



REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE, GAS, AND CYCLICAL AND PLANNED MAINTENANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy outlines Citizen's approach to repairs and maintenance, gas servicing and installation, cyclical and planned maintenance. The service is one of our most important functions as a landlord and we want to provide a service that we can take pride in, that achieves high satisfaction from our customers, and enables them to feel proud of their homes.

We are not responsible for all aspects of maintenance therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with customers' individual tenancy, licence and leasehold agreements which further define responsibilities. There are also instances where we are responsible for undertaking maintenance where we have managing agents. The agreements we have with those agents define our specific responsibilities.

This policy supports our vision of "home is our foundation for life" by defining our commitment to providing an efficient and effective repair and maintenance service which aims to achieve high satisfaction of customers. By continuing to look at ways to improve our service offer we are adhering to our pledge to be "looking out for our citizens".

We aim to:

- deliver an efficient, effective and value for money repair and maintenance service
- comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements and meet our contractual obligations
- provide customers with a safe and secure living environment.
- Ensure we always adopt safe systems of work
- Where possible, complete repairs on the first visit

We are committed to providing a quality service that meets the needs of our customers, is cost effective, and all staff, contractors and suppliers are trained to work towards this aim. This policy recognises that a successful repairs and maintenance service considers its customers, its resources, its statutory obligations, and external affecting factors.

We have a responsibility to protect the value of our housing stock and to ensure that the service standards and obligations made to our customers in respect of their homes are honoured. We will work together with customers to ensure the quality of their homes is maintained via our mutual responsibilities.

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The provision of a value for money repairs service that is appropriately responsive is a priority for us, ensuring that all customers live in a safe and healthy environment at all times.

This policy gives consideration to contractual, legislative, strategic, and statutory requirements which include the Housing Regulator Home Standard. This requires that Registered Providers shall:

1. Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time.
2. Meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.

2. Scope

This policy extends to all void and occupied property owned by us; properties we manage on behalf of others; and leasehold and shared ownership properties to which we have a contractual or statutory duty. This includes communal areas of our properties and garage sites.

3. Policy Detail

3.1 Service Standards

We will strive to ensure value for money is achieved by providing a cost-effective service that is carried out efficiently, is sensitive to the diversity of our customers, and complies with statutory obligations.

We will do this by

- providing a 24hr, 7 day a week service to allow the reporting of and response to emergency repairs
- attending and completing repairs to published timescales
- offering a choice of appointment slots
- carrying out a gas safety check where required in accordance with applicable statutory timescales

We will aim to carry out customer reported non-emergency repairs, which require access to the home, by offering flexible appointment slots.

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Customer requests for appointments beyond published timescales will be accommodated, with the exception of emergency repairs. We will provide an accessible repairs service where customers can report repairs online via our website, by telephone, and by email. Customers will be encouraged to report repairs directly themselves via the website.

The majority of services will be delivered by our own in-house teams, however, this will be supplemented by support from approved specialist contractors.

We will evidence value for money by ensuring external contractors working in our homes on our behalf are appointed following a robust procurement exercise in line with our procurement policy and procedures. Value for money of our in-house services will be demonstrated by comparing our costs to other providers and by monitoring trends over time.

We will carry out repairs to void properties to a documented standard jointly agreed with customer representatives. Standards will be published, and resident satisfaction measured and monitored.

3.2 Gas Servicing, Repair and Installation

We will maintain and service all landlord owned gas appliances in accordance with applicable statutory timescales and carry out safety checks on customer owned gas appliances.

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 came into force on 6 April 2018. This change to regulation allows landlords to carry out the annual gas safety check up to two months (56 calendar days) before the anniversary date and retain the existing anniversary date. Citizen carries out its annual gas safety checks in line with this change.

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure access is obtained, however where this is not provided, action will be taken as outlined in the gas procedures. This will include recharging for legal costs and any action required to obtain access.

Failure to allow access for servicing will result in us following formal procedures to gain access. This will involve seeking legal assistance such as applying for an injunction.

Where leaseholders and shared owners exist within our communal dwellings we will work to assist and enable owners to comply with their obligations, where possible.

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We are dedicated to the provision of a high-quality gas servicing and repairs service that:

- preserves the safety of its customers
- properly discharges its legal and regulatory obligations
- achieves the service standards outlined to its customers
- protects the value of its housing stock
- considers energy efficiency when carrying out necessary replacements
- measures and monitors satisfaction with gas servicing

3.3 Appliances That Fail Gas Safety Checks

When any gas appliance or installation in a Citizen property is found to have a safety defect, Citizen will isolate or disconnect in line with the Gas Safe/Unsafe Situations Procedure and issue the appropriate warning notice and warning label. Citizen will arrange for any follow up work to be carried out as required on any Citizen owned appliances/installations. The customer is responsible for the maintenance/repair/removal of their own appliance/s

3.4 Communal Systems

Where we have the responsibility for the maintenance or servicing of a communal system, we will do so in line with maintenance service standards. Where third parties such as managing agents have an interest, own or control the systems, we will endeavour to communicate and work closely with them to ensure the service received by customers meets our usual standards.

3.5 Cyclical Maintenance

We will provide a cyclical and planned maintenance service which protects the value of our housing stock and achieves value for money. This will be through meeting legislative and regulatory requirements; investing in our homes in a timely, efficient and effective manner, and by ensuring the quality and facilities of the home and environment are attractive to customers.

We will undertake a programme of cyclical maintenance and inspections and regularly report progress to board where required.

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3.6 Roles and Responsibility for Repairs

The responsibility for repairs and maintenance for both Citizen and our customers are set out in individual tenancy, licence and leasehold agreements which should be read alongside this policy.

Generally, we expect our customers to:

- Keep the inside of their home and where applicable exterior and garden in good condition
- Undertake minor repairs and avoid doing anything which may result in damage to the property, including blockages to pipes and drains for example disposing of fat, oil, sanitary products, nappies etc. down toilets or in sinks
- **Adopt the responsibilities shown in the table below**

Customers	Citizen
To use internal and communal installations responsibly	To ensure that our approved operatives work in a clean and tidy manner
To allow access for repair works for which we are responsible and not obstruct or deny works to their home or the communal areas	To show ID when attending customer's homes
To maintain areas of the home for which they are responsible in accordance with the conditions of the tenancy agreement or lease	To only enter a customer's home where a responsible adult is present, unless there is evidence of a clear risk to any person(s)
To ensure that a responsible adult is present for any repair or maintenance appointment	To ensure that operatives work in a way that is healthy and safe; protecting themselves, others, and the environment in which they are working
To clear repair work area of personal items or valuables prior to a scheduled appointment	To ensure that customers are aware of the status of their repair

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To be responsible for the repair or replacement of items in a property damaged due to neglect, carelessness or deliberate action on the part of the customer, household or visitors. To pay any charges for such repairs that are undertaken by us	
To seek permission from Citizen prior to carrying out any improvement or alteration works to the property.	

3.7 Rechargeable Repairs

For repairs that are not the responsibility of the landlord we will encourage and support customers to look after their homes such as by the use of videos on our websites which show customers how to complete basic DIY repairs themselves.

If, however customers are unable to carry out repairs they are responsible for we can carry out the work provided that payment is received made in line with our rechargeable repairs process. Where repairs are correctly identified as being the responsibility of the customer but have health and safety implications, work may be carried out in accordance with statutory obligations, with payment required on completion of the work.

3.8 Exceptions

We may make exceptions to this policy where a customer’s health and safety is potentially at risk and they are unable to carry out a repair they are responsible for themselves due to age, disability or other vulnerability. For more information, please see refer to our Vulnerable Persons Policy

We may undertake rechargeable repairs when a customer has been the victim of crime and can produce a crime reference number.

3.9 Complaints

We are committed to ‘providing an excellent service’ to all of our customers, we will deal with any concerns or complaints in line with our Complaints Policy

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3.10 Zero tolerance

We have a zero tolerance towards the abuse of any staff or contractors by customers and visitors. Any incidents will be dealt with in line with our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

3.11 Policy Management

We will carry out regular performance monitoring of our contractors and in-house services relating to contact compliance, customer care, quality standards, health and safety, timescales, and cost.

Regular reports will be provided to board accounting for the delivery of our repair and maintenance service.

The quality of our contractors' performance for gas servicing and repairs will be regularly audited by a third party to ensure compliance with gas safety regulations.

4. Damp and mould

Citizen will comply with all legal and statutory requirements for the identification and treatment of damp and mould and follow guidance from the Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman. We will keep our policy and procedures under review against any further recommendations, good practice or spotlight reports from the regulator and ombudsman.

We have in place specific procedures to deal with reports of damp and mould which include considerations of vulnerabilities that may make the impacts of damp and mould more acute and require a faster response.

This policy has been reviewed by customers to provide assurance that they are fair and reflect the way that we deliver our services.

4.1 Management of damp and mould

Citizen will respond to reports of damp and mould in customers homes in a timely way that takes a holistic approach to diagnosing and treating the causes of damp and mould. Citizen will use data from assets, repairs and complaints to identify trends and analyse findings and risk so that priority properties can be identified and proactively inspected. We will produce a quarterly hot spot analysis that will be used by the asset teams to make

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intelligence led decisions about investment in property that may be more prone to damp and mould.

We will take a strategic approach to managing properties by using a range of methods to proactively monitor and prevent damp and mould. We will implement a range of measures including annual safety checks, stock condition surveys, HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) inspections and monitoring technologies to help gather essential data about damp and mould.

When properties become void, they will be assessed for damp and mould and where remedial works are identified these will be carried out in a timely manner. Work to address damp and mould will be undertaken before the property is relet. Any remaining works to deal with further occurrences or prevention may be scheduled after the property has been relet to prevent extended void periods. No property will be relet with damp and mould in situ.

All staff and contractors who enter a customers property will be trained on how to identify and report instances of damp and mould. They will also be in a position to direct customers to appropriate advice. All customer facing staff are required to undertake training in order to understand the causes of damp and mould.

In regeneration areas, Citizen will continue to maintain properties where practical or move customers to a more suitable property where appropriate.

Poor thermal efficiency is a key cause of damp and mould, therefore a strategy for net zero carbon homes has prioritised a fabric first approach to target inadequately insulated properties as a priority.

Citizen will undertake remedial works as necessary when cases of damp and mould are reported however we will utilise other services to ensure that all issues are addressed not just those relating to the fabric of the building.

This will include:

- offering advice on the best way to heat their homes and reduce condensation and make this available on our website and customer portal.
- specialist money advice for customers struggling with the cost of heating their homes

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- support to seek more suitable accommodation through Mutual Exchange or in exceptional cases we can explore a transfer, where the property is no longer appropriate for the needs of the customer.

Citizen ensures that the way we manage damp and mould is effectively communicated to customers when they report issues to us.

Citizen will have in place a proactive communications plan to assist customers in understanding, reporting and managing the causes and effects of damp, mould and condensation.

5. Roles, Responsibility and Governance

It is the responsibility of the board to ensure that this policy is successfully implemented, and the procedures followed. The Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that all staff understand the importance of this policy and the related procedures and comply with them.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their reports have undertaken the appropriate policy eLearning by utilising reports produced by Learning and Development

Any changes to this policy must be made in line with the requirements set out in Citizens Standing Orders and our Policy framework.

6. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless legislation, service delivery or sector developments require otherwise ensuring the policy continues to meet its objectives and take account of good practice developments.

Legal advice will be taken to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and contractual responsibilities.

Where appropriate service delivery reports in respect of this policy are incorporated into our quarterly reporting suite.

7. Equality impact Assessment

This policy has been subject to an Equality Analysis. Staff working across Citizen have considered the impact of this policy on different groups and communities that we work with.

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In framing this policy, our staff are committed to not discriminate adversely against any group and will respect the diversity of the communities we are working within.

The EIA and any actions identified as needing to be implemented are in Appendix 1

8. Version Control

VERSION	DATE	AMENDMENTS	APPROVED AT/BY	NEXT FULL REVIEW
V 1.0	Sept 2019	Policy updated to Citizen brand format	n/a	
V 2.0	Nov 2019	Updated to reflect the revised approach to Gas Servicing	Head of Compliance	April 2021
V 3.0	Apr 2021	Regular Policy Review	ELT	April 2023
V4.0	March 2023	Including of section 4 damp and mould	ELT	Oct 2024

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