



**Cobalt**  
■ ■ ■ Housing

**RESPONSIVE  
REPAIRS  
POLICY**

**UNDER REVIEW**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Lead Director</b>    | <b>Director of Operations</b>                   |
| <b>Reference</b>        | POL 22  |
| <b>Committee Review</b> | Homes & Neighbourhoods Committee – January 2019 |
| <b>Board Approval</b>   | January 2019                                    |
| <b>Version Date</b>     | January 2019                                    |

Under Review

## 1. Introduction & Aim

Cobalt Housing is committed to maintaining its properties to a high level and in doing so provides assurance that it meets its statutory and contractual repair responsibilities. Cobalt acknowledges that the delivery of an excellent repairs service is a main priority for tenants and leaseholders and therefore strives to deliver a high quality repairs service. Our aim is to deliver a straightforward and cost effective repairs service that extends the life of its assets.

This policy will ensure that Cobalt delivers an excellent repairs service and ensures residents are safe and properties are in a good state of repair. The policy ensures that all tenants and leaseholders are aware of how to report a repair, the timescale in which the repair will be carried out and how the service is monitored.

## 2 Policy Statement

Cobalt Housing is committed to providing a high quality repairs service and has a responsibility to ensure that its properties are in a good state of repair. It is the objective of Cobalt to ensure that all repairs are carried out within the timescales detailed within the policy and that all its statutory and contractual repairing responsibilities are delivered.

The key objectives of this policy cover the following areas:

- How to report a repair
- Repairs priorities
- Service delivery
- Appointments
- Out of Hours Emergency Repairs
- Repair responsibilities
- Alterations
- Rechargeable repairs
- Quality Assurance
- No Access
- Right to Repair
- Customer Satisfaction
- Planned Maintenance
- Vulnerable Persons

## 3 Policy Principles

The Home Standard of the regulatory framework for social housing in England (from April 2012) requires Registered Providers to:

- Provide a cost effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, customers, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time.
- To ensure that customers' homes meets the Decent Homes standard.

In order to achieve the above detailed below are the key policy principles for the responsive repairs service:

## How to report a repair

Cobalt is committed to making access to its services as easy as possible. In view of this there are a number of ways for tenants and leaseholders to report repairs;

- at our office
- Digital Hubs
- "My Cobalt"
- by telephone
- by letter
- Face to Face

## Repairs priorities

All repairs are prioritised as either Emergency, Urgent or Routine repairs.

**Emergency Repairs** –These include repairs affecting the safety or security of the property or potentially affect the health of the tenant or visitors. (Examples include gas leaks, uncontrollable water leaks, loss of heat in winter months and serious electrical faults) Cobalt will attend any emergency repairs within 4 hours and will aim to complete the job within 24 hours.

**Urgent Repairs** - These are repairs which are not classed as an emergency, but which could result in the loss of a basic facility, or where further damage will be caused if the problem is not dealt with urgently. Examples might include a minor leak to the roof, or partial loss of heating. Cobalt will aim to complete all urgent repairs within 3 working days.

**Routine Repairs** - These are repairs which can wait without causing major inconvenience to the tenant and might include such repairs as a leaking gutter or damaged kitchen unit. Cobalt will aim to complete all routine repairs within 10 working days.

Repair timescales are monitored, however there may be instances where parts or specialist engineers/services are required, and these repairs may take longer than the published timescales. Tenants will be kept informed by Cobalt of any potential delays with a repair and where applicable temporary measures will be put in place e.g. temporary oil filled heating will be provided in the winter months whilst waiting for a part to a central heating system.

## Service Delivery

Cobalt delivers its repairs service via partnering relationships with two contractors and alongside this utilises Cobalt Plus, our inhouse repairs service. A repairs option appraisal will be undertaken in early 2019 to inform our approach in the delivery of repairs from October 2020. The review will include extensive consultation with tenants on what the repairs offer should include.

## Appointments

In order to deliver a high quality repairs service, we offer an appointment system for tenants when reporting a repair.

|                      | Morning    | Afternoon  | Evening   | Weekends           |
|----------------------|------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Responsive Repairs   | 9am – 1pm  | 1pm – 5pm  | 5pm – 8pm | Saturday 9am – 1pm |
| Reactive Gas Repairs | 8am – 12pm | 12pm – 5pm | 5pm – 8pm | Saturday 9am – 1pm |

Additional timeslots are also available to avoid the school run & evening / weekend appointments are also available upon request.

### **Out of Hours Emergency Repairs**

An out of hours emergency repairs service is provided outside of normal working hours. Where an emergency repair requires attendance, our contractor will attend your home as a matter of urgency in line with our published timescales. The “Out of Hour Service” operates from:

- Monday to Friday - between 5.00PM and 9.00AM
- Wednesdays between 3pm – 9am for Cobalt Solutions training
- Weekends - between 5.00PM Friday and 9.00AM Monday

The out of hour’s service will also operate on public holidays and during Christmas closure.

### **Repair responsibilities**

Your tenancy agreement details the repairing responsibilities for both Cobalt and the tenant. This list is not exhaustive but should be used as a guide when repairs are required in your home. Where repairs are required as a result of damage caused by the tenant or any visitors these repairs will be recharged in line with our rechargeable repairs policy.

Further information relating to our repairs service is available on our website ([www.cobalthousing.org.uk](http://www.cobalthousing.org.uk)) and within your tenancy agreement.

### **Alterations**

Should a tenant wish to make alterations to their home they must make an application in writing to carry out the works. The request will be assessed, and we will confirm with you our approval or otherwise to undertake such works. In some instances, approval will be subject to a number of conditions that must be met by the tenant before undertaking works. Where a tenant carries out unauthorised works in their home we may take action as detailed within your tenancy agreement.

### **Rechargeable repairs**

Cobalt ensures that its resources for repairs and maintenance are maximised and therefore will recharge tenants for repairs that are not our responsibility or if we must carry out a repair to a property which has been caused by damage, either willful or accidental.

If a tenant has been the victim of crime and as a result their home has been damaged Cobalt will upon receipt of a crime number repair the damage and not recharge the tenant. However, if it is found that the tenant or a family member or visitor has been responsible for any criminal damage, it will be the tenants’ responsibility to either repair the damage or pay for the repairs to be completed.

## **Quality Assurance**

Some jobs will require a pre-inspection before the repair appointment can be arranged. The pre-inspection will be used to establish the extent of the works. A pre-inspection will be carried out by a surveyor or a nominated contractor representative. Following the visit to the property the tenant will be advised if a repair is required and the priority of the repair.

In order to monitor the quality of the repairs service we post inspect a proportion of completed works. Alongside this we contact a number of tenants by phone to gain feedback on the repairs service. This information is used to continually review and improve the repairs service.

## **No Access**

Tenants must allow for access to repairs. Where access cannot be gained for a standard appointment, the repair will be rescheduled/cancelled.

Where the repair is an emergency or a health and safety matter then we will continue to make contact prior to the repair being cancelled. If the repair poses a serious safety risk for other residents or the building, we will take appropriate steps to gain access.

When not gaining access for a pre-agreed appointment Cobalt experiences considerable cost and inconvenience, we reserve the right to recharge the resident for the cost of the failed visit. This will only be done once investigation has taken place into the circumstances or frequency of no access instances.

## **Right to Repair**

Section 96 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended) gives tenants the "Right to Repair". Tenants have the right to have certain urgent minor repairs carried out where the repair may affect health, safety or security. If Cobalt do not undertake the repair within the target time, nor complete the repair after a second request, tenants may be entitled to compensation. It should be noted that the "Right to Repair" does not give tenants the right to carry out a repair and then seek compensation from Cobalt.

## **Customer Satisfaction**

Cobalt takes any dissatisfaction with its repairs service, or performance of its contractors, seriously and always welcomes feedback. If you are dissatisfied with our responsive repair service please contact our solutions Call Centre and they will support you and try and help resolve the matter. Formal complaints regarding a repair, or the conduct of any contractors, will be dealt with via Cobalt's complaints and compliments policy.

## **Planned Maintenance**

The Planned Maintenance Programme is administered separately from the responsive repair service. Planned works are designed to improve properties and bring them up to a standard known as the 'Cobalt Standard', which is higher than the Governments "Decent Homes Standard". Planned maintenance programmes include items such as replacement bathrooms and kitchens. Cobalt will ensure that tenants are consulted and kept informed when any planned works in their homes or neighbourhoods are scheduled to take place.

## Vulnerable People

Cobalt recognises that some tenants are vulnerable and may require an enhanced repairs service, either on a permanent or temporary basis. Cobalt will strive to provide a fair and equal service and consider a tailored approach to eliminate any discrimination either directly or indirectly. This may include:

- Taking into account a person’s ability to access services, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Work with tenants and contractors to seek alternative methods of communication and where possible apply reasonable adjustments either on a permanent or temporary basis
- Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will make referrals to the appropriate medical profession and or social services

## 4 Risk Management

The key risk associated with non-delivery of this Policy is:

| Risk Register Ref: SD10  | Risk:  |
|--|--|
| Poor management of repairs   | Poor management of repairs due to not following agreed policy and procedure standards may result in complaints, claims, fatalities, legislative/compliance breaches and negative regulatory assessments.   |
| Risk Consequences:   | Management and Mitigation:   |
| Complaints – Ombudsman<br>Claims – Insurance & Disrepair<br>Breach of landlord compliance standards<br>Health & Safety breach<br>Breach of landlord premises legislation – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defective Premises Act 1972</li> <li>• Landlord &amp; Tenant Act 1985</li> <li>• Occupier’s Liability Act 1957</li> </ul> Poor VfM<br>Poor reputation<br>Negative regulatory review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer Standard</li> <li>• Decent Homes Standard</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints management and resolution team and process</li> <li>• Disrepair Monitoring and lessons learned feedback</li> <li>• Insurance Claims monitoring and lessons learned feedback</li> <li>• Tenant feedback</li> <li>• Health &amp; Safety compliance monitoring</li> <li>• Landlord procedures and standards monitoring</li> <li>• Emergency repair monitoring</li> <li>• Contractor performance monitoring</li> </ul> |

## Key Risk Indicators and Control Limits

Detailed below are the key performance measures in respect of the responsive repairs service.

- Emergency repairs attended within 4 hours
- Urgent repairs completed within 3 working days
- Routine repairs completed within 10 working days
- Customer satisfaction with the repairs service
- Repairs completed right first time

Performance in respect of the repairs service is reported to board and the Homes and Neighbourhood committee (HNC).

## **5 Regulatory & Legislative Compliance**

Landlord & Tenant Act 1985

Housing Act 2004

HCA – The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012

2006 Decent Homes Standard

Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994

Defective Premises Act 1972

Commonhold & Leasehold Reform Act 2002

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Building Regulations Act 1984

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006

Equality Act 2010

Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016

Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018

The Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015

Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002

Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

Environmental Protection Act 1990

## **6 Links to Other Key Documents**

Asset Management Strategy 2018

Business Efficiency Strategy 2017

Health & Safety Policy 2018

Gas Safety Policy 2018

Electrical Safety Policy 2018

Asbestos Management Policy 2018

Asbestos Management Plan 2018

Rechargeable Repairs Policy



## 7 Governance of this Policy

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Equality and Diversity</b>                        | An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on this policy and recommendations and been included within the policy. When carrying out a responsive repair we will make reasonable adjustments on a case by case basis.   |
| <b>Financial and Links to VfM</b>                    | Responsive repairs require sufficient budget provision to ensure all necessary urgent and non-urgent repairs are undertaken in a timely manner.  |
| <b>Privacy and Data Protection</b>                   | Consideration in terms of GDPR needs to be factored in information is being passed to a contractor to facilitate a repair request.   |
| <b>Health and Safety</b>                             | Failure to implement this Policy carries significant risk in terms of health and safety for its tenants, staff and contractors and embedding the policy will ensure Cobalt assets are safe and fit for habitation.   |
| <b>Development and Consultation</b>                  | The policy is required to ensure Cobalt meets The Home Standard of the regulatory framework for social housing and provides a cost effective repairs and maintenance service.<br><br>The consultative panel have reviewed the policy prior to its approval and recommendations have been adopted in the final version.   |
| <b>Customer Profiles and Accessing Services Data</b> | Relevant profiling data will be used to determine if a tenant requires the service to be tailored when undertaking a responsive repair.  |
| <b>Monitoring and Review</b>                         | Performance of the following will be reported to the Homes & Neighbourhood Committee (HNC) on a quarterly basis and to Board, if relevant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency repairs attended within 4 hours</li> <li>• Urgent repairs completed within 3 working days</li> <li>• Routine repairs completed within 10 working days</li> <li>• Customer satisfaction with the repairs service</li> <li>• Repairs completed right first time</li> </ul> |
| <b>Roles &amp; Responsibility</b>                    | The Director of Operations is responsible to the Chief Executive and the Board for ensuring the effective implementation of this policy. Implementation of and adherence to the policy will be monitored by the Board.   |

## 8 Definitions

HNC – Homes and Neighbourhood Committee

GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation

HCA – Homes and Communities Agency (now Homes England, the Regulator of Social Housing)

VFM – Value for Money