

Ascham Homes Repairs Policy

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1 Introduction

Ascham Homes priorities are: -

- listening and responding to your needs
- making the best use of your money – doing more for less
- achieving very high resident satisfaction through service improvement
- rewarding the can do attitude and commitment of our staff

The repairs service is regarded as an important core service provided by the company. This is highlighted by the customer satisfaction surveys we have carried out. To reflect the importance of this service Ascham Homes will: -

- monitor performance closely,
- manage staff and operatives effectively,
- improve the service using customer feedback,
- communicate with customers plainly in a timely manner
- employ and develop knowledgeable, skilled and customer-focused staff, and
- provide staff with the tools that they need to deliver the service efficiently and effectively.

The purpose of the repairs service is to: -

- provide efficient, timely and cost effective repairs,
- deliver excellent customer care,
- deliver accessible services to diverse customer groups,
- meet customer priorities and needs, and
- be open to learning from customers and complaints

A responsive repair is a repair that arises from the identification of a defect either by a resident or other stakeholder, or from a technical inspection – either to an empty property or an estate inspection that needs to be addressed quickly to make the property fit for purpose.

This policy has been developed following consultation with residents on the Best Value Review of Repairs 2006, repairs service standard Jan 2009, the STATUS Survey 2008, the February, and December 2009 Repairs Day consultation events and the January 2010 Have Your Say listening week.

2 Board and resident scrutiny

Performance against targets on repairs will be reported to each Board meeting, to contract panels each quarter and to tenants Council.

The Performance and Development Committee will consider performance on repairs at every meeting and a detailed report on repairs performance twice a year. This will include a review of performance indicators and commitments given in the Repairs service standard.

Concerns about local repairs performance and local priorities will be addressed through tenant and resident association and contract panel meetings. Repairs staff will attend contract panel meetings to respond to these issues.

3 Legal and regulatory framework

Ascham Homes repairs policy is based on the following contractual and statutory obligations: -

- London Borough of Waltham Forest Terms and Conditions of Tenancy May 2009,
- Landlord & Tenant Act 1985,
- Environmental Protection Act 1990,
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994,
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995,
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, and
- Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994 S.I 1994 No.613.

The Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry on Stock Condition and Asset Management "excellence criteria" provides an important reference point.

4 Procurement of the repairs service

The procurement of the repair service will be in accordance with the Ascham Homes Procurement Strategy and Procurement Procedures and will: -

- meet user needs,
- deliver long term value for money,
- maximise social and economic benefits, and
- minimise damage to the environment and health.

This policy will determine the standards to be delivered by the new responsive contracts. Individual residents will be invited to participate in the contract preparation and tendering process.

5 Value for money and efficiency

It is important that expenditure on repairs achieves value for money and an efficient service. There will be a focus on: -

- reducing inputs for the same outputs – putting in fewer resources to get the same result,
- reducing prices for the same outputs – paying less for inputs to get the same result,
- achieving more outputs or improved quality for the same inputs – getting better results from the same resources, and
- achieving proportionally more outputs or improved quality compared with the extra resources that are used.

Ascham Homes will benchmark repairs quality, performance and cost indicators and strive to remain in the forefront of best practice and achieve top quartile performance in comparison with peers.

Detail: Examples of industry standard benchmarking measures are: -

- ratio of planned, responsive, voids and cyclical works,
- ratio of emergency/urgent against routine repairs,

- average cost of responsive repairs,
- average number of repairs per property per year – hence average cost of repairs per property per year,
- average cost per void repair/number of voids per 1000 units,
- Call centre costs compared to costs of operation,
- number of properties per maintenance surveyor, and
- number of full time employees involved in management of maintenance as a proportion of total repairs costs and as a cost per property

And provide an annual account to Committee and Board of how VfM is being achieved and efficiency improved.

6 Performance and service improvement

Performance measures for repairs help the company to manage the timeliness and quality of repairs. To ensure that responsive repairs offer value for money and are continually improved Ascham Homes will monitor the:

- performance of contractors and Ascham Homes and LBWF in achieving targets
- quality of the works carried out (supported by an appropriate level of pre and post inspections)
- level of tenant satisfaction

Performance will be measured against appropriately-defined targets. These targets will be set annually by:

- reviewing the performance of the previous year
- benchmarking the performance of other ALMOs
- taking into account projected LBWF funding

A range of measures will be used to manage repairs performance (updated as applicable in the coming years), including:

Description
Satisfaction with day to day repairs service
Total cost per property of responsive repairs
The % of responsive (but not emergency) repairs during the financial year, for which the authority both made and kept an appointment
% of all repairs completed within target time, first time

Services will be delivered seamlessly so that there is no loss of time between reporting the repair, pre-inspecting it where required, ordering it and completing it. Clear timescales for procedures will be set and closely monitored.

Ascham Homes will seek continuous improvement in the repairs service through:

- regular review of the repairs service standard by resident inspectors
- the responsive repairs contracts
- 360 degree appraisal of staff and competency based job descriptions
- development of procedures to better manage processes
- mystery shopping repairs processes

The definition of the key performance indicators for responsive repairs will be based on the current HouseMark definition.

7 Responsive repairs, major works and capital works

It is important that capital works programmes, cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are coordinated to maximise VfM and efficiency. For example:

- it will be wasteful of resources to order repairs to dilapidated communal areas, i.e. pram stores, if major works are planned
- properties will start to fall out of decency almost as soon as the Decent Homes programmes ends, and responsive repairs will need to be planned around future decent homes equivalent works.

It is important that data is readily available to staff who order repairs about forthcoming capital works programmes and defects liability periods for completed works.

8 Ascham Homes repair responsibilities

The Residents Handbook sets out the repairs which Ascham Homes must undertake and the waiting times for completing the repair and tenant responsibilities for repair.

Ascham Homes repairing obligations are as a result of contract, statute and case-law. Ascham Homes is responsible for keeping the structure and exterior of the property in repair including:

- external walls, external doors, external window frames and sills;
- drains, gutters, external pipes;
- access paths and steps to individual properties;
- the roof and chimney (but not sweeping);
- the internal structure
- external decoration.
- lifts, rubbish chutes and shared lighting serving the building or estate.
- fences and gates which are Ascham Homes responsibility to maintain. (Ascham Homes will use its discretion when deciding what is provided)

Ascham Homes must keep in repair and proper working order the pipes and other installations in tenants homes which provide water, gas and electricity supplies. This includes basins, sinks, baths and lavatories, but does not include other appliances that make use of these supplies, for example electric or gas cookers which are the tenants' responsibility.

Ascham Homes must keep in repair and proper working order the landlord-installed heating systems in tenant's homes and the landlord-installed systems for providing hot water.

The service up to and including the gas and electrical meter is the responsibility of the utility service provider, unless the mains supply outside the home is owned by the Council.

Without prejudice to the landlord's repair obligations, Ascham Homes may repair floor tiling or covering that they have installed in kitchens, bathrooms and toilets, where there is a potential trip hazard.

9 The Right to Repair

Tenants have a statutory right to certain repairs within timescales set by Government in Right to Repair legislation. Ascham Homes will provide such repairs within the required timescales and provide compensation where timescales are not met. Ascham Homes will publish clear and simple guidance on the Right to Repair in the Residents Handbook.

The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right-to-Repair) Regulations 1994 require landlords to carry out some small urgent repairs if they are likely to affect someone's health, safety or security. Right to repair only includes repairs that cost less than £250. The time limits for 'qualifying repairs' under the scheme will be set out in the Tenants Handbook. The time limits do not apply if the cost of the repair is more than £250. If the repair is not carried out within set time limits, then the tenant has the right to ask us to get an alternative contractor to do the work. If the second contractor does not complete the work within the extra time allowed, compensation may be payable. The compensation is fixed by the legislation at £10, plus £2 for every day that the repair is not finished, up to a limit of £50.

Ascham Homes will give notice to the tenant that the repair is a 'qualifying repair' on the tenant repairs receipt. This will include a timescale for completion.

10 Tenants' maintenance duties and repair responsibilities

Tenants are responsible for maintaining and repairing the inside of the property including:

- internal doors and catches, including cupboards
- internal glazing
- internal fittings, including skirting boards, door and window frames, bath panels toilet seats, plugs and chains to sinks and baths, bath and sink sealant, curtain rails and pelmets
- internal decorations and finishes
- plumbing to washing machines, dishwashers and so on, unless these have been fitted by the Council
- doors and drawers to kitchen units
- letter boxes
- items the tenant, their family or visitors have damaged
- repairs to tenants' improvements
- replacing tap washers where taps are dripping
- replacing light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
- lock changes and replacing keys/fobs

Tenants are also responsible for maintaining and repairing elements to the outside of the property including:

- their own equipment, such as TV aerials (unless provided by the Council), satellite dishes, electrical sockets and garden water points
- repairs to sheds
- back garden paths
- fences

11 The Tenant Service Authority service standard

The new Tenant Services Authority Home standard comes into force on the 1st April 2010. It states:

Registered providers must provide a cost effective repairs service that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants. They must meet all statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of residents.

The standards set out above are supported by the Repairs policy, and supplemented by the more detailed Ascham Homes repairs service standard. Service managers will report twice a year on performance in achieving the commitments given in service standards to the Performance and Development Committee. A programme of mystery shopping will test whether commitments given in service standards are being delivered.

12 Repair priorities, classification and response times

Repairs will be completed within specified timescales. The timescales for responding to emergency, urgent and routine repairs are explained in the Residents Handbook. Response times may be flexible in certain circumstances to meet customers' special needs.

Where work does not need to be carried out straight away the work will be specified, batched and carried out as part of a programme of similar works. Customers will be given periodic updates on the likely waiting times.

Where work is carried out as part of a regular cycle, such as external decoration work it will be classified as cyclical maintenance. Ascham Homes will publicise the details of its cyclical maintenance programmes to customers.

13 Reporting repairs

Customers will be able to report repairs at a time of their choosing, by a variety of convenient and, as far as possible, cost-free means. Reporting repairs will be possible via the telephone, reception, e-mail, the website and letter. Repair service contact options will be set out in the Resident handbook.

14 Disrepair to communal areas

It is important that disrepair to communal areas is dealt with effectively, and all Ascham Homes staff have a duty to report any disrepair that they observe whilst on estates. Procedures will be in place that set out the role of staff in reporting and monitoring the completion of repairs to communal areas.

There will be structured inspections of at least 40% of the stock, called Priority Estate inspections. The remit is to tackle ASB, disrepair and deliver a coordinated response to local priorities. The selection of Priority Estates will be based on transparent criteria including levels of ASB, disrepair and dilapidation. Inspections will be coordinated by the Operations division with support from Property and Investment. The inspections will include residents, Councillors and other stakeholders.

The results of estate inspections will be reported to all tenants on estates via a newsletter. Estates will be inspected between two and four times yearly dependant on local conditions. There have recently been significant improvements in customer satisfaction around communal repairs and this must be built on in the coming years.

It is important that quality of repairs to communal areas and customers' homes is equally high and the quality assurance provisions of repairs contracts must ensure this.

15 The quality of repairs and customer satisfaction

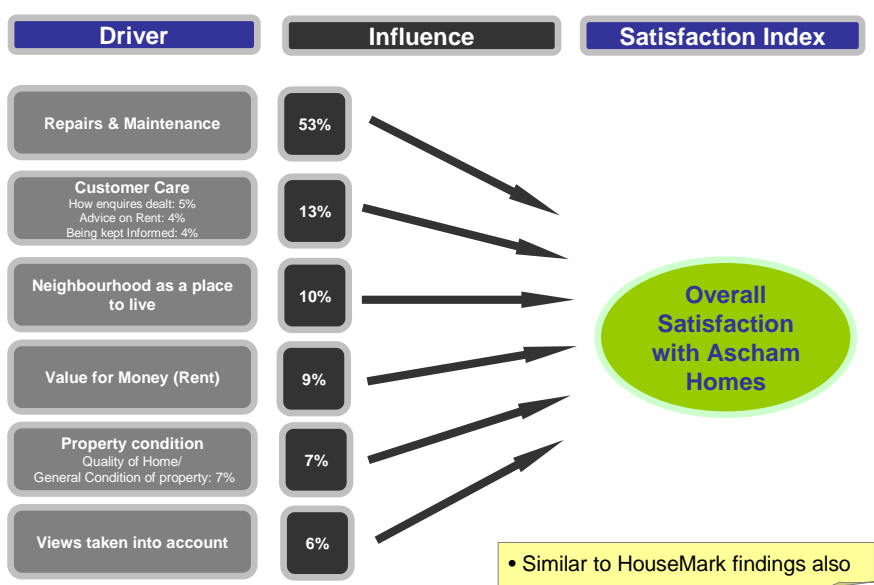
Achieving very high resident satisfaction through service improvement is a company priority. Ascham Homes carried out a large scale satisfaction survey in 2009 and there were significant improvements in all measures of repairs satisfaction and a reduction in the percentage of tenants who view repairs as one of the most important services/issues. It is important that these results are improved on in the forthcoming 2010 STATUS survey.

Summary of 2005, 2006, and 2008 Key Tenant Survey (STATUS) Results and 2009 'Mini' status survey

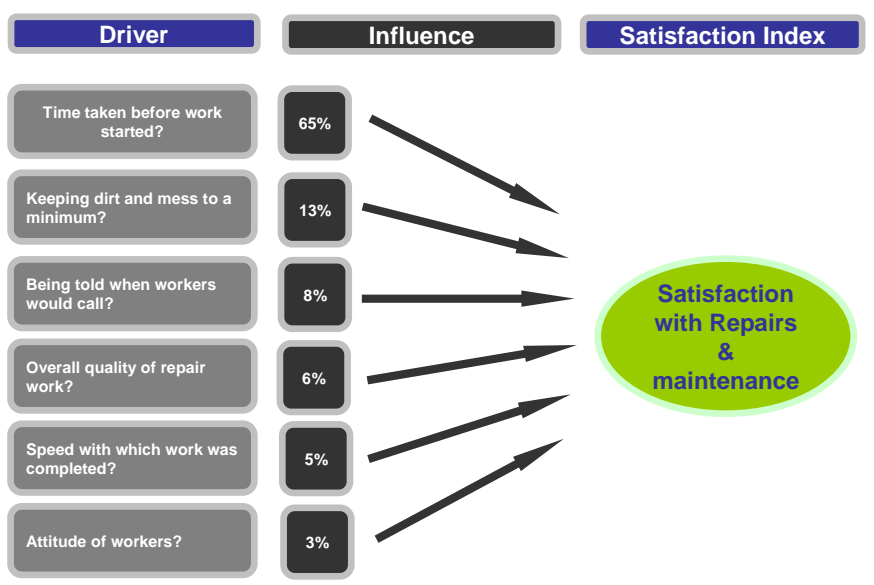
Question Description	2005%	2006%	2008%	2009%
Satisfaction with overall service NI160	67.0%	65.0%	63.0%	73.7%
Satisfaction with overall service BME	58.0%	60.0%	61.0%	70.5%
Satisfaction with overall service Non BME	71.0%	69.0%	66.0%	77.6%
Overall Quality of Home	75.0%	73.0%	68.0%	76.5%
Condition of property	71.0%	64.0%	67.0%	71.5%
Neighbourhood as place to live		61.0%	68.7%	74.3%
Value for money (for your rent)	77.0%	71.0%	72.0%	79.4%
Repairs and maintenance				
Satisfaction with Repairs & Maintenance last 12months			64.0%	70.1%
Requested a repair in the last 12 months	64.0%	70.0%	62.0%	67.1%
Being told when worker would call		84.0%	75.7%	82.8%
Time taken before work started		74.0%	69.5%	78.4%
Speed which work completed		83.0%	77.8%	81.3%
Attitude of workers		90.0%	89.5%	94.1%
Overall quality of repair work		78.0%	78.4%	79.4%
Keeping dirt/mess to minimum		82.0%	86.6%	87.7%
Estate Services				
How Quickly repairs carried out (Inside communal)			56.1%	67.0%
Quality repairs carried out (Inside communal)			63.7%	72.0%
Maintenance of communal areas (Inside)		51.0%	64.0%	75.1%
Most important services/issues				
Keeping tenants informed	37.0%	41.0%	35.3%	41.0%
Overall quality of home	63.0%	64.0%	54.5%	45.3%
taking tenants views into account			24.0%	30.1%
repairs & maintenance	82.0%	85.0%	82.8%	77.0%
neighbourhood as place to live			36.9%	23.6%
dealing with ASB			29.1%	33.3%
VFM for rent	53.0%	43.0%	27.2%	11.2%

The following illustrations show that the most important 'driver' of customer satisfaction is repairs, it has a significant influence over customers' overall satisfaction. It is clear therefore that significant weight should be given to this service area when considering competing service improvement priorities within Ascham Homes. Looking at the detail of the repairs service we can see that the most important factor is the time taken before work is started. It is important that where there will be delay in carrying out work that customers are kept fully informed about the likely waiting time for the repair to be completed. It is important that satisfaction with the quality of communal repairs (72%) matches satisfaction with the overall quality of repairs (79.4%).

Overall Key Driver Analysis Summary



Repairs Key Driver Analysis Summary



Repairs will be completed professionally, to a specified standard, right first time. Customer feedback on satisfaction with repairs will be gathered through a variety of means, including: telephone survey, automated telephone survey and postal survey. The results of the telephone survey will be reported as part of the monthly performance report and to Performance and Development Committee twice a year.

16 Rechargeable Repairs

Ascham Homes will not pay for damage caused by:

- anything done by the tenant
- anyone living with or visiting the tenant (including in both cases people under the age of 18)
- any work completed by the tenant, even if Ascham Homes has agreed that the work can be completed
- anything which the tenant has installed in their home, even if Ascham Homes has agreed that this may be installed.

The following are examples of situations where Ascham Homes will charge for repairs:

- loss of door keys
- forced entry to make an emergency repair that is the tenant's responsibility
- removal of rubbish or belongings after the tenant moves out
- the tenant provided a false or unrelated crime reference number for a repair they reported as a result of a crime
- lock changes and removal of items from garages

Staff guidance for recharging tenants will be set out in procedure/process notes issued by the Finance Team. It is important that as much detail as possible about why the rechargeable repair is being levied is included in the invoice request by the team requesting the invoice. The team that request that a rechargeable repair is responsible for dealing with detailed enquiries from customers who have been invoiced.

Ascham Homes may carry out routine and emergency repairs which are not the company's responsibility where the tenant has asked the company to do the repair on their behalf. Repairs will normally be completed on payment in advance.

Any works carried out by tenants involving gas or electrical installations must be undertaken by a Corgi or NICEIC registered contractor. Ascham Homes must be provided with the original certificates issued by the contractors.

If the work is not completed and Ascham Homes decides to do the repair, Ascham Homes may recharge the tenant for this and any other work required as a result of the repair not being completed.

Ascham Homes may also recharge the tenant if they make an appointment and are subsequently not in when the contractor arrives to complete the repair.

17 Customer care

Repairs will be made by appointment at the time when the repair is reported. AM or PM slots will be offered together with the option of avoiding the 'school-run' and very early and

late slots. Repair appointments must be made within the timescale for completing the repair. If the repair is complex and requires an inspection, an appointment for the inspection will be given at the time the repair is reported.

The operative will arrive on time with an identity card. They will fix the problem and clean up any mess. If the problem cannot be fixed at the first appointment, the repair person will offer customers another appointment or make sure that they are contacted within 48 hours to agree one. Customers will be able to complain if they are not happy with a repair or the way it was handled. Services will be delivered seamlessly between Ascham Homes and the contractor to reduce the level of 'avoidable contact'¹ with customers.

18 Complaints

Once a complaint has been received certain legal obligations may be triggered such as landlords repairing obligations under s11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. This being the case it is vital that the complaint is dealt with efficiently and effectively.

Where an inspection is necessary, for example to assess the exact nature of the problem and remedial action necessary, this will be carried out as soon as possible and will be automatic for some complex issues, such as dampness.

Whatever the reason for the works being carried out, there will be a 'sign-off' procedure to ensure the works have been completed to the satisfaction of Ascham Homes and the tenant. Simple, single works order repairs will not routinely be post inspected, but any complex works order will be post inspected.

Complaints and threats of legal action will be treated positively as indicators of problems in systems and procedures and will lead to reviews and other remedial action.

19 Response to threats of legal action

Ascham Homes will deal with threats of legal action effectively and efficiently to minimize the possibility of legal proceedings starting or continuing. The systems and procedures for responding to any threat of legal action will be separate from the day-to-day complaints system. Staff dealing with these cases will engage with the problem and avoid defensiveness.

The following will take place where legal notification of a potential claim is received in accordance with disrepair procedures :

- review the dwelling history to help assess how or if the current situation has been notified previously
- instruct a surveyor to assess and report on the current condition and comment on the allegations
- obtain a schedule of works based on the findings of the surveyor which should be sent to the tenant's solicitor or adviser as soon as possible
- implement the works identified as promptly as possible and certainly within any timescales set around any disrepair procedures or legal action deadlines.

¹ Any contact with the customer that would not have been required had Ascham Homes and its partners delivered a service as promised

Legal services will be responsible for responding to threats of legal action and systems will ensure that any such threats are passed to that team whenever they are received. The procedures will contain clear timescales for action at all stages of the process. There will be regular meetings between Legal Services and Property and Investment to help each understand the responsibilities, priorities and contribution of everyone involved.

20 Diversity

Ascham Homes will assess the equality impact of changes to the service and deliver the repairs service equally and fairly to all customer groups. Ascham Homes will monitor the delivery of the repairs service to diverse customer groups, and address any imbalances identified. The company will satisfy itself that the contractors' approach to diversity reflects industry best practice.

Ascham Homes will

- aim to deliver repairs services which do not discriminate on the grounds of ethnicity, age, gender, disability, faith and sexual orientation
- offer an enhanced service to tenants who may be less able to maintain their property
- use translation and interpretation aids and services to communicate effectively with customers

Contractors are expected to carry out minor domestic tasks for elders or people with a disability where it is necessary to complete a repair e.g. moving furniture or re-hanging curtains.

21 Passporting/Discretionary Repairs

Ascham Homes recognises that residents have different needs. Ascham Homes may carry out passported/discretionary repairs at no cost to the tenant if the tenant requires extra help and the tenant is either:

- over 75 and living alone, or with no other member of the household who is under-75, or
- in receipt of a registered care package, or
- in receipt of the medium or higher rate of the care component or the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or War Disablement Pension

Ascham Homes can only do a passported repair if the tenant is living alone or every member of their household meets one or more of the eligibility criteria. Carers or children (under the age of 18) are not required to meet any of the eligibility criteria.

The following are eligible passported repairs; internal doors, internal glazing, repairs to doors and drawers of kitchen units, replacing tap washers, two lock changes per year, toilet seats.

22 Defects liability period

All new repairs contracts will contain a five year defects liability period for component replacement for example baths, windows and tanks and 12 months for repairs.

23 Compensation

Customers will be given £15 compensation if the contractor fails to keep a repair appointment. If the customer's rent account is in arrears the payment will go to their rent account.

24 Assistance with decorating

Ascham Homes will administer a scheme, for older people and disabled people funded by the repairs budget, to decorate customers' homes.

25 Tenants' improvements and alterations

Tenants may not make improvements, alterations and additions to their home unless they first receive Ascham Homes' permission in writing. In order to avoid any doubt or misunderstanding, the installation of a satellite dish is such an addition. Tenants must obtain all other necessary planning permission and building regulation approval where these are required from the Council as the local planning authority.

If a tenant carries out an improvement, alteration or addition to their home without Ascham Homes permission, the Council may request they remove it and reinstate their home to its previous condition. This will be done in writing. If the tenant does not comply Ascham Homes may remove the improvement, alteration or addition and re-instate their home to its previous condition. Tenants will be liable for Ascham Homes reasonable costs of doing so.

Tenants may at their own expense carry out repairs to the structure or the outside of their home and carry out painting to the outside of their home if they first obtain the Council's permission in writing. In the case of painting the outside of their home the Council must not unreasonably refuse to give permission.

26 Inherited Improvement

If a tenant obtains a tenancy by way of succession, assignment or mutual exchange, and the previous tenant made improvements to their home, the new tenant 'steps into the shoes' of the outgoing tenant and is responsible for the repair, upkeep and replacement of any improvements.

27 Leaseholder repair obligations

Leaseholders should refer to their lease for details of repair and maintenance responsibilities. Leaseholders are responsible for repairing any damage due to deliberate misuse, neglect or carelessness caused by them, a member of their family, or visitor. Ascham Homes will recharge if there is evidence that damage is the fault of a leaseholder or their household or visitors.

28 Having to move because of disrepair

When Ascham Homes considers that necessary works (whether repairs or improvement) to a tenant's home cannot be reasonably carried out with them in occupation, Ascham Homes will require the tenant to move to temporary accommodation provided by the Council or at its request by one of its local housing partners for as long as it takes to carry out the works. Tenants will be notified once

the works are completed at which point they will be required to vacate the temporary accommodation and move back into their home.

29 Making good

'Making good' means that after completing a repair Ascham Homes will also prepare the surface around the repair so that it is ready to be decorated. Usually this is done after there has been a leak. In some circumstances Ascham Homes may offer a decoration allowance. If the damage caused to a room has substantially affected the entire decorative surface, or all decorative surfaces, Ascham Homes may redecorate the entire room.

Ascham Homes will not be able to 'make good' if the tenant has covered access panels, hatches, ducts or ducting with wallpaper, tiles, carpet, wood, laminate or other finishes.

Where damage to décor has occurred and this is not the fault of Ascham Homes or its contractor the tenant will be encouraged to claim from their home contents insurance.

30 Condensation

Condensation can be caused by a number of factors including inadequate insulation, lack of air flow, or inadequate heating systems. Condensation can also become a problem by residents' use of their home for example by not using the heating system fully or not allowing proper ventilation of the kitchen and bathroom.

Ascham Homes will diagnose the cause of condensation and remedy it where it is related to inadequate structural insulation, ventilation or heating system and publish guidance on making simple lifestyle changes to reduce/eliminate condensation.

31 Insurance

It is the tenant's responsibility to insure their home and its contents. The tenant is responsible for any loss or damage to their home due to theft, flooding or accidental damage. The tenant may also be responsible for damage caused to another property, for example, caused by flooding from their property. Tenants will routinely be advised to take out home contents insurance. Ascham Homes actively promotes a reasonably priced home contents insurance scheme or a tenant can make their own insurance arrangements which should, as a minimum, match the standard provided under the promoted scheme.

32 Aids and adaptations

Ascham Homes will:

- publicise how LBWF and Ascham Homes work together to deliver the service
- publicise which aids and adaptations LBWF maintain and which Ascham Homes maintain
- work closely with LBWF to minimize waiting times and be aware of general waiting times for adaptations and communicate these to customers on demand.

Aids and adaptations left behind by a vacating tenant will be recycled wherever possible.

33 Gas appliance safety checks

There is a legal requirement for Ascham Homes to service gas appliances once a year. Ascham Homes will work with contractors to meet this requirement. Ascham Homes will publicise the importance of gas servicing and the consequences for tenants of not providing access. We will work closely to achieve prompt access to homes, and will involve Legal Services where access is not provided. Timed procedures will be used to gain access and cases will be monitored closely.

The annual check by the contractor will involve a check on landlord's pipe-work and gas appliances, and visual inspection of the tenants' own gas appliances e.g. cooker.

If any appliance is found to be immediately unsafe it will be disconnected from the supply and a warning notice will be served.

Ascham Homes will order work to repair landlord pipe work and appliances. The tenant will be responsible for repairing or replacing their own appliances at their own cost. Any repairs must be carried out by a Corgi registered engineer.

34 Laminate flooring and other overlays

If a home is a flat above the ground floor tenants must seek Ascham Homes permission before installing laminate or slot and groove wooden flooring. If it is laid without permission, Ascham Homes may require the tenant to remove it.

If permission is granted this will be subject to the tenant installing adequate insulation to Ascham Homes satisfaction to prevent noise transfer into neighbouring properties.

If permission is granted but subsequently in the opinion of Ascham Homes, it contributes to or increases noise nuisance caused to neighbours, including day to day living noise nuisance Ascham Homes may require the tenant to remove it.

In such circumstances Ascham Homes will not be liable for any costs of its removal or its replacement with an alternative form of floor covering.

If works need to be carried out to a tenant's home which requires any laminate or slot and groove flooring or other floorcovering to be removed or lifted, Ascham Homes will not be liable for the cost of its replacement or the costs of relaying it.

35 Trip hazards

Any obstruction of 10mm or more presents a potential trip hazard.

If, on inspection a potential trip hazard is observed staff must assess the likelihood of the hazard arising and remove/remedy the hazard in appropriate circumstances. The two main criteria for evaluation are severity of the hazard and the frequency of use.

36 Review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless amendment is prompted by a change in legislation, operational requirements or customer feedback. The Policy will be reviewed in consultation with tenants and staff. This policy was issued in February 2010.