door or window;
- Loss of space or water heating between 31st October and 1st May.

Category C - Non-urgent repairs to be carried out within 7 working days. Examples are but not limited to:

- Minor leaks to any plumbing appliance/fitting;
- Minor electrical works;
- Minor repairs to central heating boiler.

Category D - Routine repairs to be carried out within 20 working days, although certain works may be identified for inclusion in future planned maintenance programmes. Examples are but not limited to:

- Plaster repairs;
- External works – fencing gates, brickwork, guttering;
- Works to internal doors;
- Manufactured Joinery Items (doors and windows);
- Works to garages.

3.3 **Inspections.** Derwentside Homes will inspect a repair if necessary prior to arranging work where:

- The customer is unable to fully explain the problem;
- Measurements, specification etc are required prior to ordering the work;
- The level of repairs reported by a tenant creates concern.

3.4 **Overall Responsibility.** Members of the Board of Derwentside Homes, the Chief Executive and Directors are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

3.5 **Employees.** It is the responsibility of all the employees of Derwentside Homes to ensure that their work is carried out in line with this policy and any related procedures.

4 Consultation

4.1 **Tenant Participation.** Derwentside Homes will continually look to improve its repair service and will invite tenants to attend focus groups, service review groups, and other groups to participate in the decision making process and to discuss and influence the quality of the service being delivered and identify improvements which directly affect them.

4.2 **Consultation Groups.** Derwentside Homes will consult tenants about Housing Management and changes in the company's practice and policy and

to this we will consult in line with the arrangements established by Derwentside Homes's Tenant Consultation policy. Consultation on the Repairs, Programmed Works and Improvements policy will be carried out with:

- Tenant groups;
- Tenants Forum;
- Repairs and Maintenance Performance Monitoring Group;
- Tenant Management Organisations;
- Staff;
- Board Members;
- Statutory Agencies;
- Voluntary Agencies.

4.3 **Policy Changes.** Should Derwentside Homes seek to amend or implement any changes to this Policy we will undertake every opportunity to fully consult with our existing tenants and applicants registered on the waiting list.

4.4 **Information.** All tenants will receive written confirmation that work is to be carried out to their home, whether a day to day repair, planned or cyclical maintenance or capital works.

4.5 **Satisfaction Surveys.** Tenants will receive satisfaction surveys in respect to all planned and reactive repairs that will provide information regarding customer care and quality, to ensure the performance standards as laid down in contracts and service level agreements are being met.

5 Monitoring

5.1 **Standards.** Derwentside Homes will monitor:

- Repair quality;
- Value for money;
- Effectiveness of workmen and contractors;
- Tenant satisfaction.

5.2 **Reporting.** Derwentside Homes will:

- Report any information as requested by the Housing Corporation or Government Departments;
- Set and monitor service standards and performance as set against targets in consultation with Board Members and any relevant focus groups;
- Report quarterly on a range of locally and key established Performance Indicators to Board Members and tenant groups;
- Include Repairs, Programmed Works and Improvements performance in the Annual Report which is circulated to all tenants;
- Review the service and benchmark performance to achieve continuous service development and best practice improvement;
- Report on expenditure to budget.

5.3 **Key Performance Indicators.** Key performance information will be examined regularly, including weekly bulletins of important Best Value and Key Performance Indicators which will include:

- Timescales for repairs;
- Appointments made and kept;
- Proportion of work which is acceptable or unacceptable;
- Levels of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction;
- Progress on gas servicing programme;
- Progress of external painting programme;
- Contractor performance statistics.

5.4 **Contractors.** Contractors working for Derwentside Homes will ensure that there is contract compliance in relation to supervision and health and safety, and that claims for completed works are checked.

5.5 **Compliance.** Derwentside Homes will monitor their compliance with the Housing Corporation Code of Guidance and to this will produce an annual compliance statement.

6 Review

6.1 **Continuous Improvements.** Derwentside Homes will constantly review service provision to ensure a value for money service is provided for service users. It will undertake regular reviews of tenant satisfaction surveys, complaints and any other feedback, to ensure that repairs and improvements are being carried out effectively and efficiently, and that improvements to the service are made.

6.2 **Best Practice / Legislation.** Derwentside Homes will review this policy, as a minimum every three years or whenever there are any changes to legislation or case law, taking into consideration good practice and any research that would impact on this policy and/or service delivery. This policy will be reviewed and implemented in line with the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code and Guidance

6.3 **Overall Responsibility.** The Board of Derwentside Homes will be responsible for ensuring that reviews of this policy are carried out.

7 Legislation and Guidance

7.1 Derwentside Homes will ensure that its approach to Repairs, Programmed Works and Improvements is in line with the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code and Guidance. Derwentside Homes will have regard to Derwentside District Council's Homelessness and Housing Strategy in the formulation and implementation of its policies. It will ensure that this policy is compatible with the obligations of existing legislation and guidance including but not limited to:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- Race Relations Act 1976;
- Housing Act 2004;

- Data Protection Act 1994;
- Freedom of Information Act 2002;
- Section 11 Landlord and Tenant Act 1985;
- Defective Premises Act 1972;
- Right To Repair Regulations 1994;
- Building Regulations;
- IEE Regulations (currently the 16th edition);
- Gas Safety (Installations and use) regulations 1988;
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994;
- ODPM Decent Homes Standard.