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1 HOUSING REPAIRS & INVESTMENT

1.1 DELIVERING THE NEW REPAIRS POLICY

From 6th April 2015, Thurrock Council has implemented a new Repairs Policy, which can be found online at thurrock.gov.uk/repairs or by calling 01375 366145.

This Repairs Policy has been implemented in the context of a wider programme of investment and regeneration, underlying Thurrock Council’s strategy to meet housing needs in the Borough. The strategy contributes to the Council’s vision that Thurrock will be “a place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish”.

“Repairs Policy: Procedures” sets out how Thurrock Council delivers the new Repairs Policy, including:

- How you can access the repairs service: how to report repairs, useful numbers, and giving us feedback;
- How we deliver the repairs service: making the service more accessible, including extended appointment times, and delivering repairs effectively – through prioritised repairs and batched repairs provision.

“Repairs Policy: Procedures” should be read in conjunction with the new 2015 Repairs Policy and its associated appendices:

- Appendix A: Repairs Responsibilities
- Appendix B: Common Faults & Resolution

1.2 TYPES OF REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

In delivering effective asset management, and maximising value in funding, Thurrock Council has a range of delivery streams for asset investment, repairs & maintenance:

- Responsive Repairs: the Responsive Repairs service addresses emergency, urgent or routine repairs – routine repairs do not fall into a batch repairs or planned work programme;
- Batch Repairs: where there are a number of repairs to the same property component, these may be wrapped up into a batch repairs programme – this typically might include fencing, gutters or drainage;
- Cyclical & Planned Maintenance: works which are required in a regular cycle, providing maintenance to property elements such as painting, or where servicing works are required to components such as lifts or door entry systems;
- Capital Works: large scale investment to make substantial improvements to properties – this includes for example the Transforming Homes programme which delivers new kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, and external works.
2 HOW WE DELIVER THE RESPONSIVE REPAIRS SERVICE

2.1 APPOINTMENTS
Appointments are offered on a weekday morning or afternoon basis, with time slots detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday – Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>08.00 – 13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>12.00 – 17.00</td>
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In some circumstances we offer extended repairs times – to early evening weekdays and Saturday mornings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday – Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extended time slots</td>
<td>17.00 – 18.30</td>
<td>08.00 – 13.00</td>
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2.2 PRE-INSPECTIONS
There are some requests for repairs which will not immediately generate a repair order because of a need to undertake an inspection. Some examples are dampness and structural defects, or a difficulty on the part of the tenant to fully describe the nature of the repair.

The target for the completion of pre inspections is 5 working days.

Following inspection, a repair order will be raised to the appropriate repair category and a suitable appointment time will be agreed with the tenant.

The tenant will receive a confirmation receipt once the order has been raised.

2.3 PROPERTY ACCESS FOR REPAIRS
Tenants are required to provide access as described within their conditions of tenancy. Tenants are required to allow Council employees, agents and contractors access to the Property at reasonable times to carry out a gas safety inspection, inspect the condition of, or to carry out repairs or improvements or other works to, the Property, the installations, fixtures and fittings, the communal areas or adjoining property.

Thurrock Council will normally give you at least 24 hours' notice if we require access and we will attempt to arrange a convenient appointment with you. However, immediate access may be required in an emergency. In the event of an emergency where we cannot reasonably be expected to gain access in any other way, we may force entry to the Property. If we have to force entry to the Property, we will re-secure the home afterwards.

In the case of gas safety inspections, the Council will make written requests for access to the Property. However, if we are unable to gain access to the Property to carry out the inspection then we may be in breach of our statutory duties, and resident and others’ safety may be put at risk. In such circumstances we may take steps to end the tenancy due to breach of the above provisions, and/or we may seek an injunction from the Court to obtain access.
Tenants are required to reimburse us for any reasonable expenditure we incur as a result of your failure to allow access on a pre-arranged appointment or where you have failed to respond to a request for access. This may include the costs of forcing entry.

You are responsible for moving furniture and lifting carpets to allow repairs to be done. If carpets have been lifted to carry out a repair you agree that we cannot be held responsible for any damage.

2.4 DELIVERING EXTRA HELP FOR VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

Where residents qualify for extra help in repairs & maintenance of the property (see Repairs Policy section 2.5), the Council will provide an additional offer to these residents.

This includes delivering a number of repairs which would ordinarily be the responsibility of the tenant through the ‘Handy Man’ service. This service sits separately from the responsive repairs service, however delivers these ‘Handy Man’ repairs within a routine repair timeframe (within 20 working days).

2.5 TEMPORARY DECANT TO ALLOW WORKS

Where we are required to, or consider it necessary to, carry out repairs, improvement or other works to the Property or the building or estate of which the Property forms part (whether under the terms of this agreement or otherwise) and they cannot reasonably be carried out while you remain in occupation of the Property then:

- In exchange for us providing alternative temporary accommodation you will vacate the Property for as long as is necessary for us to carry out the works; (This is known as a “decant”) and
- Upon the works being completed (as to the date of which our decision will be final) you will vacate the temporary accommodation and reoccupy the Property.

Where a temporary decant is necessary as described above we will assist with the removal and storage of personal possessions, which are non essential during the decanted period. Some items may remain in the property as long as they do not interfere with any work being carried out. However we will not accept any liability or responsibility for any damage caused to items whilst they remain in the property.

During the temporary decant period you will remain a secure tenant of the Property.

2.6 MAINTAINING A QUALITY REPAIRS SERVICE: HOW QUALITY IS MONITORED

Thurrock Council has implemented a number of enhanced contract management measures in recent years, leading to significantly improved levels of repairs service provision. Taking forward to these measures, a procedure for continual service improvement ensures that the Council is always seeking to provide a more effective and efficient service to residents.

Service providers and contractors are managed by performance indicators covering all aspects of service provision, including key elements such as:
• Customer satisfaction & complaints;
• Repairs performance – including completion times and repairs fixed first time;
• Appointments performance.
3 HOW TO REPORT REPAIRS

3.1 REPAIRS – USEFUL NUMBERS

To report a repair to your council property contact:

**Housing repairs**

0800 074 0169 / repairs@thurrock.gov.uk

This line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, free to call from landlines, call charges from mobile providers may vary.

Emails will be answered within 24 hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

If the repair is reported out of normal working hours it will be made safe or secure until a permanent repair can be made.

**Gas leak**

To report a gas leak, contact National Grid: 0800 111 999

**Blocked sewer**

To report a blocked sewer to your property contact Anglian water: 08457 145 145

This is a 24-hour hotline and will cost the same as a local call.

3.2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: FEEDBACK & COMPLAINTS

Thurrock Council works with its service providers and contractors to ensure that repairs service provision is delivered to residents right first time, delivering both value and quality to all tenants.

We undertake customer satisfaction surveys for a statistically representative sample of repairs undertaken, and integrate feedback received into our continued service improvement. However, it is recognised that sometimes things will go wrong.

**If you are unhappy with your repairs**

If you don't like your council repairs or you are in any way unhappy with the service you have received, call our repairs section. They will take details from you and try and solve your problem.

Housing repairs: 0800 074 0169 / repairs@thurrock.gov.uk

This line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, free to call from landlines, call charges from mobile providers may vary. Emails will be answered within 24 hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

**Making a complaint**

You can make a complaint by contacting us:

Complaints: 0845 300 5263 / complaints@thurrock.gov.uk

Complaints, Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, RM17 6SL

Sometimes when you complain we will ask the service to contact you direct and discuss the problem. If you are still not satisfied we will start a formal complaint process. Read examples of how we've dealt with complaints in our 'you said, we did' pages.
Other means of resolution

Complaints about housing service can also be addressed through the engagement of tenant panels, MPs and Councillors, through their role as a ‘designated person’. More details can be found by calling Thurrock complaints team, or on the Thurrock Council website:

thurrock.gov.uk/complaints-procedure/housing-complaints

Getting involved

Tenants and leaseholders are encouraged to get involved in steering how Thurrock Council deliver services, through a range of forums:

- Tenants Excellence Panel
- Sheltered housing forum
- Leaseholders' forum
- Housing investment forum
- Customer care group
- Media panel

More information can be found by visiting the Council’s website:

thurrock.gov.uk/get-involved-as-council-tenant