

Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Date reviewed: March 2022, August 2024

Purpose: To set out Bernicia's approach to delivering a tenant focussed repairs and maintenance service that offers value for money and fulfils our statutory obligations.

Definitions:

Responsive repairs: Repair or replacement of faulty or broken facilities (including emergencies) at the tenants request where the responsibility lies with Bernicia.

Right to repair: A contractual right to compensation for certain small urgent repairs not completed within prescribed timescales.

Aids & adaptations: minor adaptations to properties that makes the home more accessible and safer.

Planned improvements: Replacement of kitchens, bathrooms, rewires etc. These will be undertaken according to the life cycle and/or current condition set out in the 'Bernicia Standard.'

Cyclical maintenance: Periodic testing, inspection, and maintenance of components and/or installations such as domestic and communal heating and hot water systems

Rechargeable repairs: Repairs that are the result of damage or neglect to the property and/or its fittings and fixtures internally or externally caused by a tenant. This also includes damage caused by a member of the tenants household or an invited visitor to the property and/or communal area.

Associated Documents:

Aids & adaptations Policy
Asbestos Management Policy
Asset Management Strategy
Compensation Policy
Electrical Safety Policy

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
Gas Safety (Plus) Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Procurement Policy
Rechargeable Repairs Policy
Repairs & Maintenance Procedure
Tenancy Policy
Value for Money Strategy

Date For Review: March 2025

Responsibility: Managing Director Property & Construction

Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Bernicia aims to provide relevant, tenant focussed repairs and maintenance service which offers value for money and fulfils our legal, regulatory, and statutory obligations.
- 1.2 Our aim is to be proactive in maintaining our stock in advance of problems through our Asset Management strategies and stock investment programmes thereby reducing the number of responsive repairs required.
- 1.3 We believe by providing a relevant repairs and maintenance service this will contribute to tenant satisfaction levels and protect the condition and integrity of our housing stock.

2 Policy statements

- 2.1 Bernicia will provide property maintenance services to effectively maintain our stock and ensure the safety of our tenants and stakeholders.
- 2.2 We are committed to providing a relevant repairs and maintenance service to ensure that our tenants are satisfied, the condition and integrity of our housing stock is protected and in doing so value for money is achieved.
- 2.3 Bernicia will keep in good repair the structure and exterior of all our dwellings and common areas together with the components that make up each property. We will ensure installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity, sanitation, and heating are in working order and will service communal equipment supplied by Bernicia in accordance with current legislation, regulation and/or best practice.
- 2.4 Tenants will be treated with dignity and respect, and we will effectively engage with our tenant focus groups to ensure the tenant voice is heard.
- 2.5 Tenants who are dissatisfied with the repairs and maintenance service will be encouraged to follow the complaints procedure. We will listen to our tenants and take complaints seriously and use the opportunity to learn from complaints to drive service improvements. tenant

Responsive repairs

- 2.6 Bernicia will provide a range of ways for tenants to report repairs, including by telephone, in writing, in person, by email, fax and via online. In addition, Bernicia colleagues will also identify and report repairs arising from home visits and estate walkabouts.

- 2.7 A 365 day out-of-hours emergency service will be available where there is an immediate risk to the health and safety of the tenant or the security of their home.
- 2.8 Information on Bernicia's repairing responsibilities will be given to all tenants within their tenancy agreement and will be publicised on our website and from time to time in newsletters.
- 2.9 Where a repair is reported that is the tenant's responsibility, we will inform the tenant of this at the time of reporting.
- 2.10 If a repair is reported that has been caused through damage or neglect by the tenant, a member of their household or invited visitor, we may recharge for the cost of the repair. This is covered in our Rechargeable Repairs Policy.
- 2.11 We have two repair categories which are emergency and standard.
- Emergency – where there is a serious and immediate risk to the health and safety of the tenant or the security of their home we will aim to attend within 24 hours.
 - Standard – all other jobs will be booked on the next available appointment that is agreed with the tenant.
 - Where a further visit is required, we will endeavour to complete the repair within 3 days if the repair is categorised as a tenants right to repair or within 30 days if the follow-on work is not of an urgent nature.
 - Where possible we will arrange and agree the additional visit with the tenant whilst still at their home. Where this is not possible, we will endeavour to contact the tenant within 24 hours offering a new appointment time.
- 2.12 Bernicia will ensure that all colleagues and stakeholders associated with the delivery of the repair and maintenance service are trained and regularly updated and assessed to ensure their understanding of and adherence to this policy and any associated procedures.
- 2.13 Guidelines for colleagues will set out how they manage appointments to consider specific circumstances relating to age, disability or vulnerability.

Appointments will be offered for the majority of responsive repairs, and we will endeavour to make an appointment at a date and time to suit the needs of the tenant.

Right to Repair

- 2.14 Bernicia tenant will have a right to repair on terms that reflect as much as possible section 96 of the Housing Act 1985 and all amendments.

This provides the right to have certain urgent minor repairs done quickly at no cost to the tenant where the repair may affect health, safety, or security. We will provide full details of the Right to Repair Scheme including a schedule of qualifying repairs upon request.

Aids & adaptations

- 2.15 We recognise that adaptations may be required to properties to meet the needs of tenants who are or become disabled or otherwise experience difficulties living in their home.
- 2.16 We recognise that the main obligation to carry out aids and adaptations rests with local authorities via the DFG (where appropriate). As a Landlord, we will not normally apply to the statutory bodies for an aid or adaptation but will work with residents to support them if they need to make an application for a DFG.
- 2.17 Bernicia will undertake minor aids and adaptations as outlined within Bernicia's Aids & adaptations policy.

Planned maintenance

- 2.18 Bernicia's Asset Management Strategy outlines our approach to designing and delivering our services. It sets out the framework that enables us to undertake a range of activities to ensure our assets deliver the best returns for Bernicia, its tenants, tenants, and stakeholders as regards economic performance and economic/social sustainability. It considers not only the condition of our stock but also the overall environment within which our estates are located.
- 2.19 It seeks to support the development of a shared understanding between Bernicia, its tenants, tenants, and key stakeholders on the outcomes required from Bernicia's assets. It demonstrates that we have detailed understanding of our assets, high quality and accurate data on the condition and compliance of our stock, and that we use our understanding to make informed investment decisions that ensure the safety of our tenants and compliance with statutory requirements and our own service standards.
- 2.20 High quality accurate data and tenant involvement are at the core of everything we do, enabling the Board and the wider organisation to make informed decisions on the priorities for investment in our tenants' homes and the neighbourhoods in which they live, with a full understanding of the associated risks, tenant expectations and opportunities.
- 2.21 Our planned investment programmes are developed from our comprehensive stock condition data, which includes information on the condition of components, component life cycles, the installation dates of components, thermal efficiency, tenant/building safety, repair history and trends, and tenant feedback.

- 2.22 These programmes form the basis of our overall 30-year investment plan, as well as our detailed 5-year and annual investment plans, with the major repairs programmes delivered based on condition, with consideration of age and repair history.
- 2.23 Prior to the commencement of each individual year, detailed surveys are carried out on the works planned as a final check and balance, thereby ensuring that the final programme of work accurately reflects the needs of the stock, thus ensuring best use of resources at all times.
- 2.24 Our investment plans are procured in accordance with legislation, our Financial Regulations, and following the requirements of our procurement strategy. We adopt a mixed economy approach, utilising traditional procurement, existing national/regional/local frameworks and our internal Property Maintenance Division (PMD), with these contracts offering longevity where practicable to enable the building of successful relationships with our contractors/framework partners and gaining efficiencies from collaborative working, long term planning, economies of scale and added social value, providing compliant procurement with the flexibility to respond to the opportunities within the market.
- 2.25 Our properties will be measured against Decent Homes Standard and the emerging government standards. In addition, we will work to Bernicia's own Decent Homes Plus Standard, which sets more aspirational targets for our stock.
- 2.26 We have and will continue to improve the energy efficiency of our tenant's homes, raising the average SAP rating of our stock, and therefore reducing fuel poverty, carbon emissions and our environmental impact.
- 2.27 Up-to-date plans will be available to inform tenants at appropriate times of forthcoming works to their homes.

Cyclical/compliance maintenance

- 2.28 The safety and wellbeing of our tenant is a core priority.
- 2.29 We regularly review building and tenant safety to monitor and mitigate risk, including that to our higher risk assets, and deliver timely and relevant plans to clearly demonstrate our achievement of all existing and emerging compliance standards and legislation, including the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Bill.
- 2.30 Our Keystone Servicing and Inspection module uses our high level of comprehensive data to produce robust programmes for cyclical inspection, servicing, testing and risk assessments, both within our tenant homes and communal areas.

- 2.31 The inspection and maintenance of components will include the big six areas of gas safety and other heating (including solid fuel), electrical testing, water hygiene, lifting operations and equipment, asbestos management, and fire safety.
- 2.32 In addition, we will inspect and maintain other areas such as automatic doors and door entry systems, lightning protection, air conditioning; specialist medical equipment and drainage systems.

Estates Services (Pest control)

- 2.33 General pest control and eradication remains the responsibility of the tenant such as certain insects (wasps, ants etc.) and vermin such as rats and mice that may from time to time nest in or around the vicinity of the property and create a nuisance or disturbance within the home.
- 2.34 We will however deal with infestations of woodworm within the home.
- 2.35 Where any defect within the property is enabling the infestation to enter or nest within the property it is Bernicia's responsibility to repair the defect in line with this policy and procedure and will do so once the infestation has been eradicated or as directed by the pest control service prior to or upon completion of the works to eradicate the infestation.
- 2.36 Where pests and vermin exist within any communal area of a property, including garage blocks owned by Bernicia, we will arrange for pest control services to attend to deal with the issues. Timescales for dealing with pest such as wasps nest, rats etc. will be within two working days. Please call 0344 800 3800 or email contact@bernicia.com
- 2.37 Assistance to eradicate pests can also be sought from the Local Authority in which the property exists. To report this please visit <https://www.gov.uk/report-pest-problem>. Charges may apply for some or all pest control services.

3 Responsibility for implementation

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Managing Director Property and Construction, Director Asset and Property and Director Housing Services to ensure the effective implementation of this policy.

4 Actioning the policy

- 4.1 This policy will be actioned in relation to requests for repairs and maintenance, aids and adaptations, cyclical and planned maintenance schemes.

5 Monitoring the policy

- 5.1 Performance for responsive repairs, aids and adaptations, cyclical and planned maintenance schemes will be monitored to check if targets for cost, quality and operational outputs are being met.
- 5.2 Performance will be reported to Bernicia's Board and Committees on a quarterly basis and to the tenant engagement panels.
- 5.3 Bernicia will carry out an appropriate percentage of post inspections suitable to particular categories of work.
- 5.4 Action will be taken where performance is unsatisfactory.
- 5.5 Value for money will be assessed through externally validated benchmarking and market testing.
- 5.6 We will monitor tenant feedback to check satisfaction levels and to learn from informal and formal complaints.

6 Resources

- 6.1 There are no resource implications as a consequence of this policy. Adequate resources will be available to deliver responsive repair, aids and adaptations, cyclical and planned maintenance responsibilities.

7 Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 An equality and diversity impact assessment has been undertaken on this policy. In carrying out our services, we are committed to:
 - Treating all tenants and colleagues positively regardless of any personal characteristics including gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender reassignment or religion.
 - Taking seriously all complaints and investigating and responding accordingly.
 - Using plain language and providing information in other languages, large print, audio, and Braille on request.

Uncontrolled if printed – This may not be the latest version of the policy

All policies must be printed from Connect only – please make sure it is the latest version.

