

# Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy



<b>Name</b>	Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy
<b>Owner</b>	Director of Housing
<b>Last Review</b>	October 2024
<b>Next Review</b>	October 2027
<b>Customer Consultation</b>	Tenants' and Leaseholders' Panel
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	July 2024
<b>Board Approval</b>	TBC

<b>Strategic Lead</b>	<b>Director of Housing</b>
<b>Sign</b>	_____
<b>Date</b>	_____
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	<b>Cllr Nigel Bedford</b>
<b>Sign</b>	_____
<b>Date</b>	_____

**Contents**

1.0 Introduction .....2

2.0 Scope .....2

3.0 Key principles of the Repairs and Maintenance Policy .....2

4.0 Responsibilities .....2

5.0 Legislation, Guidance and Regulatory Standards .....3

6.0 Planned and Cyclical Maintenance.....3

7.0 Responsive Repairs .....6

8.0 Repairs Between Tenancies (Void Repairs) .....9

9.0 Tenant Fitted Floor Coverings ..... 10

Appendix 1 - Additional Legislation..... 11

Appendix 2 – Repair Responsibilities ..... 12

Appendix 3 – Void Relet Standard ..... 15

Appendix 4 – Contractors’ Code of Conduct..... 22

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out our approach to the delivery of responsive repairs, void repairs and planned maintenance services to Epping Forest District Council customers. This policy applies to all housing properties for which EFDC is responsible for carrying out repairs and maintenance, as determined by their tenancy, licence or lease agreement.

## 2.0 Scope

2.1 Responsive repairs - repairs carried out at a single property or communal area at the request of an individual. These repairs can also be called reactive repairs or day to day repairs

2.2 Repairs between tenancies (void repairs)

2.3 Planned and cyclical maintenance

## 3.0 Key principles of the Repairs and Maintenance Policy

3.1 The repairs and maintenance service provided by EFDC should:

- Be flexible, convenient and customer focused
- Prioritise safety and customer satisfaction
- Achieve the minimum level of the Decent Homes Standard
- Use opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of the homes we provide
- Be cost effective and provide customers with the best value from available financial resources

## 4.0 Responsibilities

### The Customer

4.1 The customer (tenant or leaseholder) is responsible for reporting repairs to EFDC and must allow access to their home for any work, including assessments, to be carried out.

4.2 Tenants are responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of certain minor items within the home, as set out in the Tenancy Handbook (see Appendix 2).

4.3 Leaseholders are responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of certain items within the home, as set out in their lease.

### EFDC

4.4 EFDC is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the structure and common parts of its properties, as set out in the Tenant Handbook (see Appendix 2).

### **EFDC Cabinet**

- 4.5 EFDC’s Cabinet has overall governance responsibility for ensuring this policy is current and fully implemented to ensure full compliance with relevant legislation, regulatory standards and the requirements of other stakeholders such as the Housing Ombudsman Service. As such, the Cabinet will formally approve this policy and review it every three years (or sooner if there is a change in legislation or regulation).
- 4.6 For assurance that this policy is operating effectively in practice, the Cabinet will receive regular updates on the performance of EFDC’s housing repairs and planned maintenance.

### **Director of Housing**

- 4.7 The **Director of Housing** holds strategic responsibility for the repairs and planned maintenance service. They will oversee the implementation of this policy.

### **Head of Asset Management**

- 4.8 The **Head of Asset Management** holds operational responsibility for the management of repairs and planned maintenance.

## **5.0 Legislation, Guidance and Regulatory Standards**

- 5.1 **Legislation** - The principal legislation applicable to this policy is:

- The Housing Act 2004
- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 as amended by The Home (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- This policy also operates within the context of additional legislation (see Appendix 1).

- 5.2 **Guidance** – The principal guidance applicable to this policy is:

- The Decent Homes Standard 2006.
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

- 5.3 **Regulatory standards** – We must ensure we comply with the Regulator of Social Housing’s regulatory framework and consumer standards for social housing in England; the Home Standard is the primary one applicable to this policy. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 changes the way social housing is regulated and may result in future changes to this policy.

## **6.0 Planned and Cyclical Maintenance**

- 6.1 The objectives of our planned maintenance programme include:
- Meeting the Decent Homes Standard
  - Reducing future costs of repairs and maintenance
  - Using planned works as an opportunity to improve energy efficiency where possible
  - Delivering the works cost effectively
  - Achieving high levels of customer satisfaction
- 6.2 We will use a range of information to develop our planned maintenance programme including:
- Use information from periodic stock condition surveys including the condition and expected remaining life of property components
  - Information about the energy efficiency of the property
  - Analysis of the repair history at a property (e.g. to develop planned preventive work programmes that would minimise cost and disruption when compared with responsive repairs)
- 6.3 Our approach to replacing gas boilers differs from other planned programmes. We will plan the replacement of some boilers (e.g. boilers with poor energy efficiency). However, most boilers will be replaced when they have reached the end of their economic life. The engineer responding to a breakdown or servicing the boiler can recommend that it is beyond economic repair. Provided the recommendation meets our criteria, replacement will be agreed. We aim to replace the boiler within 72 hours of the recommendation.

### **Improving Energy Efficiency During Planned Replacements**

- 6.4 Wherever possible, we will use the opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of our homes when we carry out planned replacements. This will include
- Specifying products (e.g. windows, doors and boilers) that provide improved levels of thermal efficiency
  - Including additional appropriate energy efficiency measures whilst we have access (e.g. fitting photovoltaic panels when replacing a roof)
  - Specifying details that will enable future energy efficiency measures (e.g. extending eaves on roofs to facilitate external wall insulation and facilitating the future installation of heat pumps when designing a replacement kitchen)

### **Communicating Our Planned Maintenance Programme**

- 6.5 EFDC will publish information about its planned maintenance programme each year. This will include details of the works to be undertaken and the areas that will benefit from the work. The information will be published in the tenants' newsletter, on EFDC's website and in the Members' Bulletin.

### **Procuring Our Planned Maintenance Programme**

- 6.6 Qualis will deliver the following planned works in accordance with the service level agreement between EFDC and Qualis:
- Kitchen replacements
  - Bathroom replacements
  - Electrical installation replacements
- 6.7 External contractors currently deliver other planned works. We will procure these works to provide best value considering the financial cost, work standard and customer satisfaction.
- 6.8 Over time we expect Qualis to deliver more of the planned maintenance programme as they demonstrate this would provide best value to EFDC.

### **Enabling Customer Choice**

- 6.9 Where EFDC undertakes planned improvement works we will offer the tenant of the property choices of selected finishes from its own range of available products. This will apply to the:
- the door and drawer fronts of kitchen units
  - worktop finishes in kitchens
  - colour of floor coverings
  - style and colour of external doors

### **Cyclical Maintenance Work**

- 6.10 Cyclical maintenance works are programmes which are repeated at regular intervals. EFDC will undertake the following programmes on a cyclical basis:
- redecoration of external surfaces. We will normally redecorate every eight years
  - redecoration of internal communal areas. We will normally redecorate every eight years if required
  - all statutory servicing requirements where applicable (e.g. gas servicing, electrical circuit testing, fire systems, water storage systems and lifts)

### **Appointments**

- 6.11 Where planned and cyclical maintenance works require access to a tenant's home, EFDC (or QPS where appropriate) will contact the tenant providing them with advance notice of the intended commencement of the work, its anticipated impact on the occupants and the contact details of the contractor who will be undertaking the work.
- 6.12 EFDC's contractor undertaking the work will arrange any appointments with the tenant who will be given at least two weeks' notice prior to a contractor carrying out the work.
- 6.13 Access to carry out statutory gas and electrical safety checks is particularly important. Our contractor must make all reasonable efforts to make a mutually agreeable appointment and to keep that appointment. Our tenant has an obligation to cooperate with the contractor in making that appointment and to provide access at the appointed time. Where necessary, EFDC will take legal action to enable us to make the statutory safety checks.

### **Quality Assurance**

- 6.14 EFDC believes that the quality of its Planned and Cyclical maintenance service is extremely important, not only to ensure the health, safety, comfort and satisfaction of its customers, but also to protect the fabric and value of its properties.
- 6.15 EFDC requires all staff and contractors working in customers' homes to comply with the Contractors' Code of Conduct (see Appendix 4).
- 6.16 EFDC's Property Surveyors are responsible for monitoring the standard of work carried out. Any performance issues arising from the quality assurance process will be resolved by the relevant officers.
- 6.17 All customers who receive works will be encouraged to submit customer satisfaction feedback surveys after the works have been completed.
- 6.18 Where a customer records their dissatisfaction with the quality of any works carried out to their home or the behaviour of the contractor (either during the work or after completion), this will be referred to EFDC or QPS as appropriate who will investigate promptly and initiate any appropriate remedial action. They will also ensure that the customer is kept informed of any action being taken.
- 6.19 EFDC's complaints policy is also available to any customer who is dissatisfied with the maintenance works provided and can be found on EFDC Website.

## **7.0 Responsive Repairs**

### **Reporting Repairs**

- 7.1 Customers should report repairs to our service provider, Qualis Property Solutions (QPS). They can do this by:
- Telephone 0333 230 0464 (24-hour number)

- Email at [repairs@qualispropertysolutions.co.uk](mailto:repairs@qualispropertysolutions.co.uk)
  - Using the MyQualis app (when launched)
- 7.2 Customers will be offered an appointment whilst reporting their repair wherever possible. Customers will be offered the following appointment slots:

- Morning – 8:30am to 12:30pm
- Afternoon – 12:30pm to 4:30pm
- School run – 10am to 2pm
- All-day – 8:30am to 4:30pm

### **Repair Responsibilities**

- 7.3 The repairing responsibilities of EFDC and the tenant are set out in Appendix 2.
- 7.4 Qualis run a handyman service for those who qualify for assistance in completing repairs that are the responsibility of the tenant.

### **Priority Timescales**

- 7.5 The Council has established three categories of responsive repair, these are:
- **Emergency Repairs** - These are repairs that need to be carried out to avoid serious danger to the health and safety of the occupants or where a failure to carry out the repair could cause extensive damage to buildings and property. Emergency repairs will be attended and made safe within four hours of the defect being reported to QPS or the out of hours service.
  - **Urgent Repairs** - These are repairs that may affect the comfort of customers and may cause damage to the property if not carried out urgently. Urgent repairs will be completed within 5 working days of the repair being reported to QPS.
  - **Routine Repairs** - These are repairs that are not emergencies or urgent, although they may cause inconvenience to customers. Routine repairs will be completed within 30 working days of the defect being reported to QPS.
- 7.6 In assigning the repair priority, the effect of delay on particular occupants should be considered. For example, a repair that may normally be categorised as urgent should be upgraded to emergency if an occupant has a vulnerability such as age or ill health where a delay could have a particularly adverse effect.

### **Quality Assurance**



- 7.7 QPS will post inspect at least 10% of completed repairs. Further post inspections may be required as appropriate if a systemic issue is identified. Any performance issues arising from the post inspections will be investigated by QPS and the investigation report presented to the Operational Core Group.
- 7.8 All customers who have had a repair completed will have the opportunity to complete a satisfaction questionnaire. QPS will investigate any reported dissatisfaction with the repairs service and take appropriate action including correcting defective work if appropriate.
- 7.9 EFDC’s complaints policy is available to any customer who is dissatisfied with the repairs service provided.

### **Rechargeable Repairs**

- 7.10 In some cases, customers will be recharged for the cost of repair work carried out, plus an administration charge and VAT. This will include the cost of the following repairs:
- repairs reported out of hours that are not emergencies
  - all false calls and unnecessary visits
  - faults resulting from damage caused by the tenant
  - replacement or repair as a result of alterations carried out by the tenant
  - lost keys and damage caused by forcing entry
  - any other repair that is not the Council’s responsibility
  - repeated no-access by the tenant when the Council attends an appointment.

### **The Right to Undertake and Receive Compensation For Improvements**

- 7.11 All tenants have the right to undertake improvements to their homes, on condition that they have been given prior written consent from the Council.
- 7.12 On receipt of a written request to undertake an improvement, the tenant will be visited in their home by a Council Officer.
- 7.13 Within one calendar month, the tenant will receive notice of whether consent has been granted to their request to carry out an improvement to their home.
- 7.14 Permission to carry out an improvement will not be unreasonably withheld, but permission may be withheld if the requested improvement will:
- be non-compliant with current legislation
  - be unduly expensive to maintain
  - make the dwelling difficult to let in the future

- be unsuitable for possible future occupants
- 7.15 Tenants who undertake improvements to their home will be responsible for the maintenance of the improvement, throughout the lifetime of their tenancy.
- 7.16 Compensation payments for improvements are not payable until the tenancy comes to an end.
- 7.17 The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations SI 1994 No. 613 sets out:
- details of tenants who will qualify for compensation for improvements
  - a list of qualifying improvements and the notional life of the improvement
  - formula to be used in the calculation of compensation to qualifying tenants

## **8.0 Repairs Between Tenancies (Void Repairs)**

- 8.1 EFDC is committed to making the most effective use of its housing stock to maximise rental income, meet housing need and maintain good estate management
- 8.2 In managing its empty properties, EFDC aims to minimise their long-term overall loss because of void properties. This requires optimisation of:
- The cost of the repair work
  - The duration of the rent loss
  - The number of void properties in a year
- 8.3 The above three factors are often interdependent. For example, increasing the scope of the repair work may enable a property to be let sooner.
- 8.4 EFDC will ensure that all homes are repaired in such a way as to ensure a high standard of repair and cleanliness for its empty properties. The Void Standard, provided at Appendix 3, sets out the standard to be achieved by the void repair works.
- 8.5 Wherever possible EFDC will undertake a pre-void inspection. This will identify any works that can be completed during the notice period, further reducing void times
- 8.6 In recognition of the need to minimise re-let timescales EFDC will undertake some minor repairs after occupation. The new tenant will be advised of any outstanding works at the sign-up interview.

### **Quality Assurance**

- 8.7 Acceptance of the completed work will be subject to:
- A post inspection by EFDC's Property Surveyor to ensure the works have been completed to a satisfactory standard

- Provision of all necessary certificates and warranties
- Provision of guidance to the incoming tenant on the use and maintenance of equipment fitted

### **Rechargeable Repairs at the End of a Tenancy**

- 8.8 On receipt of a valid notice to end a tenancy, arrangements will be made with the tenant for the property to be inspected. Following this inspection, the tenant will be informed in writing of any work for which they are responsible prior to vacating the property.
- 8.9 Any re-chargeable works not carried out by the tenant before they vacate the property will be undertaken by EFDC and the cost of the works will be recharged to the former tenant.
- 8.10 A situation may arise where an end of tenancy inspection is not able to be carried out in the presence of the tenant, for instance where the property has been abandoned. Further, some repairs for which the tenant is responsible may occur after the end of tenancy inspection has taken place. In these circumstances an empty property inspection will take place and a photographic record taken of any damage caused or work required to the property which is deemed to be the former customer's responsibility.
- 8.11 Where EFDC is aware of a forwarding address, the former customer will be advised in writing that they will be re-charged any costs incurred by the Council.
- 8.12 Where no forwarding address is known, a record will be kept of any outstanding re-chargeable repairs. EFDC will pursue the debt from the former tenant should their new address later become known.

## **9.0 Tenant Fitted Floor Coverings**

- 9.1 Customers are advised not to lay fixed floor coverings (tiles, hard wood or laminate) in their homes. This is due to the difficulty in removing them to carry out essential works such as under floor pipe work, without damaging the fixed covering. Where customers have installed fixed wall or floor coverings, they are responsible for obtaining the correct noise insulation and contents insurance cover.
- 9.2 EFDC retains the right to recover the costs of removing fixed floor or wall coverings from customers who have installed them, on their departure from the tenancy or if essential repairs or maintenance are required

## Appendix 1 - Additional Legislation

This policy also operates within the context of the following legislation:

- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- Building Regulations 2010 (England and Wales)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010

Guidance and other related information:

- Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Operating Guidance, 2006
- Pre-action Protocol for Housing Condition Claims (England) 2021
- Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report: It's not lifestyle (November 2021/ February 2023)

## Appendix 2 – Repair Responsibilities

Item	Responsibility	Other information
All airing racks	T	
Adaptations made by Council under instruction from Occupational Therapist	C	
Basins, baths, sinks, including defective taps, tap washers and ceramic discs	C	Unless damaged by tenant
Brickwork repairs	C	
Chimney stacks and pots	C	
Chimney sweeping	T	
Clothes lines and posts	T	Except communal areas
Curtain poles, rails and battens	T	
Coat rails, hooks, wall brackets and shelving	T	
Doors (external) including frames, windows, woodwork or UPVC repairs (also see glazing)	C	Sometimes held for external painting programme
Doors (internal) including frames	C	Excluding tenant's own furniture. Tenant's damage rechargeable
Door locks and keys (external)	C	Lost keys, gaining entry and damage are tenant's responsibility. Tenant is responsible for internal door locks and keys
Door furniture (external)	C	Excludes spy holes, security chains and numbering, which are tenant's responsibility. Tenant's damage rechargeable
Double glazed sealed units	C	Council responsible for defective seals. See 'glazing' for broken glass
Drainage, waste pipes and blockages	C	Misuse, blockages and damage caused by tenants, rechargeable
Electric plugs, fuses and bulbs	T	
Electric sockets, bulb holders (excluding table lamps) wiring and main fuses and fuse board	C	Excludes tenant's own fittings and alterations (can be rechargeable)
External decorations	C	
Fascias, soffits and barge boards	C	
Fencing (boundary)	C	Replace with like-for-like fencing - except for hedge-rows deemed to be fencing (note that repair may be temporary fencing to provide security. Permanent fencing may follow on a planned programme)
Fencing (dividing)	T	First two meters of rear fence ('gossip' or 'privacy' fence e.g. 1.8m high timber fence) council's responsibility.

Item	Responsibility	Other information
		Neighbour responsible for repairing determined by T-marks on the GIS maps
<b>Fireplace, hearths, frets, grates and bars</b>	T	Tiled surround and brickwork are council's responsibility
<b>Floorboards</b>	C	All floor coverings are tenant's responsibility. Tenant's responsibility to remove coverings if repair work required to floor- boards. If the floor covers were laid by a previous tenant, the Contractor will take up and re-lay floor covering.
<b>Garages</b>	C	Tenant is responsible for keys and garage security
<b>Gardens (see also paths) including rear gardens, paths and patios</b>	T	Front access path edging around the building (apron) and manholes are council's responsibility
<b>Gates</b>	C	Tenants own fittings excluded
<b>Gas services and appliances</b>	C	Excluding tenant's appliances
<b>Glazing (broken glass)</b>	T	Exemption for people of state pensionable age or for proven vandalism (responsible person prosecuted or given police caution)
<b>Glazing (window fittings including faulty seals and handles)</b>	C	
<b>Gutters</b>	C	
<b>Heating (other than gas)</b>	C	Excluding tenant's appliances
<b>Immersion heater</b>	C	
<b>Internal decorations</b>	T	Assistance provided through internal decorating programme for older people
<b>Internal woodwork (such as skirting and architraves)</b>	C	Excluding tenant's own fittings
<b>Kitchen unit and worktops, council fitted mixer taps</b>	C	Excluding tenant's own fittings
<b>Loft and main storage tank insulation</b>	C	
<b>Outbuildings and sheds</b>	C	Excluding any made of wood, tenant's own installation, Locks and keys
<b>Overflows</b>	C	
<b>Paths (see also gardens) Split into two boxes</b>	C	Standard path to front door. Tenant responsible for side and rear. garden paths, patios, hardstandings and drives. Council responsible for hardstandings and drives

Item	Responsibility	Other information
		fitted by Council. Unless 'gifted' to new tenant.
<b>Pest infestation (within the home and garden)</b>	T	
<b>Pest infestation (in communal areas)</b>	C	
<b>Plaster and external rendering</b>	C	Except minor surface cracks to plaster which, as internal decorating, are tenant's responsibility
<b>Plumbing, interior pipework and stop valves (not central heating)</b>	C	Excludes connection hoses to washing machines, dishwashers and tenant's appliance
<b>Roofs</b>	C	
<b>Sanitary ware including toilet pan, bath and basin</b>	C	Excluding plugs, chains, seats and lids. Tenant's damage rechargeable
<b>Showers including: electric showers, enclosures, curtains, curtain rails, pumps, heads and hoses</b> <b>Add grab rails</b>	C	Excluding tenant's own fittings and any shower over a bath (unless installed for existing tenant on health grounds). Shower curtains are tenant's responsibility
<b>Smoke alarms</b>	C	Tenant responsible for regular testing of alarms
<b>Soild fuel appliances (primary heating source)</b>	C	Tenant responsible for chimney sweeping (although may be done as part of regular safety check). Also see 'fireplace'
<b>Stairs, handrails, balustrading</b>	C	Rechargeable if tenant alters handrails 14ob alustrading
<b>Tap washers</b>	C	
<b>Wall tiles</b>	C	Excluding tiles installed, broken or removed by tenant
<b>Water butts</b>	T	

## Appendix 3 – Void Relet Standard

### General

We aim to make the property ready to be home for the new tenant. There are budget constraints which means we cannot always make all the improvements we would like. However, as a minimum, the homes offered to the tenant must:

- Be safe
- Be secure
- Have components that are in reasonable condition
- Have all services in working order
- Be clean

### Internal

#### *Kitchen*

- All work surfaces will be secure and free from cracks or burns and safe for food preparation
- Kitchen units should be in good working order with all drawers and doors opening and operating correctly.
- Non-standard kitchens in good condition will be left in situ and where partial replacements (single drawers, cupboards, worktops) are required, these will be replaced using the agreed EFDC standard. Consideration may be given to gifting or replacing the kitchen with the agreement of EFDC.
- Missing plinths to be replaced as appropriate.
- Hot water supply to the sink. Where there is no heating available, the hot water will be checked when the property is let.
- There will be space for a cooker and a cooker connection point. For both gas and electric if gas is available.
- There will be at least two double electric sockets above worktop level.
- There will be space for a fridge or freezer.
- There will be space for a washing machine. (Unless in sheltered housing where there is a communal laundry). At this space there will be a cold-water washing machine isolation connection, waste and fused spur will be provided.
- Water isolation valves will be clearly labelled.
- In a studio flat or one-bed flat, there will be a minimum of a sink base unit, 1000mm floor unit and 1000mm wall unit. However, additional storage capacity and worktop should be provided if space is available [C].
- The stop valve is to be accessible and clearly labelled. The valve should be tested and, if a replacement is required, a ball valve lever turn type is to be fitted for future low maintenance. The location of the stop valve is to be provided to the incoming tenant.



- Existing extractor fans to be clean and in working order. Extractor fans are to be continuous running with a humidistat-controlled boost.
- Where the kitchen is in poor condition and beyond economic repair, propose a full replacement for EFDC's consideration. The new kitchen design is to consider the future installation of a heat pump including designating a space that can easily be made available for a hot water cylinder and facilitating pipe runs. [C]

### **Bathroom**

- Sanitaryware will be cleaned and free from chips, cracks and leaks.
- All sanitaryware will have working taps, plugs and chains.
- The WC will be fitted with a new toilet seat.
- Shower curtains to be replaced. Any damaged glass shower screens to be replaced with a shower curtain. **Note: shower curtain will be the tenant's responsibility.**
- Where the property has a shower rather than a bath, the shower is to be retained and no bath fitted.
- There will be at least three rows of wall tiles as a splash back around the wash basin and baths where space allows.
- Where there is a shower, the area of the walls affected will be tiled full height.
- Existing extractor fans to be clean and in working order. Where necessary, extractor fans are to be upgraded so they are continuous running with a humidistat-controlled boost [C].

### **Doors and Windows**

- All broken, cracked or missed glass will be replaced.
- All rooms will be fitted with a door where all latches, locks, hinges and handles will operate correctly and safely.
- The main front door lock will be changed, and three keys will be provided. Any additional lock changes will be the responsibility of the tenant.
- Any windows with locks or restriction devices will be checked and be fully operational. Restrictors will be fitted as required (e.g. above ground floor). Keys for window locks (whether replaced or not) to be provided for the incoming tenant.
- Fire escape windows to be checked to ensure they operate correctly and there is a clear route of escape.
- All meter cupboard keys will be provided. Missing keys will be replaced, including replacing locks if necessary.

### **Flooring and Floor Coverings**

- Serviceable waterproof non-slip coverings in both kitchen and bathrooms
- Loose timber flooring to be securely fixed and free from any trip hazards
- Carpets in good condition to be retained and cleaned if necessary (always clean if affected by pet fur). **Note: carpets will be the tenant's responsibility. Carpets in poor condition to be removed.**

- Laminate flooring above ground level within a flat will be removed unless otherwise requested to remain by EFDC. Laminate flooring in houses can remain in situ if it is in good, safe condition. [C] *Additional to the Price per Void.*
- Floor grippers and tracks to be removed unless requested by EFDC to remain.

**Decoration**

- Walls and ceilings shall be in a good state of repair and ready for decorating
- Minor indentations and cracks will be deemed acceptable.
- Minor damage and chipped paintwork are considered acceptable.
- All newly plastered wall or ceiling areas are to be covered with mist coats of emulsion paint.
- Wallpaper can remain if in good condition and neutral design (e.g. plain). If wallpaper is damaged, falling off or strongly patterned, then the wallpaper should be removed as appropriate ready for re-decoration by the tenant. This will include plaster repairs if necessary and a mist coat.
- If the standard of decoration is unacceptable a decoration allowance by way of a decoration voucher will be advised and agreed with the Allocations Officer. The table below shows the maximum value of decorating vouchers that can be allocated per property:

1st Bedroom	£60
2nd Bedroom	£50
3rd Bedroom	£40
4th Bedroom	£30
Lounge	£60
Dining Room	£40
Bathroom	£20
Kitchen	£20
Hall, Landing and Stairs	£60
WC	£10
Utility	£10

**Cleaning**

All properties to be left in clean and clear of any belongings this includes:

- All cobwebs removed and the property swept out.
- The kitchen worktops surfaces and sinks to be cleaned and cleaning residue to be rinsed away.
- Kitchen cupboards to be clean inside and out.
- The bathroom fittings (including sinks, WC, bath and showers) to be cleaned and free from lime scale and water stains.
- Toilets to be cleaned fully including the back, front and around the U bend.
- Window frames (internally) and windowsills to be cleaned and washed down.

- Architraves, picture rails and shirting boards to be clean.
- All storage cupboards to be swept and mopped.
- All rooms and stairways to be swept.

### **General**

- Balustrades and handrails on staircases will be in place and secured, ranch style banisters should be risk assessed. Should the risk be rated high, banisters should be enclosed. All balustrades will be safe and secure meeting BS EN 1991-1-1.
- All floor surfaces will be safe and secure.
- The property will be free from damp and mould from growth from condensation will be fungicidally washed to reduce reoccurrence. Any major damp issues should be referred to the Property Surveyor for that property.
- The ventilation of the home to be adequate. This will include clean and operational trickle vents (where provided) and adequate extract fans (correctly sized, continuous running with humidistat-controlled boost) or other ventilation systems (e.g. positive input) operating correctly.
- Where there is a loft, it will be clear and emptied. The loft should be made inaccessible to the tenant. Locks should use a FB1 key.
- Water supplies will be capped off in long term void properties. Where water supplies have been capped off (e.g. in long term void properties) the supply should be reinstated prior letting including taking precautions to prevent legionella.
- Any polystyrene ceiling tiles are to be removed and the ceiling made good if required.

### **Health and safety**

#### ***Electrical Safety***

- The full electrical installation is to be tested and an EICR certificate provided.
- Any Code 1 and Code 2 defects are to be rectified. All switches, sockets and fuse boxes will be free from cracking and will be properly secured. All F1s will be fully investigated.
- There will be at least one light fitting per room including the staircase and hall and landing. All lamps to be low energy LED.
- Rooms that have spotlights will be changed to EFDC approved spotlights where they are not fire rated and or installed correctly.
- Assess external lighting and potential safety risks (e.g. trips and falls in darkness). Add external lights as necessary to provide a reasonable level of safety. [C]

#### ***Gas Safety***

- Any gas fires and cookers left by the previous tenant will be removed as well as the tiled fireplace surround. Any opening will be blocked up, re-plastered and a vent provided.
- The gas cooker point will be capped off for safety.
- Once the void repairs are completed a Landlord's Gas Safety Certificate will be provided, where a gas supply exists. The tenant will need to contact Qualis Property Solutions to arrange for the heating system to be re-commissioned.

- A carbon monoxide detector will be present where there are fixed gas appliances.

### ***Fire Safety***

- Mains powered hard-wired smoke detectors be located according to the LD2 standard. For example, smoke detectors in the living room, hallways, landing and heat detector in the kitchen. Detectors to be linked. [C]
- Fire doors and mechanisms (including flat front entrance doors) are checked and, where necessary, repaired or replaced by a suitably qualified person.

### **Energy Efficiency**

#### ***Insulation***

- Loft insulation is to be topped up to 200mm, or as close to 200mm as possible. Loft insulation must provide full even coverage ensuring ventilation is maintained. [C]

#### ***Lighting***

- Lamps to be replaced with low-energy LED as necessary.

#### ***EPC***

- Unless there has been no energy improvement works or the current EPC is less than five years old, an Energy Performance Certificate is to be provided showing the energy efficiency of the home within one week of completion of void relet works.

#### ***Future Proofing***

- Consider whether the property would be suitable for the installation of air source heat pump in the future. Identify where the heat pump, hot water tank and pipe runs may go. Mark this on a floor plan and make provision in the design if installing a new kitchen or making other alterations to minimise further alterations when the time comes to fit the heat pump (a 'no regrets' provision).

### **External**

#### ***Building Envelope***

- Where possible the roof will be checked ensuring it is watertight.
- All down pipes will be safely secured. A visible inspection will be carried out to check for potential leaks and visible signs of ingress and repaired.

#### ***Outbuildings***

- Any permanent outbuildings will be cleared before the property is occupied and any broken or damaged glazing will be replaced, and the building made weathertight. Any services to the outbuilding will be isolated.
- Sheds are to remain if in serviceable condition (or can be made serviceable with repairs up to £100) and gifted to the incoming the tenant. Sheds in poor condition are to be removed.
- All greenhouses will be removed.

### ***Paving***

- Access from the boundary line of the property to the front door should be free from any trip hazards. Path or paving should be a min of 900mm width and unrestricted from vegetation or other fixed items.
- Any raised or broken paving slabs causing a trip hazard are to be repaired, by way of remove and rebed or replaced with a suitable subbase. For guidance a trip hazard is a difference in level of 15mm unless there is a specific hazard (e.g. it is near steps) where a reduced tolerance would be appropriate.
- Any paved or concrete areas apart from the front access path should be hazard free using the measurements above and future maintenance will be the responsibility of the incoming tenant to maintain and repair.
- Concrete where broken should be filled with a suitable flexible expansion joint if possible or where a small area (3m<sup>2</sup> or below) is damaged this should be removed and replaced to match existing.
- Areas over 3m<sup>2</sup> should be sent referred to EFDC for approval of cost.
- Large areas of concrete should be appraised for removal, soil replacement and seeding, both front and rear of property.
- Access to a communal washing line should be from the rear access in a short and straight line to match the dimensions of a front access path.
- No paved or concrete access is required in individual gardens to washing lines, if there is one in situ and the washing line is removed the paving should be removed and replaced with soil and seeded.

### ***Garden***

- The garden will be cleared of any rubbish and debris.
- Any trees to be checked to ensure there is no obvious potential damage to the property and other neighbouring properties. For any major tree works, seek advice from the Tree team.
- Damaged boundary fencing will be repaired and made safe where possible.
- Missing boundary fencing that creates a security or safety issue is to be made secure with suitable temporary fencing and a recommendation given to EFDC for permanent replacement fencing to be installed.
- Any ponds will be filled in using available soil and all debris removed. The filled in area should be seeded or the surrounding area matched.
- If decking is installed, this to be checked. This includes the hidden supports if accessible. If it is unsafe, it should be removed. If the decking is safe, it will become the incoming tenant's responsibility to maintain and repair or remove.
- Washing lines in poor condition should be removed from individual gardens.
- Washing lines should be accessible in communal gardens and drying areas.
- All other garden maintenance is the responsibility of the incoming tenant.

### ***Possible Works Additional to the Void Standard***

To be agreed and charged separately:

- Aside from ensuring safe access to the property, cutting back of vegetation and other landscaping works is not part of the Relet Standard. However, recommendations and proposals for additional works will be considered by EFDC for instruction outside of the void works. This may include:
  - Permanent replacement fencing.
  - Additional topsoil.

### **Property Option Appraisal**

Where the estimated cost of void repair works is greater than £10,000 (or other amount as subsequently agreed), inform EFDC prior to starting work. EFDC will confirm within two working days whether the property is to be considered under an option appraisal. In such cases, void repair works will be suspended.

*The Void Relet standard may be reviewed and refined from time to time during the course of the Repairs and Maintenance policy.*

## Appendix 4 – Contractors’ Code of Conduct

Repairs and maintenance is one of the most important services we provide for our residents, and we want to get it right every time. As one of our contractors, you spend lots of time in our residents’ homes so it’s important that you create a great impression and carry out your work professionally.

We’ve developed these standards with our residents, so please make sure that you work to them.

Whilst employed by EFDC, all contractors, their employees and any sub-contractors are required to fully comply with the terms of this Code.

### **Preparation is key to good relations.**

- Wherever possible, make an appointment.
- Be aware of information provided about residents’ personal circumstances, such as mobility or hearing difficulties – make allowances for these.
- Be prepared with the tools and materials to do the job.

### **First impressions count**

- Arrive on time.
- Turn up clean and tidy.... that goes for your van too!
- Park considerately and responsibly, and never park on grassed areas.
- Greet the residents by name....and smile!
- Do not enter a property unless an adult is present at the property.
- Introduce yourself, say who you work for and show your ID to make it clear you’re there on EFDC business.
- Explain what you’re there to do.
- Ask if there are any individual needs such as health issues or allergies that need be taken into consideration.
- Wipe your feet and make sure you have protective footwear or overshoes in case you need them.
- Ask residents about the problem and ask them to show you where it is if necessary.
- Explain what you’re going to do and give residents an idea of how long you think it’ll take.
- Clarify what rooms you’ll need access to and make sure carpets and furniture are protected.
- Check that children and pets are out of the area you’re working in and make sure there’s an adult there throughout the visit. EFDC Tenant Handbook states a resident must be over 18 years of age.
- If work is likely to impact on neighbours or communal areas, let them know, ensure permission is given (where applicable) and that all customers affected are informed with an indication of timescales.

### **Do it right, do it well – first time, every time.**

- Carry out all work professionally.
- Keep disruption to services to a minimum – if you need to turn off gas, water, or electricity, explain what you're doing and when you think it'll be back on. Always make sure it's reconnected at the end of the day.
- Keep homes and any communal areas always secure, don't prop open communal doors or fire doors.
- If you need to go out for materials, tell residents and give them an idea of when you'll be back.
- Complete the job in one visit if possible. Where work must be undertaken outside normal working hours, the contractor should inform residents, leaseholders and neighbours (where appropriate) in advance.
- Do NOT pass comment on the quality of work previously carried out by others.

### **Be considerate and respectful.**

- Remember you're working in someone's home.
- Treat residents and their family as you wish to be treated.
- Be mindful of and respect cultural sensitivities. Offer translation services if you need to.
- Do not make comments of a personal nature.
- Do not share personal information such as your phone number.
- Before using products with volatile organic compounds (including some paints and adhesives), check that no occupant has a health condition that would be affected. Select an alternative product or change your working method as necessary.
- Ask permission before using residents' toilets, water electricity or gas supply.
- When working in the bathroom, minimise the time the toilet is unavailable. Be prepared to reinstate the toilet at short notice.
- Use battery tools where possible.
- Do not use portable radios on site.
- Do not use expletive or profane language, including jokes.
- If you'd like to leave materials overnight, make sure that it's ok with residents and the materials are secure and safe.
- Don't smoke or vape in or near residents' homes.
- Don't get into a confrontation. Leave if you don't feel safe, report it to your EFDC liaison.
- Keep mobile phone use to a minimum and ensure it is work related only. Step outside if you do need to make or take a call.
- Don't carry out any private work for residents.

### **Finish the job properly.**

- Explain what you've done, and check residents are happy with the work.
- If you've fitted new services or equipment, explain how it works and leave them with instructions if available.
- Leave the home clean, tidy and take all rubbish away with you.



- Check to see if there are any minor jobs you can do if you've got time, that fall within the Councils repair responsibility, and it doesn't make you late for your next appointment.
- Report back on any other defects or problems you might come across that you cannot repair or are for a different trade or team.
- If you have any concerns about the safeguarding of anyone in the home, report it to EFDC.

**Communications is key.**

- If it's a long job, update residents regularly on progress.
- If you don't complete the job in one visit, explain to the resident what needs to be done and arrange a convenient appointment for you to return before you leave.

**We will ask residents to:**

- Make sure they keep their appointments or, if they need to change it, to let us know well in advance.
- Be considerate and respectful to you.
- Not to smoke or vape whilst you are working in the home.
- Clear work areas before you arrive to complete your works.
- Give you clear access to the work area.
- Keep any children and pets away whilst work is being carried out.
- Make sure there's an adult there throughout the duration of the work. (over 18 years of age)