



Responsive repairs policy

Who's this for	Customers and colleagues
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1. Policy Statement

At settle, we want to help our customers stay in their homes comfortably. We know that a good repairs service is a key part to achieving this. This policy sets out our approach to ensuring that the repair service is responsive to customer needs and is accessible to all customer's while considering personal circumstance.

settle is responsible for carrying out the majority of repairs to the structure of the property, kitchens, bathrooms and communal areas. These are defined as responsive repairs and fall under the following two categories:

- 📍 An **emergency repair**: This would include any fault which threatens harm to customers or their home and will be made safe as quickly as possible, and always within 24 hours of being notified.
- 📍 An **appointed repair (also referred to as routine repairs)**: this is defined as a fault which is not considered to cause an immediate risk but requires repairing.

(Examples of jobs in each of these categories are detailed in Appendix 1).

This policy specifically addresses responsive repairs. We are committed to doing more than the minimum when it comes to the homes our customers live in, how we manage this is detailed in our Asset Investment policy, which outlines our ongoing investment into individual homes, shared spaces and neighbourhoods.

It's important that this policy is driven by the needs of our customers. As part of forming this policy we have used feedback through the perception surveys, root cause analysis of complaints, the big check in and a survey specifically around understanding what our customers would like from our repairs service. The survey was carried out by colleagues in our customer service centre when customers called in. The feedback tells us our customers value:

- A repair being carried out as quickly as possible
- The quality of the repair
- Clear communication on what is happening next when the repair requires more than one visit

2. Current Position

Currently we carry out responsible repairs within an average of 22 days, however this isn't necessarily the true experience for the customer, often a 'new job' is opened to resolve an ongoing issue for a customer, due to our current reporting and limitations of the system it does not link it to previous jobs – we are in the process of resolving this through how we manage data through our new repairs system which is due to be in use from January 2022.

We aim to reduce routine repairs turnaround time to a true average of under 18 days. Customer satisfaction with the service is over 95% for those surveyed but we know we can do more. We will now be surveying all customers who use the repairs service.

During the periods of lock down resulting from the pandemic customers were unable to have many of their repairs completed. As a result, there is a backlog of repairs to be completed. Some customers have waited since the beginning of the lockdown period to have their repairs completed. We are working to resolve this by firstly completing any issues relating to vulnerability and secondly resolving repairs for customers who have waited the longest. By October 2021 we aim to have worked through all suppressed and increased demand in some trades that we understand to be as a result of more time spent in the home. We are reviewing our inbound demand on an ongoing basis, if the data continues to demonstrate increased demand in repairs due to more time in the home and increased wear and tear, by October 2021, we will work adjust our resource and repairs trade to ensure that our service is responding the changing needs of customers.

3. Key principles

To:

- Get it right first-time and offer clear explanations and maintain communication on progress when we can't.
- Complete all responsible repairs jobs as quickly as possible to reduce the length of time our customers are waiting.
- To be transparent about our service, to be clear about what's included and what isn't – and about how we're performing against this. (Detailed in appendix 1, which is published on our website).
- Understand and respond to the diverse needs of customers and treat all customers with fairness and where possible tailor services to recognise individual needs of customers.
- Consider value for money to ensure we are providing an efficient service.
- To deliver good quality repairs that our customers are happy with.
- To make our service as easy as possible for our customers to use.

4. Objectives

- Meeting or exceeding the specific expectations and the outcomes of the Regulator of Social Housing, such as 'Home' and 'Tenant involvement and empowerment'.
- Improve our right first time repairs from 94% to 95%.
- Improve our average waiting time from 22 days to under 18 days to continue to improve our timeliness in completing repairs.
- Making the process of booking an appointment easier, ensuring there is appointment availability through the online portal.
- Ensure all contractors adhere to our values and principles so when customers are visited by our contractors, it feels like a familiar service that can be trusted.
- To carry out repairs service in a way that feels empathetic and takes into consideration customers circumstances. This policy must not act as a barrier to achieving positive outcomes for the customer.

- Ensuring the team is skilled in the diagnosis of damp related issues.
- To have a smart approach to responsive repairs, where reasonable effort has been made to repair something, if it cannot be repaired for it to be replaced as part of our investment programme.
- To deliver good quality repairs.

5. Policy Actions

- Carry out all repairs that fall under settle's responsibility (please see Appendix 1)
- To have quality assurance controls in place to ensure repairs are of a good standard
- Act on insight from customer perception surveys and other customer feedback
- Provide information and clarity online about the services we deliver – this is listed on the settle website to make the repairs service offer clearer for customers
- Maintain contact with customers when completing work, so we all know where we stand. This will include but not be limited to sending SMS reminders to customers 24 hours before their appointment
- Carry out minor adaptations where eligibility has been determined to meet specific health and access needs to enable individuals to live comfortably and remain in their homes
- Identify areas for colleagues to develop and improve their skills as required
- Recharge or take enforcement action when a customer falls short of meeting their responsibilities – legal action will be a last resort, however, if the situation warrants further action we will have to pursue this approach
- Ensure that components are replaced through the investment strategy and policy where responsive repairs are no longer effective
- To ensure that visits resulting in no access are visited on at least 2 occasions and appropriate contacts made to the customer to arrange access
- To recognise mental health as a potential barrier for customers obtaining repair services and respond with compassion and empathy
- For all customers who use our repairs service to be asked for feedback on their experience of using the service

6. Desired outcomes

- Improved customer journey from reporting a repair to a repair being completed including reducing the overall journey time (i.e. average repair turnaround time).
- To have a clear approach and process around repairs that customers feel they understand, so it's clear what is included within the settle repairs offer and what is the customers responsibility.
- To deliver a service that is easy for our customers to use.
- To demonstrably respond to customer feedback and continually improve our service.
- Demonstrate an efficient repairs service through our cost per job and the maintenance cost per unit.

- To provide a service that doesn't discriminate through standardisation but recognises individual needs and circumstances.
- Meet our regulatory requirements.
- To deliver good quality repairs.

7. Performance Indicators

We will use regular quality checks through different methods to ensure effective monitoring and reporting on our repairs and maintenance programmes

- Have a right first-time score of over 95%
- Have all appointed repairs completed in under 18 days
- Increase number of appointments available online to 40% of all repairs being logged on line by 2024, based in a baseline position of 5% being currently logged online end of end.
- For upwards of 95% of appointments made and kept for our customers
- Achieve a trust score of 7.2 or above
- Achieve an effort score of 4.5 or less
- Comfort score of >7
- CX real time feedback to show over >80% overall satisfaction with repairs work carried out (baseline position of 95% satisfaction based on responses of less than 10% of overall users)
- All complaints investigated and dealt with in line with our complaints policy

8. Key Legislation

- The Home standard 2015
- Housing Act 2004
- Landlord & Tenant Act 1985
- HCA- The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- The Equality Act 2010

9. Review

The summary of feedback from customers who responded to the survey on repairs (included as Appendix 2) suggests a high number of customers who participated would like to see an intermediary repairs category so there are 3 categories as opposed to the current 2. It should be noted this survey only had 21 participants. The broader feedback through complaints analysis and perception surveys shows that the timeliness of repairs is a consistent theme for larger numbers of customers.

At the time of writing this policy due to the suppressed demand we are responding to following Covid-19 related lockdowns, we have approximately 1800 repairs in our WIP (works in progress) that need to be completed. This is usually at approximately 1000 at any given time.

If we were to move to the three categories (based on feedback from a small sample of customers) it is likely that the repairs that fall into the third category will have further increased turnaround times. Therefore at this point, considering all feedback sources, we have continued with two categories whilst we work through the backlog. It is recommended that this policy is reviewed in 12 months time (as opposed to the usual 2 year review interval) with further customer feedback to see how customers feel about overall wait times and the number of categories that would work best once the backlog has been worked through.