

**Item 8****REPORT TO THE CARLISLE SHADOW BOARD**  
**MEETING TO BE HELD ON 25/2/02****Carlisle Housing Association**  
**Proposed Repair and Maintenance Policy****For Decision****1. Purpose of this Report**

- 1.1 To agree the attached proposed repair and maintenance policy.

**2. Report Content**

- 2.1 This policy sets out Carlisle Housing Association's approach to the repair and maintenance of its stock. The Association recognises that the repair and maintenance of its stock is a vital aspect of its service provision, and that many residents will see it as the key element by which they will assess Carlisle Housing Association's performance as a Registered Social Landlord. The effective provision of repairs will therefore contribute towards improved customer satisfaction and is a major strategic area of the Association's work.

- 2.2 The report includes all aspects of:

- the repairs and maintenance service
- reactive repairs
- programmed and cyclical repairs, and
- non-priority and discretionary work

- 2.3 The report details:

- the resources available to comply with the Association's legal and contractual obligations
- the service standards that the Association aims to achieve
- the contractors' code of conduct
- repairs and improvements carried out by the customer and
- consultation.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Shadow Board is asked to approve the attached policy.

**Paul Anson**  
**Assistant Director**

**Julie Gray**  
**Stock Investment Manager**

**Carlisle Housing Association****Repairs and Maintenance Policy****1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The repair and maintenance of properties is a vital element of our service provision and many tenants see it as the key element by which they will assess our performance as a Registered Social Landlord. The effective provision of repairs will therefore ~~also~~ contribute towards improved customer satisfaction and is a major strategic area of the Association's work. This policy statement recognises this and aims to set the clear policy direction of Carlisle Housing Association in relation to repairs and maintenance.

**2. Policy Statement**

- 2.1 Carlisle Housing Association is committed to:
- providing accommodation for tenants that is of good quality and
  - to the future repair and maintenance of properties so that this standard is continually achieved.
- 2.2 The Repairs and Maintenance Policy will support this aim by recognising tenants' rights and obligations, protecting the assets of the Association and ensuring that the repairs service achieves a high standard of efficiency and customer care.
- 2.3 The scope of this policy will include all aspects of
- the repairs and maintenance service
  - reactive repairs
  - cyclical repairs and
  - programmed repairs and
  - non priority and discretionary work
3. **Resources**
- 3.1 Carlisle Housing Association will make sufficient funds available to comply with the Association's legal and contractual obligations. The Business Plan has the following resources contained within it:
- Years 1-5 - £550 per unit
  - Years 6-30 - £450 per unit
- 3.2 The Association will contract the services of Carlisle City Council's DSO to undertake the majority of the responsive repairs and maintenance for the first 15 months following transfer. The Carlisle Housing Association DSO will continue to carry out the majority of the responsive repair work following its transfer to the Association.

- 3.3 We will ensure value for money and probity in the commissioning and execution of our repair, maintenance and improvement work. We will embrace the principles of partnering as set out in Rethinking Construction (33), the report of Sir John Egan's Task Force, and the principles of Best Value.
- 3.4 Where external contractors are used, the Association is committed to using local contractors wherever it is possible to do so. We will encourage and support the use of local labour.
- 3.5 The Association will ensure that these resources are utilised efficiently in order to achieve value for money and minimise waste. Through an annual review of its priorities, the Association will ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained between the repair of building elements, the carrying out of work to prevent the future deterioration of components and the planned renewal of items as they reach the end of their useful life.

#### **4. Legislative and Regulatory Requirements**

- 4.1 Carlisle Housing Association aims to maintain its stock in good condition in order to achieve customer satisfaction and avoid a deterioration of its assets and an increase in future repair costs. There is an extensive legislative and contractual framework within which repair and maintenance activities operate and Carlisle Housing Association will strive to meet these standards at all times.

#### **4.2 Service Standards**

- 4.2.1 All Carlisle Housing Association homes should be in a reasonable and lettable condition. The definition of "reasonable condition" will be taken as the requirements of the Housing Corporation's Temporary Social Housing Standard (unless superseded as an element of the Housing Corporation's Performance Standards). These standards cover the following areas:

##### **4.2.1.1 Heating**

Heating should be combined with appropriate levels of ventilation and insulation. The main living room and bathroom should have fixed heating appliances.

##### **4.2.1.2 Ventilation**

Appropriate combinations of openable window areas and background ventilation should be provided. Mechanical extractors should be provided for rooms which would otherwise be difficult to ventilate.

#### 4.2.1.3 Health and Safety

Remedial measures should be incorporated to eradicate dampness or serious condensation. A safe lighting level should be provided. Floor coverings to kitchens and bathrooms should be hygienic, safety glazing should be provided for window glass below 800 mm and glazed doors. Windows and balconies should protect young children against falling.

#### 4.2.1.3 Security

Windows should be provided with locks; doors to dwellings should be sturdy with a mortice lock and suitable frame.

#### 4.2.1.4 Decoration

All externally exposed woodwork should be in a serviceable condition.

#### 4.2.1.5 Kitchen

Kitchen fittings should be serviceable. Worktops, sink and food preparation area should be provided in a hygienic and easily cleaned condition.

#### 4.2.1.6 Living Rooms and Bedrooms

These rooms should be capable of sensibly accommodating standard furniture.

#### 4.2.1.7 Bathroom

Sanitary fittings should be in a serviceable condition.

#### 4.2.1.8 Energy Efficiency

Carlisle Housing Association recognises that energy efficiency is a key element in the overall running cost of properties and that there are many benefits of ensuring that a good standard of energy efficiency is achieved. We are also conscious of our wider responsibility of ensuring that, wherever possible, sustainable materials will be used.

### 4.3 Performance

4.3.1 The table at **Appendix 1** shows Carlisle City Council's current target response times along with their performance against these targets over the last year. The table also shows the improved response times and performance targets that Carlisle Housing Association aims to achieve following transfer.

4.3.2 Performance against these targets will be monitored and reported to the Board and to Carlisle Housing Association tenants.



#### 4.4 Responsive Repairs

- 4.4.1 A system of repair priorities has been established to distinguish between emergency, urgent and routine works and those that can be tackled as part of a planned maintenance programme. All repair requests received by Carlisle Housing Association will be assessed against 5 categories in order to determine whether they fall within the Association's responsibility and, if so, their relative importance and priority.

- 4.4.2 The repair categories are:

Category	Definition and Examples
Emergency	Repairs required to avoid an immediate danger to personal safety or health, or serious damage to the building. E.g. Gas leaks, serious electrical faults, structural danger, blocked drains and burst pipes.
Urgent	Work required to avoid substantial inconvenience to tenants or ongoing deterioration to the building. E.g. plumbing leaks, heating breakdown, roof leaks, re-glazing.
Routine	All other statutory reactive repairs. E.g. minor joinery works, minor gutter leaks, adjustments to kitchen units.
Programmed / Cyclical	Repairs that are part of a cyclical, planned or modernisation programme.
Non Priority / Discretionary	Work carried out at the discretion of Carlisle Housing Association depending on circumstances such as availability of funds.

#### 4.4 Special Needs

- 4.4.3 Priority will be given to repairs for households with vulnerable people, as appropriate to the circumstances. People with special needs because of disability, mental health problems, illness or age may require a quicker than usual response.

#### 4.5 Victims of Harassment

- 4.5.1 Carlisle Housing Association will treat as emergencies 'make safe' repairs to the homes of victims of harassment as defined under its Equal Opportunities and Harassment policies.

#### 4.6 Inspections

- 4.6.1 If the repair cannot be diagnosed when reported we will pre-inspect within 3 working days. This is to help to maintain customer satisfaction and control budgets.
- 4.6.2 In order to ensure that we are getting value for money we will pre-inspect a random sample of jobs each week.
- 4.6.3 We will post inspect the following:
- at least 3% of all jobs
  - all voids
  - every job that costs more than £250.

#### **4.7 Appointments for Responsive Repairs and Inspections**

- 4.7.1 Carlisle Housing Association will develop a system of appointments for urgent and routine jobs so that repairs are carried out at a time convenient to the customer, wherever it is possible to do so. Wherever possible, notice of cancellation or delay will be given to the customer. Appointments will also be offered for pre- and post-inspections.
- 4.7.2 Carlisle Housing Association will monitor the percentage of repairs where an appointment was not kept and report performance to the Board and to residents.
- 4.7.3 Failure to keep an appointment will entitle the resident to claim compensation from the Association. A phased scheme will be introduced in which from April 2004 after the initial evaluation of the appointment system, a sum will be agreed by the Board in consultation with tenants organisations.

#### **4.8 Programmed and Cyclical Maintenance**

- 4.8.1 The Association will develop and maintain a medium/long term work plan to utilise the resources made available by the Board to keep their stock in a reasonable and lettable condition.
- 4.8.2 Programmed repairs include the replacement of worn out building components and fittings with elements to modern standards. The representative stock condition survey adopted by the association will enable a long-term plan to be established and funded from reserves in accordance with the Business Plan and subject to annual approval of the budget.
- 4.8.3 Cyclical maintenance is work which takes place on a recurring basis such as redecoration programmes or the servicing of gas central heating systems.
- 4.8.4 Carlisle Housing Association will consult with its Tenants and Residents Groups on planned and cyclical maintenance programmes.

- 4.8.5 Customers will be consulted on the proposed work to their homes and given commitments on the work to be undertaken up to 2 years ahead.
- 4.8.6 Tenants and leaseholders will be informed in writing about the works to be carried out.
- 4.8.7 Carlisle Housing Association will aim to minimise the degree of disruption and disturbance to the customer's home and lifestyle when undertaking maintenance works.

## **5. Contractors' Code of Conduct**

- 5.1 Contractors employed by Carlisle Housing Association will, in many instances, be the 'face' of Carlisle Housing Association as seen by customers.
- 5.2 Contractors will be therefore be asked to follow a Code of Conduct requiring them to:
  - Work in a safe manner
  - Be tidily dressed
  - Introduce themselves to the tenant and show proof of identity
  - Explain the nature and purpose of the job
  - Be polite and courteous to residents and staff
  - To respond to tenants complaints
  - Comply with confidentiality guidelines
  - Behave in a proper and professional manner at all times
  - To protect the comfort, safety and security of the customer, the customer's family, visitors and neighbours
  - In particular, to take steps to protect customers homes and their contents whilst they are working
  - Give plenty of warning if there will be any disruption to services, for example water gas or electric supplies
  - Restrict their activities to normal working hours – except for emergencies and by appointment
  - Leave customers homes in a clean and tidy condition
  - Adhere to Carlisle Housing Association's equal opportunities policy
  - Wherever possible, the contractor will complete the work required on the first visit. If this is not possible, the contractor will leave the customer details of the additional work required and the expected date of the return visit.

## **6. Products and Materials**

- 6.1 Products and materials used shall be easily maintained and meet, where possible, the Housing Corporation Scheme Design Standards (current edition). Where appropriate, products should be energy efficient and consist of sustainable materials only. These provisions



include:

- solid timber from well-managed regulated sources
- Formaldehyde emissions minimised by treating timber only when necessary and treating it industrially prior to use
- no asbestos and no added lead in paint
- achieving Standard Assessment Performance Targets for energy efficiency

## **7. Repairs and Improvements carried out by the Customer**

### **7.1 The Right to Compensation for Failure to Repair**

7.1.1 Where the Association has failed in its duty to have a qualifying repair carried out within the specified time and (after a further request from the tenant) fails to complete the works within the second specified period, the tenant shall be paid compensation by the Association.

7.1.2 A qualifying repair is defined as a repair which does not cost more than the £250 and which, if not carried out within a specified period, is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or security of the tenant.

7.1.3 The Right to Repair shall not apply where the tenant has failed to provide access for an inspection or for the qualifying repair to be carried out, although s/he has been given a reasonable opportunity to do so.

7.1.4 Where the Association fails to undertake the repair requested under the procedure, the tenant shall be entitled to compensation of £10 plus £2 per day (up to a maximum of £50) for every day the repair remains outstanding after the end of the second period.

### **7.2 Right to Make Improvements**

7.2.1 Carlisle Housing Association encourages residents who wish to make improvements to their homes, provided that the work carried out is safe and of good quality and does not detrimentally affect the value of the property. Written permission from Carlisle Housing Association will be required before the work is undertaken, but will not be unreasonably withheld. Permission will be dependant on the terms of the lease, terms of the tenancy agreement, any statutory requirements e.g. Planning, Building Regulations and any legal requirements e.g. Health and Safety legislation. Where permission is refused, the resident will be given a written statement setting out the Association's reasons for refusal.

### **7.3 The Right to Compensation for Improvements**

7.3.1 In certain circumstances tenants will be entitled to claim compensation for improvements to their home carried out with the written consent of



the Association.

- 7.3.2 A list of improvements that tenants can make to their home at their own cost, and for which they can claim compensation, is shown at **Appendix 2**. The tenant must obtain the written permission from the Association prior to making any improvement.
- 7.3.3 The tenant should submit three estimates from bona fide contractors for the work to the Association and state the reasons for choosing a particular estimate. Only when the Association has agreed the estimate can the tenant then instruct the contractor to start work.
- 7.3.4 When the tenant is given permission to start the work he/she should be informed that the final sum will not be the full amount that the tenant paid to the contractor as depreciation will be deducted. The tenant should be made aware that compensation will only be paid at the end of the tenancy and that the amount agreed will be set against any sums that may be owed to the Association by the tenant. Where the tenancy is terminated through a possession claim based on the tenant's breach of obligation, the tenant will not normally be entitled to compensation.
- 7.3.5 Compensation will be paid when the tenancy ends and is calculated using the 'notional life' of the improvement. The amount of compensation may be adjusted upwards or downwards if the original cost was excessive, if the improvement is of a higher quality than Carlisle Housing Association would have carried out or if the rate of deterioration has been slower or faster than that of the notional life.
- 7.3.6 Compensation will not be paid where the formula produces an amount less than £50. The maximum compensation is £3,000 and any grant received towards the work will be deducted from the cost of the improvement.
- 7.3.7 The claim for compensation must be made in writing between 28 and days before the actual end of the tenancy or up to 14 days after the tenancy has ended.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 Carlisle Housing Association is very interested in the views of its customers on the repair service. A sample of customers will be contacted on a regular basis to ask them what they think of different aspects of the service. This information will be used to improve the service to tenants. Reports on tenant feedback will be taken to each Tenants and Residents Association.
- 8.2 Carlisle Housing Association also aims to give tenants options in relation to the work that is carried out to their home, wherever this is possible. For example, the colour schemes when homes are being painted or styles where kitchens are being replaced.

## 9. Financial Regulations

- 9.1 All work shall be organised in accordance with the Association's financial regulations, tendering procedures and procurement policy.

The tenant should submit three estimates from bona fide contractors for the work to the Association and state the reasons for choosing a particular estimate. Only when the Association has agreed the estimate can the tenant then instruct the contractor to start work.

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### Consultation

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# APPENDIX 1

REPAIRS SERVICE – KEY PERFORMANCE STANDARDS					
CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL			CARLISLE HOUSING ASSOCIATION		
Repair Type	Target Response Time	Performance (2000/2001)	Repair Type	Proposed Target Response Time	Performance Target
Priority 0 (Emergency Repairs)	Attend in 3 hours	89%	Emergency	Attend in 2 hours Complete within 12 hours	95%
Priority 1 (Not emergency, but cannot wait for timescale of Priority 2)	To be completed within 3 days		Urgent	To be completed within 3 working days	90%
Priority 2	To be completed within 10 days		Routine	To be completed within 10 working days	90%
Priority 3	To be completed within 20 days				
Priority 4	To be completed by date on order (20 days+)				



## APPENDIX 2

## Qualifying improvements under the Right to Compensation for Improvements

- Bath or shower
- Wash-hand basin
- Toilet
- Kitchen sink
- Storage cupboards in bathroom or kitchen
- Work surfaces for food preparation
- Space or water heating
- Thermostatic radiator valves
- Insulation of pipes, water tank or cylinder
- Loft insulation
- Cavity wall insulation
- Draught proofing of external doors or windows
- Double glazing or other external window replacement or secondary glazing
- Rewiring or the provision of power and lighting or other electrical fittings (including smoke detectors)
- Any object which improves the security of the dwelling house, but excluding burglar alarms