



VIEWPOINT

# Housing Repairs & Maintenance Policy

Some Important Changes Affecting Your Service

JUNE 2024



# Introduction

**Our Board has recently approved an updated housing repairs and maintenance policy following a detailed consultation process with representative tenants.**

The underpinning aims of the policy are Viewpoint's key objectives:

- To deliver an excellent customer experience
- To provide good quality homes
- To be efficient and effective whilst considering value for money

The new policy contains some importance changes that we believe will drive improvements to the service and in all three respects.



# Summary of Main Changes

## **Change to Timescale for Routine Repairs**

The maximum time allowed to complete Routine Repairs is increased to 15 working days from 8 working days – this gives us more time to organise any necessary materials and to make a suitable appointment with you.

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## **Two New Repair Categories**

**Batched Works** - these are other minor works required to the common parts of developments or to a group of individual properties that can more efficiently be organised as a single package of works.

**Major and Specialised Works** – this will allow us to focus on repairs that are not routine and require more extensive work in order to resolve the issue.

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## SUMMARY OF MAIN CHANGES



### **Changes to Landlord and Tenants Responsibilities for Repairs**

There are some minor changes to this and a list of what you, as the tenant, are responsible.

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### **Rechargeable Repairs**

Making it clearer what tenants can be recharged for e.g. lost keys or customer neglect.

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# Why Change?

**Repairing, maintaining and improving the homes and developments you live in is increasingly complex and expensive. We currently spend over £5 million every year on repairs and maintenance so it is essential that we achieve best value for money and spend it where it makes the greatest impact.**

Our priorities are to keep you safe in your homes, ensure that they are wind and watertight, warm and comfortable to live in and equipped with the facilities you need. All of the money we need to do all that comes from your rents and service charges.

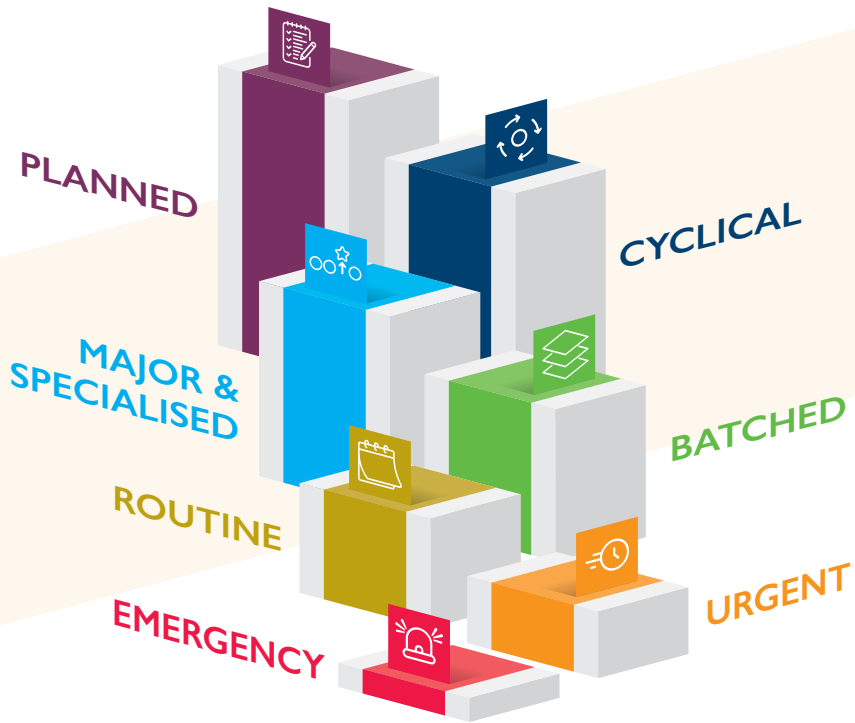
High levels of inflation have driven up our costs in delivering repairs and maintenance ahead of increases in rent levels over the past few years. At the same time we are spending more on making and keeping your homes safe and now looking ahead to having to spend even more on bringing your homes up to higher levels of energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions.

All of that means we have to strike the right balance on how we spend your rent and services charges on repairing and maintaining your home. That means we have to have tighter controls over what we spend on day to day routine repairs so that we have more to spend on planned works that will future proof your homes.

We certainly will not be spending less money on your homes, rather we will be embarking on a process of shifting that expenditure onto planned works that will have more positive impacts for you and for the business. The rest of this leaflet/article sets out the main policy changes that will help us move in that direction.

# Revised Categories

The staircase of categories below shows what those categories are and where categories fit into our repair and maintenance hierarchy.



You will probably be most familiar with the first three categories. They cover works that require immediate or early response to rectify a defect. Together they are referred to as Response Repairs.

# Repair Timescales

**Routine Repairs are by definition not emergencies or urgent and can wait a little longer to be completed without any risk to health and safety or serious inconvenience to customers.**

Our current timescale for completing Routine Repairs is 8 working days. This has now been increased to a maximum of 15 working days.

15 working days gives more time to effectively plan works efficiently and make appointments that suit our customers. It will increase our ability to get routine repairs completed right first time.

15 working days is also more consistent with the timescales set by similar landlords.

This does not mean that everyone will have to wait 15 working days to have a routine repair completed though so, to ensure that, we have set a target time to complete routine repairs target of 8 working days.

There are no changes to timescales for emergency and urgent repairs.





# Cyclical and Planned Maintenance

At the other end of the staircase you will see the other two existing categories, Cyclical and Planned maintenance.

Cyclical Maintenance comprises work done on a regular timescale to maintain the general condition of the property. Examples of items typically included in our cyclical maintenance programme are:

- Landlord health and safety risk assessments, inspections, testing and servicing.
- Gutter cleaning
- External and communal internal painter work

Planned Maintenance work is intended to prolong the useful life of properties and their component parts. Examples of items typically included in our planned maintenance programme are:

- Replacement kitchens and bathrooms
- Replacement central heating boilers
- Replacement doors and windows
- Replacement central heating systems
- Renewal of electrical fittings
- Replacement roofing

We will aim to organise upcoming planned works into a rolling three year programme and share that with customers through the tenant newsletter and website. Individual tenants will be directly notified and consulted in advance of specific planned works to their homes and developments.

# New Maintenance Categories

We have now introduced two new categories because we were finding that there was a growing gap between response repair works that needed done quickly to address defects and the more organised cyclical and planned works.

This means that our response repairs budget has been stretched beyond its capacity as we had to do a lot of jobs as one offs that could have been better done in groups over a longer timescale or that were jobs that were just too big and complicated to be done as response repairs within those strict timescales.

To bridge those gaps you will see that there are now two new additional categories: Batched Maintenance and Major & Specialised Works. We have summarised what is included in each of those categories across:



## NEW MAINTENANCE CATEGORIES

### **Batched Maintenance**

These are other general and preventative minor maintenance works required to the common parts of developments or to a group of individual properties that can more efficiently be organised as a single package of minor works.

By allowing more time for inspection, specification, procurement, organisation of labour and materials this Batched Maintenance supports the efficient delivery of works and will help reduce future response repairs demand.

We will inform affected customers when we elect to do this with a proposed timescale for completion. We will strive to complete packages of batched maintenance works within 3 months of notification by the Assets Department, subject to availability of resources.

Examples of batched maintenance works include:

- Minor maintenance or improvement of paths and steps
- Minor patching and pointing of external walls
- Minor maintenance and upgrades of kitchens
- Minor maintenance or refurbishment of walls, fences and gates
- Plasterwork patching of minor cracks
- Minor paintworks
- Minor adjustments to doors and windows including preventative replacement of ironmongery

## NEW MAINTENANCE CATEGORIES

### Major & Specialised Works

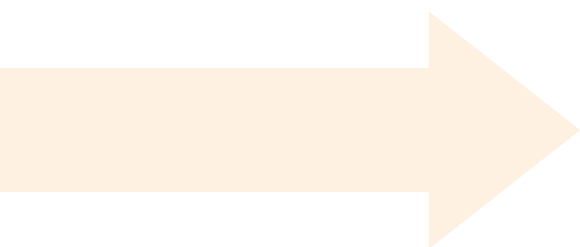
Where it is apparent that the specialised nature or scale and estimated cost of works required to fully address an identified defect requires a more focused approach to further investigation, specification, planning or procurement of appropriate contractors, we may designate that job as Major or Specialised Works.

These works can often include structural works or replacement of expensive equipment or parts often with extended delivery times.

As with Batched Maintenance, customers will be given a revised timescale for completion and the approved repair response timescales will not apply. We will aim to complete Major or Specialised Work as quickly as possible and within 3 months where possible.

Any interim works required to ensure that the customer's property remains safe and habitable pending delivery of a full solution will of course be carried out.

We are sure that the new categories in our repair and maintenance staircase will enable us to improve the service to customers and deliver better value for money.







# Landlord and Tenant Responsibilities

Viewpoint is not responsible for every repair to your home. We have reviewed the list of landlord and tenant responsibilities and can now confirm that the following are listed as the responsibility of the tenant (exceptions in italics)

- Internal decoration
- Door bell
- Driveways (for cars) (where part of pedestrian access to house)
- Electric plugs (not sockets)
- Floor tiles *except where asbestos is known or suspected*
- Garden huts
- Replacement keys (recharges may apply where keys have to be provided by the Association)
- Light bulbs and fittings in tenants' homes  
*Sealed bathroom units will be repaired or replaced. Bulbs in standard bayonet or pendant fixings will be replaced where ceiling is over 10 ft. high or where the tenant is unable to carry out replacement due to disability or infirmity*
- Rotary clothes lines – exclusive use
- Toilet seats in tenants' homes etc.
- Waste plugs/chains to basin/bath/sink



# Rechargeable Repairs

**Viewpoint is committed to providing its customers with an efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service that delivers value for money. It is not fair that the costs incurred as result of the wilful, negligent or accidental actions of a minority of customers should be met by all other customers.**

Under such circumstances, the customer responsible for making the repair necessary will be responsible for paying for it.

They will be advised of the estimated cost of replacement or repair and required to lodge this sum with Viewpoint prior to work proceeding.

Our approach to recharging customers is summarised as follows:

## **Customer Damage or Neglect**

If a repair has arisen because the customer has not taken proper care of the property or because they, a member of their household or a visitor has damaged it, the customer will be held liable to either:

- Repair the damage to a standard acceptable to the Association
- If we have to carry out the work, pay the costs incurred



## RECHARGEABLE REPAIRS

### Lost Keys and Entry Damage

Customers are responsible for their own door keys. The responsibility for the cost of replacing lost keys lies with the customer. Where suited keys are lost then these will be replaced by the Association but at the customer's expense.

Customers will be recharged for any costs associated with securing access to their homes and for any costs associated with repairing damage caused by their own attempts to regain entry to their homes.

### Access

When customers agree to an appointment at a specific date and time but do not provide access, they will be charged for the abortive visit, including any travelling time. Recharging the tenant is subject to demonstrating evidence of the appointment being agreed with the tenant.

### Criminal Damage

Where customers have been a victim of criminal damage, the Association may pay for the repair providing it has been reported to the police and a valid crime reference number has been issued.

### Emergencies and Other Exceptions

In an emergency situation and at the discretion of the Viewpoint officer on call, the recharges procedure can be suspended but vigorous efforts will be made to recover costs after the event.

The Association will take into account any other exceptional circumstances where appropriate and may agree to waive or defer recharges in such cases.



# Conclusions

**We are now in the process of ensuring that all of our staff members and contractors understand the new policy and can implement it consistently.**

If you want to read the new Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy in full you can find it on our website.

If you have any questions you would like to ask please email [repair@viewpoint.org.uk](mailto:repair@viewpoint.org.uk) or call us on **0131 668 4247** and follow the directions to speak to someone in our repairs team.





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