



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Repairs Policy (Housing)

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document outlines the main aspects of the Housing Repairs policy for South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), providing definitions, explanations, and signposts to other relevant maintenance policies affecting the repair service.

1.2 Types of repairs

- Emergency/Urgent repairs: These are repairs done when there's a serious risk to people or the building.
- Responsive repairs: These are everyday fixes needed to keep tenants safe and the building in good shape.
- Cyclical repairs: These happen regularly, like yearly gas safety checks.
- Programmed repairs: These are for bigger or less urgent problems that are scheduled in advance.
- Planned repairs: Planned repairs will address defects as part of a package of work, rather than individually.

2. Scope and standards

2.1 SCDC aims to provide a responsive repairs service that:

- Meets agreed standards of customer service.
- Is tailored to tenant needs.
- Is reliable and value for money.
- Considers the environmental impact of the service.

2.2 To achieve this, SCDC will:

- Carry out repairs in one visit (if possible) within agreed appointment slots



- Agree appointments to inspect and carry out work where necessary
- Maintain regular communication with residents throughout the repair process
- Set high standards for the quality of work for staff and contractors
- Consult with residents and mitigate the impact of repair issues
- Set, publish, and regularly monitor key performance targets
- Manage the budget effectively
- Mitigate the stress and impact of repairs on tenants

2.3 This policy applies to all residential and communal buildings and garages owned and managed by SCDC. This does not include leasehold, equity share or shared ownership properties (except for external repairs and maintenance or unless stated otherwise within the lease agreement – see points 10 and 11 below).

2.4 Properties managed by Ermine Street Housing or Shire Homes Lettings are excluded from this policy, as they have their own policies.

3. Fair and equitable services commitment

3.1 SCDC is committed to delivering equitable services to residents, adapting services to meet specific needs of residents and their households. Constraints related to available resources, such as financial resources and availability of alternative or temporary accommodation, will be considered.

4. Legal and regulatory framework

4.1 SCDC's Repairs & Maintenance Policy is based on legal obligations as a landlord and the Tenancy Conditions. The main legislation relating to this policy include (but are not limited to):

- [Landlord & Tenant Act 1985](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#)
- [Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993](#)
- [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\) \(Section 9 of the Housing Act 2004\)](#)



- [The Hazards in Social Housing \(Prescribed Requirements\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#) (Awaab's Law)
- [Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities \(Right-to-Repair\) Regulations 1994](#)
- [Housing Regulator Consumer Standards](#)
- [Housing Ombudsman Complaints Procedures](#)
- Compliance and safety regulations, as currently in force.

5. SCDC's repair responsibilities

5.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council is responsible for keeping the structure and outside of the property in good repair, including:

- External walls, doors, window frames, handles, and sills
- Drains, gutters, external pipes
- Paths and steps to individual properties where health and safety concerns exist under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Roof and chimney (excluding sweeping unless there is a council-owned solid fuel appliance)
- External decoration
- Installations/maintenance for water, gas, electricity, and sanitation
- Installations/maintenance for space heating and water heating fitted by the Council
- Internal wall plaster and timber fixtures
- Stairs and balustrades
- Floor to wet areas (bathrooms only)
- Loft access hatches and insulation
- Mechanical extraction equipment
- Ceramic tiling, kitchen worktops, sanitary fittings
- Lifts, rubbish chutes, shared lighting serving the building or estate
- Fences and gates adjacent to public boundaries
- Boundary walls, fences, and gates confirmed as the council's responsibility

5.2 Additional information on standard fittings, relets, fencing responsibilities and internal wall repairs can be found in Appendix A – Guide to Repair Specifics



- 5.3 While every effort will be made to align styles and colours where feasible when undertaking a repair, an exact match may not always be possible. All repairs will be completed professionally and to a reasonable standard, taking into account the age and condition of the building's components.
- 5.4 SCDC is responsible for the repair and maintenance of external elements of housing blocks and estates, including communal equipment and shared areas. Where repairs may impact leaseholders/neighbouring properties, the council has a duty to consult with them in advance or act within Section 20 guidance - except in cases where urgent action is required due to an emergency.

6. Tenants' duties and responsibilities

- 6.1 Tenants are responsible for repairs defined by the [Housing Act 1988](#) and the Council's Tenancy Conditions, including:
- Internal doors, door catches, glazing, fittings and fixtures.
 - Internal decorations.
 - Plumbing connections to the tenant's own appliances (such as washing machines and dishwashers). SCDC remain responsible for the fixed plumbing within the property.
 - Blockages within internal waste pipes
 - Doors and drawers to kitchen units.
 - Letter boxes.
 - Repairs to items damaged by the tenant or their visitors
 - Replacing light bulbs (except maintenance-free LED fixtures) installed by SCDC.
 - Lock changes.
 - Replacing batteries in smoke alarms (SCDC will upgrade to mains-powered alarms on request).
 - Maintenance of gardens, grounds, driveways and paths within the property boundary.
 - Repairs to their own equipment and installations, including:
 - TV aerials and satellite dishes
 - Timber sheds
 - Any tenant-installed alterations or improvements



- 6.2 Tenants are required to report any defects promptly and take reasonable steps to minimise or prevent any resulting damage or loss. This obligation includes concerns related to damp and mould.

7. Repairs

7.1 Reporting Repairs

The Council provide multiple channels for reporting repairs, including the 24-hour Repairs Helpline, 'M & Me' app, online, and through council staff or representatives. Tenants are expected to grant access to their homes for necessary works, inspections, or surveys. Where damage is found to be caused by tenants, their household members, or visitors, the Council reserves the right to recover the cost of repairs.

7.2 Repairs Priorities and Response Targets

Repair priorities comply with Right to Repair regulations and are used to decide how urgent a repair is and how long it can take to fix. Categories include emergency, urgent, recall, routine, planned, and adaptations.

- Emergencies - 4 Hours
- Urgent - 24 hours
- Routine – 20 working days
- Routine Planned - 30 Days (this is where a routine repair is escalated to a planned works activity, for example a roof repair becomes a re-roof)
- Adaptations – dependent on works (see Section 12 of the [Disabled Adaptations Policy](#))

As stated above, SCDC will aim to respond to emergency repairs within 4 hours of being reported, to make safe, but may require follow up works. The repairs considered to be emergencies are:

- a total loss of electric power or water supply.
- an uncontrollable water leak.



- a blocked, leaking or non-flushing toilet (when there is only one in the property).
- a water mains leak.
- insecure ground floor windows, doors or locks.
- An immediate hazard with potential to cause harm

7.3 Appointments

Routine repair appointments will be scheduled at the time of request, with a range of time slots available. The repairs helpline operates 24/7; however, appointments can only be booked during standard office hours (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm). Appointments are generally available during these hours, with evening and Saturday morning slots offered by prior arrangement. For more complex repairs requiring access over multiple days, a detailed programme of work will be provided, including estimated timescales and a work schedule.

7.4 M & Me app (Jan 2026) Live operative tracking and communication

On the day of the scheduled appointment, tenants will receive a text message displaying the operative's location and estimated arrival time via a live map. Tenants can use the provided link to communicate directly with the operative, share additional information, and offer feedback.

7.5 Online Repairs

Tenants can report most repair issues online, book appointments, and monitor the progress of their request without needing to contact the repairs helpline. For planned maintenance or specialist repairs and Damp and Mould / Hazards, these must be arranged through other channels, as they are not available via the online system.

7.6 Making good

After completing a repair, SCDC will prepare surfaces around the repair area for tenants to redecorate. Extensive damage will be prepared for redecoration and repainted.



7.7 Providing a safe, inclusive and responsive service

In certain circumstances, the Council can tailor its service to accommodate individual needs, such as requests for enhanced privacy, added security, or same-sex operatives. While we cannot always guarantee these arrangements, we will make every effort to meet them. Tenants are encouraged to share any special requirements confidentially so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Residents affected by anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, or harassment should contact their local Housing Services Officer (HSO) for advice and support. SCDC will complete repairs needed as a result of criminal damage at no cost to the tenant. Criminal damage must be reported to police and a crime number obtained.

7.8 Rechargeable repairs

Rechargeable repairs are those the landlord is obliged to carry out for health and safety or welfare reasons following damage caused by tenants. The council charges for repairs needed due to tenant negligence, forced entry, unauthorised DIY, or any other circumstances the Council determines to be the tenant's responsibility.

8. Security

- 8.1 SCDC is committed to maintaining the security of homes at all times. All windows and external doors must be lockable to prevent access from outside, though this may not always require a key. Where new frames or doors are being manufactured, temporary security measures may be put in place. If glazing is found to be insecure, it may be boarded over to ensure safety until permanent repairs are completed.

9. Gas appliance safety checks

- 9.1 SCDC must ensure all gas appliances and flues are maintained in a safe condition by carrying out annual Landlord Gas Safety Checks. Tenants must



give access to gas engineers for these checks, and failure to do so will result in court action.

10. Planned programmes of work

- 10.1 Cyclical and planned maintenance programmes aim to reduce reliance on reactive repairs and manage long-term costs effectively. General information about upcoming works is available on the Council's website. Property-specific details can be provided upon request as a guide; however, no work is guaranteed until a formal survey confirms the need.

11. Guarantees and warranties

- 11.1 Contractors provide guarantees and warranties for certain types of work, such as new roof coverings, windows, or fire doors. If issues arise within that period, SCDC will request that the contractor resolves them under these guarantees or warranties.

12. Handyperson service

- 12.1 SCDC offers a Handyperson service designed to support older or disabled residents with minor home repairs and improvements. This service is chargeable.

13. Adaptations to properties

- 13.1 SCDC is responsible for maintaining and servicing any adaptations it has installed and will replace them when necessary. Tenants who need adaptations are advised to get in touch with their Housing Services Officer (HSO).



14. Insurance

- 14.1 Tenants are responsible for insuring their personal belongings and covering any loss or damage to their home caused by theft, flooding, fire, or accidental incidents. SCDC strongly recommends taking out home insurance.

15. Fire safety

- 15.1 SCDC ensures that common parts of blocks of flats or converted houses have up-to-date Fire Risk Assessments. Front doors must resist smoke and fire travel, and self-closing devices must be maintained. Security gates or grills must not be installed, as these can obstruct escape routes.
- 15.2 SCDC will carry out annual inspections and servicing of all fire doors within flat blocks, including individual flat entry doors. Tenants and leaseholders are required to provide access for these checks.
- 15.3 The block will have published Fire Risk Assessments and fire safety strategies in place. It is essential that all residents familiarise themselves with these documents and be prepared to follow the guidance in the event of a fire.

16. Asbestos

- 16.1 Asbestos-containing materials must not be tampered with or touched. Tenants should report any damaged asbestos immediately to the repairs team.
- 16.2 Current Asbestos assessments will be provided to the property when completed.

17. Health & Safety Hazards covered by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

- 17.1 The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a risk-based tool used by local authorities to identify, assess and address potential hazards in residential properties that may pose a risk to the health and safety of



occupants or visitors. The system assesses 29 categories of housing hazards, including issues such as damp and mould, excess cold, fire risks, poor sanitation, electrical hazards and structural risks. Its purpose is to ensure homes provide a safe and healthy living environment. Awaab's Law introduced in 2025 further strengthens the HHSRS by prescribing specific timeframes for remediation.

- 17.2 SCDC operates a zero-tolerance approach to all significant health and safety hazards covered by the HHSR. This includes, but is not limited to, damp, mould, excess cold and any other hazard that may pose a risk to tenants' health or wellbeing.
- 17.3 Any report of a potential hazard will be treated as a priority and investigated promptly by an appropriately qualified officer. Where issues are identified, SCDC will ensure timely and effective remedial action is taken, and tenants will be supported with clear advice and guidance to help prevent issues from recurring.

18. Drains and waste

- 18.1 Residents are responsible for disposing of waste correctly to help prevent blockages. While the Council maintains drainage stacks and underground drainage systems, any blockages within internal waste pipes fall under the responsibility of the tenant. If a blockage is found to be caused by neglect or misuse, a recharge may be applied to cover the cost of repairs.

19. Pest Control

- 19.1 Tenants are primarily responsible for preventing and managing pest infestations within their home, including maintaining good hygiene, securely storing food, and arranging and paying for pest control treatments where issues arise through normal household circumstances.
- 19.2 The Council will provide assistance where an infestation is linked to a structural defect, disrepair, or failure of the building fabric for which the Council is responsible. The Council may also intervene where pests affect communal areas, pose a significant public health risk, or have the potential to



spread to neighbouring properties. Where there is reasonable belief that an infestation has arisen from causes other than normal household circumstances, the Council will consider what action is required

20. Improvements

20.1 Tenant improvements

Tenants have a legal right to make improvements or alterations to their home, provided they obtain written permission from their Housing Services Officer (HSO). All gas and electrical work must be completed by registered contractors, and asbestos testing may be required depending on the nature of the work.

Permission requests must follow the formal tenant alterations procedure and be approved before any work begins. Once completed, the work must be signed off by SCDC. Structural changes are unlikely to be permitted, and any proposals that raise concerns under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) will be refused.

20.2 Inherited improvements

Inherited improvements refer to alterations made by previous tenants, that the current tenant has signed to accept responsibility for. This means the current tenant is responsible for any repairs, ongoing maintenance, or replacement of these features - unless they fall within SCDC's standard planned replacement schedule.

21. Safeguarding

- 21.1 Staff have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns involving children or adults who may be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. In urgent cases, concerns must be reported directly to the police. For non-urgent matters, staff should refer the issue to the Housing Services team or the designated Safeguarding Officer for appropriate review and action.



22. Legal disrepair

22.1 Tenants have the legal right to expect their homes to be properly maintained, and landlords are responsible for ensuring necessary repairs are carried out. If significant repair issues are not resolved within a reasonable timeframe, tenants may submit a disrepair claim against the Council. Should tenants be dissatisfied with the initial response from council officers regarding the standard repairs service, they are encouraged to follow the formal complaints process for further review.

23. Accessibility and inclusion

23.1 SCDC is committed to engaging with tenants and residents in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure services are accessible to all. This may include:

- Contact preferences
- Offering home visits
- Use of advocates or interpreters
- Alternative communication formats, such as large print or translated materials
- Adjusting appointment times
- Adjusting locations to accommodate mobility or health needs

24. About this policy

24.1 This policy will be reviewed every 5 years. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and/or legislation.

24.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If a tenant is interested in getting involved in shaping the housing service, further information is available on the [website](#), or contact resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk.





25. Service Requests and Complaints Process

25.1 A tenant should report initial service requests, such as repairs or safety concerns, through the designated channels:

Repairs - [Online](#) via the Council's website

By phone - via the Repairs Hotline: 0800 0085 1313

General Queries - Tel: 01954 713 000 or
email duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk

The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

25.2 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service but recognise that mistakes can happen. If a tenant is dissatisfied with the service received following a service request, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, visit our [website](#) or telephone 01954 713000 or email housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.

26. Our values

Ambitious

We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.

We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

Collaborative

We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.

We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.



Compassionate

We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.

We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.

Accountable

We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.



Appendix A – Guide to repair specifics

1. Standard fittings

- 1.1 We provide a standard selection of fixtures and fittings designed to be accessible and practical. These include items such as lever taps, thermostatically controlled showers, baths, basins, sinks, and kitchen units. Bespoke or non-standard items requested by tenants will not be installed by the council and will be considered tenant alterations, meaning tenants are responsible for their installation and ongoing maintenance (the permission process for tenant alterations would need to be adhered to).
- 1.2 SCDC regularly reviews the products used to ensure they offer good value, sustainability, and reliability. Tenant feedback is always welcomed and considered, but we are unable to guarantee changes to the standard range.
- 1.3 In bathrooms and kitchens, wall boards are prioritised over ceramic tiles.

2. Newly relet properties

- 2.1 All properties made available for relet will meet the minimum requirements outlined in our relet standard. Full decoration and floor coverings are not guaranteed (except in kitchens and bathrooms), however decoration vouchers may be offered to new tenants where appropriate. Each property will be handed over in a safe and secure condition, with heating, hot water, and all essential services connected.

3. Fencing

- 3.1 Where a property boundary adjoins a public area, such as a footpath, car park, or open space, a 6ft wooden close-boarded fence will be installed to provide privacy and security. Access through the fenced area may or may not be available, but this cannot be guaranteed.
- 3.2 In most cases, boundary fencing for front gardens is not required and therefore not provided.



- 3.3 For boundary fencing between properties, SCDC will install a chain-link fence along the boundary line where it holds responsibility. If the neighbouring property is responsible for the boundary, SCDC will request that the resident ensures the fencing is secure.
- 3.4 Tenants are responsible for ensuring their gardens are adequately secured to prevent pets from escaping or causing a nuisance. For further guidance, please refer to our Pets Policy. Tenants are responsible for installing and maintaining any additional fencing required to accommodate pets or ensure the safety of children.
- 3.5 If a property's boundary brick wall becomes unsafe, it will be replaced with a fence, unless planning regulations or listing requirements prevent this.

4. Internal walls

- 4.1 Tenants are responsible for keeping internal walls in good condition and avoiding damage. If issues arise due to age-related wear or property faults, the Council will carry out necessary repairs and repaint any newly plastered areas.
- 4.2 Minor repairs will be prepared for painting with a mist coat of emulsion. If there is a discrepancy in colour matching, the council may choose to repaint only the affected wall.
- 4.3 Where feasible, wall and ceiling repairs will be matched to the existing finishes. However, an exact match cannot be guaranteed in every instance.