

Document Name:	Repairs Policy
Policy Date:	November 2025
Approved by:	Cabinet at meeting on 4th November 2025
Review Date:	November 2028
Policy Author:	Stephanie Duff – Strategic Lead for Repairs & Maintenance

Our Vision

Our Housing Service vision is that all homes in East Suffolk are safe, suitable, and sustainable, in communities where residents are proud to live.

This vision supports the Sustainable Housing theme in the Council's Corporate Strategy: Our Direction 2028.

Equality and Diversity Statement

East Suffolk Council is intent on ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; sex; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity and socio-economic deprivation.

This document complies with the Council's equality and diversity policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy outlines East Suffolk Council's (ESC) standards and procedures for delivering responsive repairs and maintenance services to council housing tenants. It ensures compliance with statutory obligations and the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing.
- 1.2. This policy promotes service consistency, and safeguards tenant wellbeing and the condition of properties.

2. Policy Objectives

- Deliver timely, high-quality repairs in line with legal and contractual obligations
- Ensure tenant safety, satisfaction, and dignity during all repair interactions
- Maintain cost-effective operations within approved budgets
- Promote accountability and professionalism among all staff and contractors

3. Relevant Legislation

- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Act 1985
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Housing Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (as amended)
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 2018 (as amended)
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2022 (as amended)
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- Decent Homes Standard
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

4. Definitions

- 4.1. A responsive repair is maintenance where ESC repairs something that is damaged or faulty. This can also be called a day-to-day repair.
- 4.2. A planned repair is considered maintenance of the property; this does not include replacement of kitchens and bathrooms as these are planned improvements.

- 4.3. Direct Labour Operatives are employees of ESC that have been employed to carry out maintenance to ESC homes.
- 4.4. Sub-Contractors are companies that are procured by ESC to carry out maintenance to ESC homes. Usually, a sub-contractor is used to carry out specialised works to ESC homes.
- 4.5. A leaseholder is an individual who has purchased the right to occupy a property for a fixed period under a lease agreement. The leaseholder owns the property for the duration of the lease but does not own the land it stands on. Leaseholders are typically responsible for repairs within their own property, while ESC may retain responsibility for structural or communal areas, depending on the terms of the lease.
- 4.6. A tenant is an individual who rents a property from the local authority under a tenancy agreement. The council, as landlord, is responsible for maintaining the structure and exterior of the property, as well as essential services such as heating, plumbing, and electrics. Tenants are responsible for keeping the interior of their home in good condition and reporting any repair issues promptly.

5. Tenant Responsibilities

- 5.1. Tenants are expected to:
- Report any required repairs to their home or communal areas as soon as possible
 - Provide access at agreed times
 - Prepare the area for repair (e.g., move furniture, lift carpets, white goods if needed)
 - Keep children and pets away from work areas
 - Treat staff with respect and refrain from abusive or threatening behaviour
 - Ensure a responsible adult (over 18 years old) is present in the home while a repair is being carried out
 - Take out home contents insurance – ESC insures the building, but not the contents of tenant's homes
 - Inform ESC of any specific needs or vulnerabilities of themselves or other household members which may assist with prioritising and completing a repair, and ESC staff may ask you about this.
- 5.2. Staff have the right to withdraw from a property if safety or conduct concerns arise.

6. Repair Responsibilities

- 6.1. Repair obligations and responsibilities are outlined in the ESC Tenancy Agreement and are set out in legislation.
- 6.2. ESC is responsible for most repairs; however, tenants are expected to carry out certain repairs themselves. Appendix 1 provides a guide outlining the responsibilities of both ESC and the tenant. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and should be used as a general guide only.
- 6.3. Utility suppliers are usually responsible for any repairs to the services up to and including the utility meter, for example, gas, electric and water.
- 6.4. For new build homes there will be defect liability period determined when the property is handed over to ESC. The defect liability period can vary with developments, and the main contractor is responsible for any repairs that are caused by faulty design, workmanship or materials. These can be reported in the same way as other repairs however the response times may vary from those in section 8. Repair Priorities.

7. Leaseholders

- 7.1. Leaseholders should be aware that individual lease agreements may contain different terms and conditions. It is essential that each leaseholder consults their specific lease to understand their responsibilities and those of the council. Even within the same block or scheme, lease terms can vary.
- 7.2. In general, for leasehold flats:
 - The council is responsible for organising repairs and improvements to the structure of the building and communal areas, which are chargeable to leaseholders through the service charge.
 - Leaseholders are responsible for internal repairs and decorations within their own property.
- 7.3. In accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), ESC has a duty to address hazards that pose a significant and immediate risk to health and safety. This includes emergency issues in communal areas such as water ingress, sewage leaks or structural instability.
- 7.4. Where such hazards are identified ESC will:
 - Respond promptly to make the situation safe
 - Prioritise the health and safety of all residents, including leaseholders
 - Undertake necessary emergency works
 - Determine liability for the cost of repairs after the immediate risk has been mitigated

8. Repair Priorities

- 8.1. Every repair that is raised will have a target date for completion using the following categories:
- Emergency repairs: 4-hour response time, inside office hours and our Out of Hours service.
 - Urgent repairs: 3 working days response time.
 - Non urgent repairs: 10 working days response time.
 - Routine repairs: 30 working days response time.
 - Planned repairs: 90 working days response time.
 - Please note that some repairs may be chargeable depending on the nature of the issue and the tenant's responsibilities under their tenancy agreement, in line with our Recharge Policy: [Recharge-Policy.pdf](#)
- 8.2. Following the implementation of Awaab's Law, response times may vary for repairs related to damp and mould. These will be assessed in line with our Damp and Mould Policy: [Damp-and-Mould-Policy.pdf](#)
- 8.3. Tenants will be informed of the target completion date for repair works at the time of their request. This information is usually provided via text message or by letter to the tenant's home.

9. Reporting a Repair

- 9.1. Should tenants have an emergency repair during normal working hours (Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5pm/Friday 8.45am - 4pm, excluding bank holidays) they should report their repair by phoning 0333 016 2000 or by visiting a local contact point.
- 9.2. In line with Awaab's Law, which comes into effect on 27 October 2025, tenants are encouraged to report any issues relating to damp and mould as a priority. These will be assessed and responded to within legally prescribed timeframes. Further information is available in our Damp and Mould Policy: [Damp-and-Mould-Policy.pdf](#)
- 9.3. If tenants are reporting a fault with their gas boiler affecting their heating/hot water, solid fuel fire or air source heat pump they need to call Gasway direct on Freephone 0800 0470120 and an appointment time will be arranged.

- 9.4. If there is an emergency relating to gas (such as a leak) tenants should contact Cadent on 0800 111 999 in the first instance.
- 9.5. If electricity has been cut off, tenants should contact their utility provider.
- 9.6. If water supply has been cut off, tenants should contact their water supplier.
- 9.7. More complex repair requests may require an inspection to be carried out by a Maintenance Inspector prior to the works being ordered. This will be discussed as part of the triage of the repair request.
- 9.8. Tenants can report non-emergency repairs by one of the following methods:
- Online: Tenants can request a repair or view upcoming repair appointments using our online service for tenants: [myHome East Suffolk » East Suffolk Council](#)
 - Phone: 0333 016 2000
 - Post: Housing Repairs
Riverside
4 Canning Road
Lowestoft
Suffolk
NR33 0EQ

10. Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

- 10.1. Should tenants have an emergency repair outside of normal working hours they can contact the council's out of hour's emergency service on 0800 440 2516.
- 10.2. We will respond to emergency repairs outside of normal working hours when the issue cannot safely wait until the next working day. This includes situations that pose a significant risk to the safety of residents or could cause serious damage to the property.
- 10.3. Our out of hours service is primarily intended to make the situation safe—for example, isolating a water supply due to a leak or securing an insecure door. In most cases, a follow-up visit will be required to fully resolve the issue. If the immediate risk has been addressed during the emergency callout, the follow-up repair may not take place on the next working day.

11. Access and Appointments

- 11.1. Our appointments for routine repairs are offered with the following time slots:

- All day appointments 8am-4pm
- Morning appointments 8am-12pm
- Afternoon appointments 12pm-4pm
- Appointments to avoid school runs 10am-2pm

- 11.2. The above time slots are available Monday to Friday. If tenants are unable to be at home for the full duration of any of the time slots, they need to inform our repairs team, and we will make attempts to accommodate their request. Please note that the duration of the works required will be taken into account as part of the request.
- 11.3. If ESC misses a pre-arranged appointment or a repair has not been resolved within a specific time frame you may be entitled to compensation under the Right to Repair Scheme. Please refer to our Housing Compensation Policy for details of the scheme: [Housing-Compensation-Policy.pdf](#)
- 11.4. If tenants are not at home when we attend a pre-arranged appointment, we will try to contact them by phone, if we are not able to make contact by phone, we will leave a card at the property confirming the date and time that we attended.
- 11.5. This will be followed up with a letter stating if we do not hear back within 14 days of the date of the letter we will cancel the repair.
- 11.6. Any repair that relates to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and deemed a Category 1 hazard are an exception to this and will not be cancelled. We will continue to attempt to gain access to the home, and we will follow our Access Policy: [Access-Policy.pdf](#)
- 11.7. In line with Awaab's Law, this includes repairs related to damp and mould, which must be addressed within statutory timeframes. Tenants are strongly encouraged to provide access for these repairs, and we will continue to pursue entry where necessary. Please refer to our Damp and Mould Policy for further details: [Damp-and-Mould-Policy.pdf](#)
- 11.8. If tenants are unable to keep an appointment, we request that they notify ESC as soon as is practically possible so the appointment slot can be offered to other residents. This could be via telephone, e-mail or written correspondence.
- 11.9. If there are repeat occasions where we are unable to gain access to a property ESC may recharge tenants for the abortive visits and costs in relation to the missed appointments, please see our Recharge Policy for further details: [Recharge-Policy.pdf](#)

12. Delivery of repairs:

- 12.1. We deliver our repairs service through using a combination of Direct Labour Operatives and sub-contractors.
- 12.2. When a repair is raised, we will advise tenants if a sub-contractor will be carrying out these works as they will need to contact tenants directly to make an appointment for the works.

13. Communal Repairs

- 13.1. ESC regularly inspects the communal areas of places such as blocks of flats.
- 13.2. As part of our regular visits, we will identify if there are any repairs required. However, if a tenant notices a repair that is required, we request that this is reported via one of the methods stated in section 8.

14. Completion of repairs:

- 14.1. Once a repair has been completed, we will ask Tenants for feedback of the service that they received. This is usually collected via text or e-mail by way of a survey.
- 14.2. As our approach to data collection evolves, we will be using the information obtained from repairs to support future investment decisions for our housing stock.

15. Rechargeable Repairs:

- 15.1. Some repairs are considered chargeable to the tenant. We will make tenants aware of this when the repair is reported. Please refer to our Recharge Policy for further details: [Recharge-Policy.pdf](#)

16. Decoration after repairs:

- 16.1. Some repairs can affect the decoration of homes. If the decoration is disturbed beyond what is considered the tenants responsibility a paint allowance will be offered for the tenant to redecorate the affected areas. If the tenant is unable to carry out the redecoration themselves, we will consider this on a case-by-case basis.

17. Temporary Moves:

- 17.1. Most repairs should be able to be completed around the tenant however in exceptional circumstances ESC may need to temporarily move tenants to another property for the duration of the works. In such cases this will be arranged in conjunction with the Housing Officer. Please refer to our Decant Policy for further details: [Decant-Policy.pdf](#)

18. Properties under the Right to Buy

- 18.1. Where a tenant applies to purchase their property through the Right to Buy (RTB), the Council will only carry out essential health and safety repairs. This includes works necessary to keep the property secure, windproof, and watertight. Once the sale of the property has been completed, ESC will no longer be responsible for undertaking repairs to the property.
- 18.2. If you become a leaseholder after purchasing your home through the RTB, please refer to section 7 of this policy.

19. Service Standards

- 19.1. All staff and contractors must ensure that repairs:
- Are completed promptly, ideally in a single visit, if we are unable to complete the repair in a single visit a follow-on appointment will be made
 - Are scheduled at times convenient to the tenant
 - Meet high standards of workmanship and safety
 - Are delivered with respect for the tenant's home and privacy
 - Are carried out in accordance with health and safety regulations

20. Code of Conduct for Repairs Personnel

- When we arrive, we will explain what we will be doing and how long it will take to complete
- If we are running late, we will phone ahead and let the resident know
- We will honour appointments made with residents
- We will introduce ourselves and present our ID badge
- We will be polite and treat everyone with respect
- We understand that some residents are vulnerable, and we will act accordingly
- We will never work in a property with a minor unless a parent/guardian is present
- We will make sure that all residents receive an equal level of service regardless of their circumstances
- While working, we will be considerate to neighbours and other building users

- We will give residents as much notice as possible if work will be delayed or has been cancelled
- We will minimise disruption and mess in residents' homes and keep our working area clear and free from obstructions
- We will work carefully around residents' possessions and property, use temporary covers when necessary and treat residents' home as if they were our own
- We will keep the property we are working in secure at all times
- We will keep materials and equipment safe and tidy to avoid danger to others
- We will not disconnect or reconnect any services or utilities unless we are trained and authorised to do so
- We will clear all our rubbish away and clean up before we leave
- If the work is not finished during the first visit, we will tell the resident what the next steps are and how long we think it will take to complete the work.
- Repairs Operatives will not:
 - Use foul, abusive or offensive language
 - Smoke or vape in a resident's home or garden
 - Play music
 - Use personal mobile phones
 - Work under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Use the resident's facilities such as a toilet (unless the resident gives us permission), telephone, broom, tea making facilities or vacuum
 - Engage in any sort of harassment
 - Smoke or vape in our vehicles
 - Use a mobile phone while driving
 - Promise to arrange additional work, for example a kitchen or bathroom replacement, if we are not authorised to do so

21. Support Needs and Personal Circumstances

- 21.1. We recognise that some tenants may have specific support needs, vulnerabilities, or personal circumstances that affect their ability to engage with the repairs service in the usual way. This may include, but is not limited to, tenants with disabilities, long-term health conditions, caring responsibilities, mental health needs, or language barriers.
- 21.2. Where such needs are identified, we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that tenants can access and benefit from the repairs service. This may include prioritising certain repairs, offering tailored appointment slots, providing additional communication support, or liaising with support workers or advocates.
- 21.3. Tenants are encouraged to share any relevant information with us so we can record it appropriately and sensitively. We collect and use Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

data to help us understand our tenants' needs and improve service delivery. All personal information is handled in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

22. Appeals

- 22.1. Tenants can appeal decisions related to this policy through ESC's Customer Feedback Policy: [Customer feedback » East Suffolk Council](#)

23. Roles and responsibilities

- 23.1. The Strategic Lead for Repairs and Maintenance is responsible for ensuring that this policy is adhered to.

24. Policy Review

- 24.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there are any reasons, such as legislative changes, requiring that it be reviewed earlier.

25. Version Control

Version:	Date:	Author:	Rationale:
1.0	November 2025	Stephanie Duff – Strategic Lead for Repairs and Maintenance	New Policy

Appendix 1

Repairs Responsibilities and Timescales

Location or Type of Repair	Responsibility	Priority Time
Communal aerials installed by ESC	East Suffolk Council	3 working days
Communal washing lines	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Door entry systems	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Window catches and frames	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Bannister rails	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Broken timber flooring or stair tread to be made safe	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Flooring	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Make safe glass in windows or doors	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Passenger lifts	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Burst or leaking pipes up to and including the main stoptap	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Clearing blockages to rainwater pipes and gutters & repairs to gutters	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Blocked main drains	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Shower repairs	East Suffolk Council	10 working days
Wall tiles	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Taps including washers	East Suffolk Council	10 working days
Toilet pan and cistern	East Suffolk Council	3 working days
Kitchen units and worktop repairs	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Doors inside your home	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Front and back doors including locks	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Broken glass in windows and external doors	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Stairs	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Stairlifts	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Total loss of power or lighting	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Extractor fans	East Suffolk Council	30 working days
Carbon Monoxide alarm and mains fitted smoke alarms	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Ceilings	East Suffolk Council	90 working days
Plastering inside your home	East Suffolk Council	90 working days

Inspection chamber covers	East Suffolk Council	Same working day
Roof tiles and leaks	East Suffolk Council	3 working days
Footpaths	East Suffolk Council	90 working days
Bath/sink plugs and chains	Tenant	
Blocked toilet, washbasin, sink, bath, shower or gulley	Tenant	
Shower curtains and poles	Tenant	
Toilet seats	Tenant	
Washing machine fittings	Tenant	
Door keys	Tenant	
White goods/appliances	Tenant	
Door chains/additional security	Tenant	
Keeping windows and frames clean	Tenant	
Fluorescent tubes & light bulbs	Tenant	
Carpets/Laminate flooring	Tenant	
Internal decoration	Tenant	
Gates	Tenant	