Repairs and Maintenance Policy - Version 4

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1. Policy Statement

TorVista Homes are committed to delivering a high-quality, modern and effective repairs service and to provide homes that are comfortable, maintained and safe for people to live in.

The primary purpose of this policy is to ensure that all TorVista Homes staff and residents are aware, understand and are equipped with information to deliver the requirements of the repairs service.

2. Policy Aims

This policy recognises that a successful repairs service considers doing the right thing for TorVista Homes residents by getting it right first time

The policy is designed to meet the following aims:

- To deliver a great, consistent and modern repairs service
- To provide an efficient service that ensures our properties are protected and well maintained whilst maximising added value
- To ensure that all residents live in a safe and habitable environment
- To comply with relevant statutory and regulatory obligations
- To deliver the promises made within the service standards (Appendix A)
- To promote a culture of innovation and incorporate emerging technologies.
- To respect and protect our planet through our working practices

And objectives:

- To interact and listen to the feedback of residents to shape service delivery and residents experience
- To continually strive for the highest levels of performance and residents satisfaction
- To place emphasis on the quality of repair works
- To clearly define the repair responsibilities of TorVista Homes and residents
- To provide a service that is accessible and convenient for residents
- To undertake repairs in the most efficient manner whilst adopting a right first-time ethos

3. Scope

This policy covers the responsive repairs and maintenance service to properties and communal areas owned and/or managed by TorVista Homes. Excluded from this policy are rechargeable repairs, resident alterations and void repairs which will have their own policies.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Director will have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Housing Manager will ensure that the policy and associated procedures are embedded within the operational delivery of the repairs service and that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are adequately trained to carry them out.

TorVista Homes staff and residents will follow the policy guidelines and its approach to repairs and maintenance.

5. Legislation and Guidance

TorVista Homes will deliver a repairs service that complies with regulatory and statutory obligations to ensure the health, safety and security of people and property are maintained at all times.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) provides The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from 2012 including 'The Home Standard'.

The key areas of legislation in this policy are:

- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Landlord and Residents Act 1985
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Housing Act 2004
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Awaab's Law

6. Definitions

'Resident' – Any resident, licensee or leaseholder of a property owned and/or managed by TorVista Homes.

'Repair' – The process of rectifying a component or installation when it is faulty or in a state of disrepair; in a TorVista Homes owned and/or managed property.

7. Repair Responsibilities

The responsibility for repairing and maintaining homes is shared between TorVista Homes and residents and are set out in the Tenancy Agreement.

Residents can report repairs 24 hours a day, every day of the year. We aim to offer appointments for the majority of repairs and all repair inspections; and complete the repair right first time.

Repairs request can be taken

- Via a 24 hours phone line
- In writing
- Via email

When a repair is requested we will:

- Offer a convenient appointment date for the repair
- Tell the residents approximately how long they will have to wait for the repair to be completed
- Complete all non-urgent repairs within an average of 20 working days.

Residents must report repairs that are the responsibility of TorVista Homes, as soon as reasonably possible, to ensure the property does not fall into disrepair, this also includes repairs to the communal areas where you live, if not covered by a management company.

8. Repair Categories

Repairs will be classified and responded to within TorVista Homes's repair categories and timescales.

Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs are any defects that put the health, safety or security of properties, residents or anyone else at immediate risk.

Emergency repairs will be responded to and **made safe within 24 hours**.

Where possible a full repair will be carried out, if this is not possible we will arrange a new appointment at a time convenient for the residents

Urgent Repair

Urgent Repairs are any defects that causes loss of facilities to the residents or likely to cause further deterioration to the structure, fabric or services to the building.

Urgent Repairs will be carried out within 5 working days, from the repair being reported and accepted.

Routine Repair

A routine repair is a repair that can prevent immediate damage to the property and/ or overcome inconvenience to residents.

Routine repairs will be carried out within 20 working days from the time a repair is reported to the completion of the work, at the resident's convenience.

Planned Repairs

There are some repairs that require specialist materials and/ or equipment and further time to complete. They can also consist of a replacement rather than a repair of a component.

Planned repairs will be carried out within 40 working days.

TorVista Homes also carry out planned maintenance to properties as part of wider estate investment schemes. If a property is identified for improvement works, the residents will be notified, and works can be brought forward if required.

Examples of repairs that fall under each response category are listed in Appendix 3.

9. Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs are available outside of day-to-day operating hours for repairs that pose an immediate risk to people and/ or property.

10. Individual Circumstances

TorVista Homes appreciate and embrace the diversity of residents and there will be occasions where services will need to be tailored to accommodate individuals and their needs. Every attempt will be made to identify any individual circumstances at first point of contact to ensure reasonable adjustments can be made.

10.1. Code of Conduct (TorVista Homes and Residents)

TorVista Homes and its Representatives

- will answer calls promptly and be polite, honest and helpful at all times.
- will introduce themselves when calling the residents by phone and will show photo identification before entering a resident's home.
- will explain what work is going to be carried out and discuss with the residents how this might affect them.
- will take care of all residents' belongings whilst working in their property, protecting them from damage and dust for example.
- will make sure that materials and tools do not cause danger to anyone in the

residents' home.

- will make sure that when having to use residents' electricity we ask first but wherever possible use portable battery tools. Where this is not possible the use of electricity must be kept to a minimum.

- will keep mess and rubbish to a minimum, making sure it is all removed at the end of the working day or when the job has been completed.

- will make sure that electricity, water and gas are connected at the end of each day wherever possible.

- will limit the use of their mobile phones.

- if the repair is a TorVista Homes responsibility we and our contractors will take responsibility and take ownership and not blame any other party.

- are not allowed to smoke or play radios whilst working in a resident's home or garden.

- are not allowed to use a resident's phone or toilet without asking for permission first.

- are not allowed to make or receive personal phone calls during their work.

- are not allowed to be in a resident's property with children under 18 without a responsible adult being present.

- are not allowed to accept gifts from residents.

- are not allowed to keep keys for residents' homes.

- Where appropriate a resident may ask for a security code word to be used to gain access. If given this will be made available to the member of staff or representative to give added security to residents that feel especially vulnerable.

10.2. Resident access Responsibilities

- TorVista Homes offer a flexible appointment system for repairs (excluding emergencies which are carried out within 24 hours).

- Residents must allow authorised staff of TorVista Homes or other agents/contractors of TorVista Homes into their home at all reasonable hours to inspect its condition, do any repairs needed, or improvements or to service appliances or to carry out work TorVista Homes consider necessary to make sure the property and surrounding properties do not put the residents or anyone else at risk.

- Staff or contractors employed by TorVista Homes must have access to carry out

gas servicing as and when required.

- TorVista Homes may need to gain access to homes to inspect, clean or repair a home or neighbouring dwellings, or any sewers, drains, pipes, wiring or cable serving a home or neighbouring dwellings.

- Authorised staff of TorVista Homes may need to enter a property without notice in an emergency, using reasonable force if necessary, if TorVista Homes feel there is a risk of personal injury or damage to property or surrounding properties.

- Residents must not cause or commit or allow anyone living with them or visitors to cause or commit any form of harassment or other anti-social behaviour. Harassment and anti-social behaviour is any act or omission which interferes with the peace and comfort of or which may cause nuisance annoyance injury or offence to any other residents, members of their household, visitors, neighbours, our employees, agents and contractors or any other member of the general public and includes (but is not limited to):-

    - harassment on the grounds of age, gender, race, religion, culture, sexuality, disability or lifestyle
    - violence or threats of violence to any person
    - abusive or insulting words or behaviour
    - offensive drunkenness
    - damage or threat of damage to Premises

- Resident's dogs must be kept in a different room at all times. If this is not possible the residents will be asked to remove them from the property. If this is not possible the repair will be cancelled and rearranged with a new priority when this is possible.

- Employers must protect their staff from second hand or passive smoking. Therefore residents will be expected to refrain from smoking for two hours prior to a member of our staff or contractors visiting their homes. Residents must not smoke during the period staff and contractors are in their home.

11. Inspections

Pre-inspections

A pre-inspection maybe required before a repair appointment can be arranged. This will include circumstances where the scope of the repair is unknown. Following the inspection, the repair will be diagnosed and planned within the appropriate timescales

If a pre-inspection is required, the repair priority will not be made until the inspection has taken place.

Appointment to carry out a repair at your home:

- Appointments will be offered for the majority of repairs unless they are external to the property or to be carried out by a specialist contractor. Appointments will be offered for all

repairs that require an inspection or a visit from an estimator.

- The repair appointment will be offered that is convenient to both the residents and the association. Appointments will be offered for the morning or afternoon. Mornings being 8am till 12pm and afternoon being 12pm till 4pm.

- No appointments will be offered for emergency repairs. Emergency repairs are defined in Appendix C. The aim is, within 24hrs, to make safe an emergency repair or complete the repair where possible. Any follow up work required will be appointed if appropriate to do so as set out above.

- External repairs that do not require the resident to be present will not be given an appointment time unless requested. 24 hours' notice will be given prior to commencement of the repair.

- Specialist contractors and some contractors working on supported housing properties will make their own appointments with the residents within 3 days of the repair request. Residents will be informed of this when they report the repair.

- The residents will be informed about their repair appointment via a phone call. In all cases this information given will include the appointment date and if it is in the morning or afternoon.

- If there is no access when the operative calls then the repair cancelled. Residents will be required to report the repair again.

Post-inspections

To ensure TorVista Homes are delivering a high-quality repairs service and committed to added value, a text will be send to the resident with a link to complete a very quick survey.

12. No Access

In the event that TorVista Homes are unable to gain access due to the residents not being home for a repair, the residents will be notified that the repair has been cancelled and to contact TorVista Homes to raise another appointment.

Where a no access occurs and the repair is related to health and safety matters or materials have been ordered, the repair will stay open to allow time to make contact to rebook the repair.

TorVista Homes will monitor no accessed visits to ensure a property does not fall into disrepair.

13. Rechargeable Repairs

Damage that has been caused by a resident, their family members or visitors to a property, may be rechargeable. A rechargeable repair is defined as, '*repairs that are above and beyond*

normal wear and tear, and arise from abuse, accidental damage, neglect or deliberate and/or malicious damage'.

Rechargeable repairs are underpinned by the tenancy agreement which will enable TorVista Homes to recover the costs resulting from residents who fail to meet their obligations.

Rechargeable repairs unless covered under Health and Safety will have to paid for before the repair is completed.

14. Residents led alterations

Where residents have carried out alterations or improvements to a property and written permission has been sought, TorVista Homes will not be responsible for carrying out repairs unless this has been previously agreed and in writing.

TorVista Homes recognise that residents will want to make alterations and improvements to their homes. Where requests are reasonable they will not be refused. However written permission must be obtained if residents wish to carry out any improvements. This may also require the need for planning permission, building regulations approval or any other permission must be obtained before starting the work. Any cost of obtaining permission will be down to the residents.

15. High Levels of Repairs

Where a resident has reported a high level of repairs over a set period of time, an inspection will be carried out to the property to determine the cause of the repairs. The inspection will identify whether further repairs should be raised.

16. Repair and Maintenance

Cyclical Maintenance

Gas & Solid Fuel Servicing

- All properties that contain gas appliances will be serviced on an annual basis and properties containing solid fuel appliances will be serviced every six months.
- The gas installation is also checked when a property becomes empty prior to the new resident taking the property

Electrical Periodic Testing

- Every five years a full electrical safety test will be undertaken to all properties, as well as when the properties become empty. The electrical installation will also be visually checked for safety when an electrician visits the property. This includes planned maintenance works and repairs calls.

Asbestos

- We will establish where asbestos containing materials (ACM) are within our properties, in line with our Asbestos policy and procedures. This information will be made available to our staff, contractors and residents where necessary.

Legionella

- We will carry legionella risk assessments in line with our Legionella policy and procedures. Legionella risk will be managed through regular monitors where necessary.

Smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors

- Our aim is to fit hard wired smoke detectors to all properties. In homes with two or three stories then a detector will be fitted on each floor. These will be linked so all detectors are activated when one is set off.
- Smoke detectors have a battery back-up. These can either be a 9v battery that can be bought on the high street or a 10 year lithium battery that is embedded within the smoke detector. It is the responsibility of the residents to test the smoke detector on a regular basis and to report any issues. Replacement of 9v batteries is the responsibility of the residents. Embedded batteries will be replaced by the association.
- Some homes have carbon monoxide detectors. The association's policy is to install carbon dioxide detectors to all homes. Where installed it is the residents' responsibility to test the detector on a regular basis, change the batteries and report any issues.

Gardens

- The maintenance of gardens within dwellings is the responsibility of the residents. Where communal facilities are offered then grounds maintenance will be carried out via the association or a management company and charged to the residents via a service charge.

Pest Control

- It is not the responsibility of TorVista Homes to deal with any issues with pest control unless there is a risk of damage to the property. The residents will be directed to the local authority in the first instance to deal with any issues. Pest control within communal areas will be managed by TorVista Homes in conjunction with an appointed contractor.

Adaptations

- TorVista Homes is committed to meeting the needs of its residents for independence, privacy and dignity. We aim to help people continue to live independently and comfortably in their homes for as long as possible, with the minimum intrusion or intervention.
- A budget is allocated for carrying out adaptation works each year and, in addition, grant applications will be made for Disabled Facilities Grants from the Local Authority wherever possible. This ensures that the maximum possible number of adaptations can be carried out. We will ensure our processes are cost effective and represent value for money.

- The Aids and Adaptations Policy provides the basis to produce and implement procedures for providing aids and adaptations. There are many differences in the way each subsidiary handles aids and adaptations, however this policy provides a statement on TorVista Homes stance on the provision of aids & adaptations

Right to Buy and Right to Acquire Applications

- Once an application under the Right to Acquire Scheme is received by TorVista Homes then there becomes a legal responsibility for the association to carry out emergency repairs only. This will make sure that the property remains wind and watertight and is fit for human habitation. Examples of repairs that might be carried out are as follows:
  - serious water penetration
  - no power
  - no heating
  - no bathing facilities
  - not being able to use a toilet when there is only one in the property

Locks and key replacement

- The security of residents is a basic requirement for the association to provide. The residents will be provided with a set of keys to all relevant locks within the property. The association does not hold keys for any occupied dwellings of buildings

- If a lock is faulty then the association will affect a repair where necessary. Where keys are lost or mislaid by the residents then it is the responsibility of the residents to replace the locks or gain access to the property. The association does not provide a locksmith service out of hours.

17. Performance & Resident Satisfaction

TorVista Homes will collate and monitor performance information in relation to repairs strategic key performance indicators.

Resident's satisfaction testing will be conducted regularly on a random selection of completed repairs.

Feedback and analysis will be used to identify trends and to continuously improve service delivery.

18. Gifted Items

Any items that are gifted to the residents, usually at the start of a tenancy will require the residents to sign an agreement that explains future maintenance and replacement of the items is their responsibility.

19. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there is a significant incident, important change in circumstances or legislation which would warrant a review being carried out at an earlier date

20. Equality and Diversity

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to members and applicants. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or other grounds set out in our policy.
When applying this policy we will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and to reduce discrimination and harassment

21. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Service Standards

Appendix 2 – Repair Categories & Examples

Appendix 1 – Service Standards

Repairs and maintenance	**TorVista Homes** ✓ Provide you with a convenient way to report your repair ✓ Offer flexible appointments to carry out your repair ✓ Be polite and respectful when carrying out work in your home ✓ Where possible, carry out your repair on the first visit ✓ Make you aware when we are unable to complete your repair at first visit and keep you updated on progress ✓ Undertake a regular programme of improvements and keep you informed of when this work will take place	**Residents** ✓ Inform us of any repairs that need doing to your home or any communal area which is part of your home. ✓ Give our employees access to your property to carry out any necessary work, including your annual safety checks

Appendix 2 – Repair Categories & Examples – This is not a compressive list.

Emergency repairs – 24 HOURS

- Total loss of water supply
- Total loss of heating
- Dangerous structures including wall or ceiling collapse
- Unsecure doors and windows
- Full loss of electricity
- Unsafe power, lighting socket or electrical fitting
- Total or partial loss of gas supply
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
- Avoid major damage to a property such as a serious flood.
- Make the property secure following a break in by changing locks or boarding a broken window; and
- Removing any possible health and safety risk. This could be following Domestic Abuse attack; a Crime number may be required)
- Blocked WC/drains
- Toilet not flushing (where this is no other working toilet)
- Graffiti Removal – (Obscene or Racist)

Urgent Repairs – 5 WORKING DAYS

- Leaking roof
- Minor Plumbing repair or fault.
- Partial loss of electric power
- Partial loss of water supply
- Blocked sink, basins, bath or second toilet, No caused by a person at the property.
- Faulty Extractor fan
- Damage caused to timber flooring, stair treads, handrails or banisters.
- Entry phone handset failure. Avoid major damage to a property such as a serious flood.

Routine repairs - 20 WORKING DAYS

- Repairs to ease and adjust windows or doors
- Minor leaks or dripping tap
- Non urgent electrical work e.g. loss of power to one socket or light)
- Partial loss of electricity
- Partial loss of heating or water

Planned repairs 40 WORKING DAYS

- Repairing internal joinery including cupboards, shelving, skirting, bath panels.
- Cleaning out and/or repairing defects to gutters and rainwater pipes
- Fencing repairs
- Graffiti Removal – Non obscene or racist