

## MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS POLICY

August 2017

Approved by MC: August 2017

Review date: August 2019

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### 1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1** Quadrant Brownswood Tenant Co-operative (QBTC) recognises that the delivery of an efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service is both critical in determining tenant satisfaction with the housing service and essential to the proper management of the Co-op. QBTC will therefore aim to ensure that the repairs and maintenance service provides value for money, properly discharges its obligations to tenants and is responsive to their needs.
- 1.2** The Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) expects all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to develop and manage good quality homes that seek to meet people's needs and preferences now and in the future ensuring that:
- Homes are well maintained and in a lettable condition
  - Maintenance is carried out effectively and responsively and in ways that reflect residents' preferences
  - Necessary investment in the future of the stock is a key priority
- 1.3** All RSLs were expected to ensure that their stock met the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. The Decent Homes Standard deals with four main criteria:
- Fitness for habitation
  - Disrepair
  - Reasonably Modern Facilities
  - Thermal Comfort e.g. effective insulation and efficient heating

### 2 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1** QBTC aims to provide residents with a high quality repairs service which is easy and reliable to use. QBTC aims to ensure that all its homes are maintained in reasonable condition and that a fair and consistent service is delivered.
- 2.2** In order to achieve this, QBTC has a planned maintenance programme to maintain homes in good condition.
- 2.3** QBTC will seek to achieve an appropriate balance between responsive and planned investment in its stock. This balance will alter over time to have a greater emphasis on planned rather than responsive investment.
- 2.4** **Planned Maintenance**

QBTC will have a programme of planned maintenance which will:

- Review the external condition of all homes on a 5 yearly cycle and take action where necessary to repair, renew or redecorate elements which form part of the main fabric of the dwelling (e.g. Roofs, windows, walls)
- Review the main services and equipment to our properties on a regular cycle (dictated by the needs of the services and service installations) and put in place a programme of servicing, repair and renewal to ensure that main services and equipment are maintained in good working order. This will cover communal lighting, lightning conductors, water tanks etc.
- Develop a programme of internal repair, upgrade and renewal to ensure that the internal fabric of our homes meets and maintains the decent homes standard or any future standard put in place by Government.
- Will create a schedule of works based on the condition of properties and the Co-op's financial position to upgrade kitchens, bathrooms, roofing, windows, boilers, doors, wiring as a minimum. This will be done to ensure compliance with decent homes standard and help to reduce the amount and cost of day to day repairs through a planned investment programme.

- “QBTC retains the right to defer any non-essential planned improvement works for those members who are in breach of their tenancy agreement, including those more than four weeks in arrears (not attributable to Housing Benefit). QBTC will not defer any works required to ensure the health and safety of the people living in their homes”.

## 2.5 Responsive Maintenance

QBTC will provide a responsive maintenance service which will either directly or via a managing agent:

- Enable customers to order emergency repairs on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week basis.
- Offer an appointment for all routine repair jobs.
- Provide an acknowledgement of your repair request, giving a unique reference number and details of the repair and target time.
- Carry out repairs in line with published timescales.
- Check the quality of work carried out, including, where possible, checking directly with 100% of customers who have received a repair.
- Include general quality and satisfaction checks with customers and continually improve the service in the light of feedback where possible.
- Require contractors and staff to comply with our code of conduct to ensure that high standards of customer care are met.
- Keep to the Landlord and tenant responsibilities with regard to various specific repairs which are described in more detail in the Tenancy Agreement.

## 2.6 Equality & Diversity

QBTC will ensure that all customers are treated equitably in respect of the repair and maintenance of their homes and that all residents have equal access to the service.

## 3 IMPLEMENTATION

QBTC is responsible for some of the maintenance, repair and replacement of items in tenants' homes. Tenants have responsibility for certain repairs and are expected to carry these out as necessary.

### 3.1 QBTC responsibilities

As the landlord QBTC will always be responsible for repairs to:

- the structure and exterior of the building - this includes the roof, walls, windows and external doors
- central heating, gas fires (if fitted by QBTC), fireplaces, flues, ventilation and chimneys
- water, pipes, basins, sinks\*, toilets and baths, drains and guttering
- gas pipes and electrical wiring
- Common parts such as communal entrances.

\*QBTC are not responsible for unblocking sinks, baths, basins or WCs where the blockage has been caused by inappropriate use or lack of cleaning.

QBTC are not responsible for carrying out cosmetic works or repairing or replacing any alterations, fixtures or fittings installed by the tenant. QBTC will only replace fixtures or fittings when it is not economic to repair them.

QBTC will keep items that are their responsibility in good repair, and repair any damage that has **not** been caused by tenants or their families, visitors or others (including children).

QBTC will also arrange for gas appliances owned by it to be serviced once a year and will take all actions necessary to enable access to be gained.

### 3.2 Tenants responsibilities

Tenants are also responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement of items in their homes. These are set out in the Tenancy Agreement and in this policy.

Tenants are responsible for:

- keeping the home clean and in good decorative order
- not damaging the property or any contents provided or allowing their family or guests to do so either
- carrying out minor maintenance, like changing light bulbs, pull cords, fluorescent fittings or unblocking a sink
- preventing pipes from bursting during cold weather
- keeping air vents and window trickle vents clear both inside and outside
- internal redecorations to walls, ceilings and woodwork
- maintaining cooker connections using a qualified installer
- maintaining all paths except those that lead to the front door and continue to the back door
- keeping gully grids clear of leaves etc
- replacing door bells, door knockers and chains
- repairing any additional units or work surfaces fitted to the kitchen or other parts of the home not provided by QBTC
- resetting trip switches and adjusting heating controls
- fitting additional door locks or burglar alarms
- putting up, removing or replacing shelves, rails or hooks and to make good to any damage to the walls on removal
- replacing bath and sink plugs and chains
- replacing toilet seats
- informing QBTC when a repair needs to be done and allowing access to rectify the problem in their or a neighbouring property.

### 3.3 Clarifying who is responsible

Damaged items	QBTC is not responsible for repairing or replacing goods damaged by neglect or misuse by the tenant, a member of their household or any visitor to the property
Doors & Joinery (Internal)	QBTC will only carry out repairs to internal joinery where the damage is caused by rot or woodworm or where items are beyond economic repair due to age. We will not carry out minor repairs to internal joinery or renew internal doors or door furniture or adjust doors when tenants fit new floor coverings
Floor covering	QBTC is only responsible for repairing flooring in the kitchen and bathroom if it was installed by them. QBTC will renew it in keeping with our property lettings standard.
Gardening	QBTC do not maintain gardens in individual homes, nor any communal areas of grass, shrubs, trees, sheds etc. not already covered by an estates management programme
Glazing	Tenants are responsible for repairing broken glass in windows and doors unless there has been unlawful entry and there is a crime number which can be checked with the police.
Light bulbs and fuses	QBTC is not responsible for renewing light bulbs and fuses, tubes and / or starters.
Locks (external)	If tenants lock themselves out, they are responsible for any subsequent lock change and door repair.
Locks (internal)	QBTC does not provide locks to internal doors.
Plaster repairs	Tenants are responsible for all minor plaster repairs. Tenants may be recharged for any re-plastering necessary when the property is vacated.
Sinks and Basins	QBTC is not responsible for unblocking kitchen or bathroom sinks where the blockage is caused by food, fat or other waste products. Customers will be recharged for our costs if this is discovered. QBTC do not provide plugs or chains on bathroom or kitchen sanitary ware.
Taps	QBTC will only replace mixer taps where already fitted. It is the tenants responsibility if fitted by them.
Toilet seats	QBTC does not repair or renew toilet seats.

**\* If QBTC is asked to carry out any of the works listed above which are subject to re-charge, we have the right to ask for payment for the work in advance**

**\*\* The management committee or delegated authority may, when deemed necessary, carry out works not detailed here.**

Tenants will also be responsible for the repair or replacement of any item in a property damaged due to neglect, carelessness or deliberate action on the part of the tenant, their family, visitors or others, other than fair wear and tear.

Where safety or specialist work is concerned (for example, repairs to PVC windows) QBTC reserves the right to carry out the work itself and recharge the tenant.

Tenants must not unreasonably prevent access to their properties and must tell QBTC or the managing agent when a repair needs to be done and allow access in order to qualify for any compensation scheme.

### 3.4 Right to repair

QBTC will attempt to fix any repair raised as soon as possible. To help manage the process it has 3 categories of repair, Emergency, Urgent and Routine.

Below is a summary of what is included in each heading. The list covers most but not all likely scenarios:

#### Emergency – 24 Hours:

- Total loss of electric power\*
- Total or partial loss of gas supply\*.
- Total or partial loss of heating or hot water during colder months (1 November to 30 April) if there is no other means of heating available
- Total loss of water supply
- Toilet not flushing (if no other WC in the home)
- A blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack or toilet pan (if there is no other WC in the home)
- Blocked sink, bath or basin (unless caused by tenant misuse)
- Leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks or cistern
- Blocked flue to open fire or boiler
- Insecure window, door or lock
- Unsafe power or electrical fitting (provided by us)

#### Urgent - Seven Days

- Broken window pane
- Broken door entry system
- Partial or total loss of heating or hot water (1 May to 31 October)
- Partial loss of water supply
- Partial loss of electric power or gas supply\*
- Unsafe timber flooring or stair treads
- Loose or detached banister or hand rail
- Extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working.

#### Routine – 30 days

- All repairs which are the responsibility of QBTC that do not meet the criteria of an emergency or urgent repair.

\* Not associated with no fuel credit

### 3.5 Routine - Responsive Repairs

**3.5.1** QBTC will ensure that all new tenants are provided with information about how to access the repairs service, what to do in an emergency and how to complain if the service does not respond appropriately to their needs. This information will be provided within individual Tenancy Agreements.

#### 3.5.2 Appointments

Appointments will be offered for all repair jobs and tenants are expected to keep these appointments, if they agree to the appointment.

#### 3.5.3 Priority Times

QBTC operates priority bands as set out below. It aims to honour these timescales and may escalate any repair where there is deemed to be an overriding health and safety, medical, welfare or social need to do so.

Priority Bands

- **Emergency** – Any repair which is required to make safe a situation where there is an imminent threat to life, limb or major damage to property. These repairs are carried out within 24 hours.
- **Urgent** - Any repair which is required to rectify a problem which causes significant reduction in amenity or comfort for customers in their home. These repairs are carried out within 7 calendar days.

- **Routine** - Any repair which is required to rectify a problem within the customers home where this is the responsibility of QBTC but where the problem is not causing significant loss of amenity or comfort for the resident. These repairs are carried out within 30 days.
- **60/90 day repairs** – Where a contractor reports that routine items may need replacement/repair in the near future, these may be placed on a 60 or 90 day schedule.

Repairs should not be escalated to a higher priority band unless there are serious health & safety issues, medical, social or welfare need. A note describing the escalation must be entered on the system as part of an audit trail.

### **3.6 Programmed**

Any repair work which requires planning or co-ordination with other services in order to complete the work, or where the work cannot reasonably be completed within a 30 day period, will be programmed. The customer will be given a specific target date for completion of the works.

### **3.7 Fencing & Gates**

The Landlord and Tenant Act states that boundaries and fences must be kept in reasonable repair by the landlord. This repairs policy makes it the responsibility of QBTC.

### **3.8 Internal Joinery**

Internal joinery (doors, cills, and cupboards other than the kitchen cupboards) will not be replaced or repaired by QBTC unless the damage is caused by rot, woodworm or is beyond economic repair due to age.

### **3.9 Decorations Required Following Essential Work**

- QBTC will make good any area damaged by essential repair work unless the work was required due to damage caused by the resident or a guest/relative etc, or by negligence or misuse of the property
- Making good will be to a reasonable standard and will not necessarily be like for like

This latter point is important. An example of a difficult case is where QBTC attends a water leak from a bathroom where the customer has fitted expensive ceramic tiled flooring which has to be lifted in order to repair the leak. QBTC would, in that case, offer vinyl flooring (as per our normal standard) to repair the damage caused by the leak – but would not renew the ceramic tiles. In cases where customers have installed their own equipment, QBTC is not always responsible for the maintenance but may have to carry out works to protect other properties.

### **3.10 Repairs required before the property is vacated**

An outgoing tenant may be required to remove non-standard fittings and fixtures or equipment from their homes at their own expense prior to departure. Any costs incurred by QBTC as a result of DIY or repair work carried out by customers due to a poor standard, or where fixtures and fittings have to be removed by QBTC in order to bring a property up to our Lettings Standard, will be recharged to the outgoing tenant.

### **3.11 Out of Hours Repairs**

QBTC will provide an emergency repairs service outside of normal working hours. Non-emergency repairs must be reported during normal working hours.

## **4 Monitoring Quality and Satisfaction**

QBTC wishes to understand how customers experience its services and to amend and adapt services to achieve high levels of satisfaction from tenants. In order to achieve this, QBTC uses a variety of methods to get feedback from customers about the service:

- Direct telephone surveys about individual repairs
- Post works inspection to assess quality and satisfaction
- General surveys about the repairs/ maintenance service

**4.1** The feedback will be assessed by QBTC on a regular and ongoing basis and the service adapted to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

## **5. Use of contractors**

**5.1** The Co-operative will use building contractors to carry out the majority of repairs and will draw up a list of approved contractors. Only contractors on the approved list will be used by the Co-operative.

## **6. Alterations**

**6.1** Tenants are not allowed to make any major alterations to their homes without prior consent of the management committee. Small minor repairs are allowed in line with the responsibilities of the tenant.

**6.2** If a customer wishes to undertake major alterations they should request permission to do so in writing, detailing the works to be done. If approved, an appropriately qualified surveyor will post inspect the work to ensure it is done to a satisfactory standard

**6.3** Any works or alteration carried out by the tenant becomes the responsibility of the tenant thereafter. For example, if a new bathroom is installed the Co-op would not carry out any repairs relating to the bathroom.

**6.4** Any request for a major alteration should not be approved if the tenant is in substantial arrears, this consists of more than four weeks rent. The committee can where an agreement is in place and being adhered to allow works on the grounds of medical needs when the work is being funded by a third party. An example may be the fitting of a stair lift or wet room being paid for the local authority.

**6.5** If a tenant carries out work without prior permission of the committee they may be asked to return the property to its original condition.