

Repairs and Maintenance Policy

February 2021

Company	Thirteen
Lead Manager	Director of Repairs and Maintenance
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Officer Responsible for Review	Director of Repairs and Maintenance

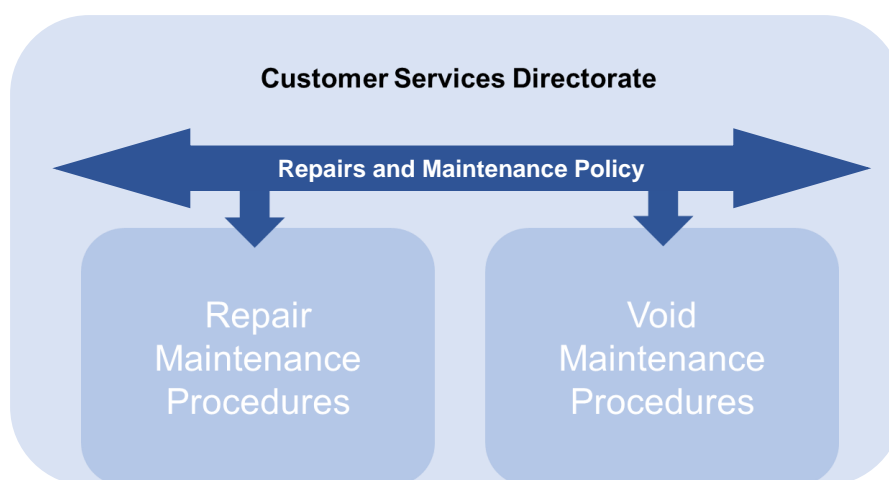
POLICY HISTORY

Version	Action & Changes	Author	Date
1	New Policy	Director of Repairs and Maintenance	February 2021

1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 This document covers Thirteen's policy on repairs and maintenance, and how we will meet our responsibilities and duties as a leading landlord and housing developer, managing 34,000 properties, exceeding 70,000 customers, and employing over 1,000 colleagues.
- 1.2 Thirteen is committed to delivering a high-quality repairs and maintenance service, providing customers with good quality homes, and a safe space they can enjoy. In addition, Thirteen has a wider responsibility to protect the value and condition of its housing stock and prevent disrepair to its assets.
- 1.3 Thirteen aims to digitalise all appropriate aspects of our business, transforming our property management functionality and enhancing our repairs and maintenance service offer.
- 1.4 The information contained in this policy is applicable to all Thirteen-owned domestic properties. Where properties are managed on behalf of external property owners, the statutory responsibility will be detailed in individual management agreements. The statutory responsibility for leaseholder properties will be detailed in the individual leaseholder agreement.
- 1.5 This policy demonstrates our assurance to ensure full compliance with all legal, regulatory and statutory requirements associated to the duty of landlords within all buildings owned and managed by Thirteen.

- 1.6 The success of this policy depends on the positive working relationships between interdepartmental teams, alongside external contractors and the effective implementation of agreed processes.
- 1.7 Thirteen recognises the needs and requirements of our diverse customer profile, and acts within the scope of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy and the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that every customer can access the same quality and consistency of service.
- 1.8 The Repairs and Maintenance Policy covers the statutory areas of repairs maintenance and void maintenance, relevant to the customer services directorate, as demonstrated in the diagram below. Each service area within the policy will be supported by detailed procedural documents.



2 REFERENCE MATERIAL

- 2.1 All relevant repairs and maintenance legislation and regulatory documents that Thirteen will comply with are listed in **Appendix A**. Our wider organisational commitment to health and safety is detailed within our Health and Safety Policy.

3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 A statement of exact meanings for this policy is outlined below:

Term	Definition
Aids and Adaptations	Equipment or fixtures that can be added to properties to help customers or homeowners carry out day to day tasks.
Benchmark	Comparing Thirteens business processes, services, and performance to assist in improvements.
Defect	Aspects of the works which are not in accordance with the contract.
Homeowner	Refers to anyone living in a Thirteen Group leasehold property, including freeholders, shared ownership, right to buy and right to acquire, leasehold retirement and outright purchase properties.
Options appraisal	A process to review properties which are not sustainable or no longer in demand.
Stakeholder	Any person or group who has an interest in Thirteen.

4 POLICY CONTENTS

- 4.1 This policy outlines information regarding all aspects of repairs and maintenance, and associated property management.

4.2 Aids and Adaptations

- 4.2.1 Thirteen commits to facilitating and supporting independent living by carrying out alterations to meet the needs of vulnerable customers, or of those who have special requirements arising through disability or infirmity. This is to enhance their quality of life, and where appropriate, enable them to remain in their current home.
- 4.2.2 Aids and adaptation funding, where available, may be subject to constraints. Thirteen does not fund or carry out aids and adaptation work for leasehold customers.
- 4.2.3 A detailed specification must be completed by an Occupational Therapist or appropriate healthcare professional. All requested aids and adaptations are considered alongside the needs of the customer and the long-term use and sustainability of the asset. In some cases, it may be appropriate to relocate customers to a suitably adapted property.

4.3 Chargeable Works

- 4.3.1 This policy sets out the principles to recharging the cost of work that is caused by tenant's neglect, deliberation misuse or damage that is above normal wear and tear, including unauthorized alterations that are undertaken to Thirteen assets. This approach extends to similar damage caused by visitors to the property, for whom the tenant is responsible, and applies to all customers regardless of tenure type.
- 4.3.2 Thirteen reserves the right to ask for non-essential (other than health, safety, and security) rechargeable repairs to be paid in full prior to the works being carried out, and will allow for this to be paid in instalments. In the event of the damage being discovered upon the termination of a tenancy, Thirteen reserves the right to request payment in the notice period prior to termination or seek repayment following termination. At all stages in the tenancy termination process, customers will be encouraged to repair wilful neglect or damage to the property prior to recharge being held on the customer's account.
- 4.3.3 In the event of the charge failing to be recovered, it will be held indefinitely against the tenant's rent account and taken into consideration should a further tenancy be applied for. It should be noted that failure to comply with rechargeable repairs, either in tenancy or at the termination point, could lead to a refusal for housing in the future.
- 4.3.4 Exceptional circumstances include damage caused by vandalism; criminal activity; access gained by the Police when an appropriate warrant is not present; fire damage and flooding. In all circumstances, before charging the cost of works, customers will be asked to provide evidence with regards to the nature of the damage and cause. Failure to provide evidence will render the damage chargeable.

- 4.3.5 Chargeable works include damage to individual homes owned by Thirteen and communal or community areas of a building or estate. These can also be applied to customers after they have terminated their tenancy.

4.4 Home Improvements

- 4.4.1 Thirteen will consider giving permission for home improvement works if the title deeds allow; if works do not invalidate any defect period or warranty; and if the application has the necessary approvals. No home improvement works should be undertaken without prior written approval from Thirteen. Failure to get permission will result in the recharging of any repairs in the event of tenancy termination.
- 4.4.2 Approved works must be complete to an agreed specification by a competent person. All elements of gas and electrical work must be carried by a Thirteen trade operative or an approved and registered contractor.
- 4.4.3 Repairs and maintenance of home improvement works will become the responsibility of the customer.
- 4.4.4 All home improvement details supporting the Repairs and Maintenance policy can be found in the relevant procedure documents.

4.5 Mutual Exchanges

- 4.5.1 Thirteen accommodates mutual exchanges between Thirteen-owned properties. The property condition must be that of the minimum void standard before a mutual exchange is approved. In other words, the cost should only be equivalent to that of the statutory landlord checks. The new customer is required to accept responsibility for any alterations, home improvements or outstanding works on the property.
- 4.5.2 All mutual exchange details supporting the Repairs and Maintenance policy can be found in the relevant procedure documents.

4.6 Responsive Repairs

- 4.6.1 Thirteen has a statutory duty to carry out repairs (and/or replace or remove) to our tenants' homes, which are our responsibility. It is the responsibility of our tenants to keep their property in a reasonable condition so that the need for repairs is minimised; however, where a repair is required, the onus is with the tenant to report it via one of Thirteen's methods of contact. Each repair will be allocated a predefined priority which reflects its degree of urgency with the aim of completing all repairs right first time, with the exception of those repairs which require us to make safe or carry out a temporary repair. Any works not considered to be a "defect" within the defect liability period will be dealt with as a responsive repair.
- 4.6.2 The Tenants' Handbook details repairs which are the tenant's responsibility; however, certain repairs cannot be undertaken by the tenant, where inadequate work may create legal liabilities for the landlord or leave the landlord compromised in relation to prosecution or regulatory intervention. Such work includes repairs relating to gas; electrical; plumbing that requires

re-routing of pipework; and any such work which requires appropriate certification by a qualified tradesman. This is not an exhaustive list.

- 4.6.3 Thirteen offers an out-of-hours service, which is available for emergencies only. Under this service, Thirteen will attend to an emergency repair if there is an immediate danger to a customer's health and safety and/or the asset.
- 4.6.4 For those with assured tenancies that commenced prior to 9 April 2016, Thirteen commits to the Right to Repair.
- 4.6.5 All repairs and maintenance detail supporting the Repairs and Maintenance policy can be found in the relevant procedure documents.

4.7 Voids

- 4.7.1 The management of empty properties is a key business priority for Thirteen, and therefore it is important to recognise that the teams and associated working practices cut across several service areas within the Customer Services Directorate.
- 4.7.2 Thirteen's voids standard is an enhanced model that does not compromise the legal and regulatory requirements; quality of workmanship; or the health and safety of staff, contractors, or prospective tenants. The ultimate aim is to maximise satisfaction of new tenants with the standard of their home and the service offered, whilst minimising the void loss to the business.
- 4.7.3 Each void will be subject to a scoping exercise, and will be allocated a pre-defined priority which reflects the extent of work required to ensure that the property is offered at the minimum void standard. Where possible, customers will facilitate us carrying out inspections, statutory checks, repairs (including those which are chargeable) and viewings whilst the property is at the pre-termination stage.
- 4.7.4 In some instances, advanced works will be agreed to contribute to improving opportunities to reduce void loss and the time taken to let a property, and, or to assist our elderly and vulnerable customers. Where a property is void during a defect liability period, any defective works identified will be reported and dealt with as a defect.
- 4.7.5 For housing stock that is the responsibility of Thirteen and has been empty for a significant period of time, or where the cost to repair is unsustainable, the property will be reviewed through an option appraisal process.
- 4.7.6 All empty property policy information can be found in the Empty Property policy. All void maintenance detail supporting the Repairs and Maintenance policy can be found in the relevant procedural document.

4.8 Decants

- 4.8.1 Thirteen consults with customers and homeowners when it is necessary to decant them from their home. This may be part of planned works, as part of a regeneration scheme or in emergency situations, including emergency repairs. We will ensure the disruption to their lives and homes is kept to a minimum during this process, and full consideration is given to customers' vulnerabilities and circumstances. Thirteen will make all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the accommodation is safe, suitable and meets customer needs.
- 4.8.3 Homeowners have a right to secure accommodation through their building insurance policy and in line with the terms of their lease or written statement.
- 4.8.4 Where appropriate, and in accordance with our statutory obligations, we provide financial compensation set out by the Land Compensation Act 1973 and our supporting resources.
- 4.8.5 It is the responsibility of the customer or homeowner to ensure that they have adequate insurance in place to protect the contents of their home. We do not provide compensation for any contents which may be lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed.

4.9 Performance Standards

- 4.9.1 All staff working within, or on behalf of, the Repairs and Maintenance department are subject to the Thirteen code of conduct, which details expected behaviours consistent with demonstrating our values and high standards.
- 4.9.2 Performance standards associated with service delivery are reviewed in line with changes to legislation, regulation and approved standards. Consideration is given to influencing factors, including risk; cost; satisfaction survey results; our current operating model; data analysis; and customer feedback.
- 4.9.3 Thirteen has a zero-tolerance policy in relation to staff abuse, whether verbal or physical.
- 4.9.4 Key Performance Indicators are used to identify efficiencies in internal service delivery and contractor management. As best practice, Thirteen benchmarks from within and outside the sector to ensure our offer is of high quality and delivers the maximum benefit for the cost and resource assigned.
- 4.9.5 Thirteen adheres to a robust procurement criterion when appointing contractors.

4.10 Value for Money

- 4.10.1 Thirteen maintains information systems to ensure the effective monitoring, analysis and reporting of our repairs and maintenance services.
- 4.10.2 Our services are benchmarked to ensure that they are of high quality and deliver an enhanced customer experience, whilst maintaining value for money and return on investment.

- 4.10.3 Our processes for procuring maintenance services and products help us to offer improved quality and better value. Decisions to invest in our assets are considered in accordance with governance as set out by the Delegated Authority approvals process, to ensure that these are sustainable and financially viable.
- 4.10.4 Budgetary spends go through consultation and the customer engagement framework. Colleague and stakeholder feedback and satisfaction levels are used to check that we are delivering value for money and highlight areas for improvement or review.

4.11 Communication and Consultation

- 4.11.1 Thirteen commits to notify residents of all appropriate repairs and maintenance information on the required or regular basis, via available media sources necessary. This includes signage; newsletters; resident group meetings; electronic media boards; the Thirteen website; and new tenant sign up packs. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list.
- 4.11.2 Communication is tailored to the protected characteristics of our customers, including the age, ethnicity, and religion of the individual; again, this is not an exhaustive list. Thirteen recognises our vulnerable customers, and promotes equality of opportunity through tailoring services and accessibility to meet their specific needs.
- 4.11.3 As a requirement of legislation and good practice, Thirteen will engage in effective, two-way communication to consult with customers regarding required works; this is to ensure a customer-focussed service delivery, unless under exceptional circumstances whereby the safety of our asset or customers takes precedent. This includes consultation on product choice and services to enhance customer satisfaction. Feedback is analysed, and all customer insight is used to shape and improve our services.
- 4.11.4 In the event of a major incident, communication will be issued in accordance with the Thirteen Resilience Plan.

4.12 Qualifications and Training

- 4.12.1 Thirteen will provide training task-specific to those with specific roles within this Repairs and Maintenance Policy; responsible persons; and others with delegated duties within the Repairs and Maintenance service area.
- 4.12.2 Thirteen will ensure that any contractors and subcontractors carrying out repairs and maintenance works on the organisation's behalf will be qualified to the appropriate standards. Competency assessments will be carried out at frequencies agreed between all parties.

5 GOVERNANCE INFORMATION

Equality and Diversity	In delivering the Repairs and Maintenance Policy Thirteen aims to treat all residents fairly. Where additional support is required, individual equality assessments or PEEPS are carried out depending on their needs, services, and dwelling type. Results from each assessment are accommodated for within specifications, delivery works and documentation to ensure we meet the needs of a resident or household but remain within the regulatory constraints.
Environmental Sustainability	Repairs and Maintenance commit to the identification and continued mitigation management of any potential environmental risk in compliance with Thirteen Group's Environmental Management System. Including, but not limited, to those aspects stated within the 'R&M Environmental Aspect Register'.
Customer/ Stakeholder Involvement and Consultation	<p>The Repairs and Maintenance Policy will be consulted on with the relevant customer involvement group as advised by the Governance and Compliance Team.</p> <p>Consultation will also to be carried out internally with the Repairs and Maintenance team, and relevant employees within the Customer Services Directorate.</p>
Monitoring and Review	<p>This policy will be reviewed every three years from the approval date, or in-line with impacting corporate, legislative, or regulatory change requirements. Reviews will be conducted by a competent delegate within the Thirteen and submitted to Governance Team for corporate approval prior to publication.</p> <p>The supporting procedural documents can be updated at any time and the changes can be implemented following sign off from the service area Director or competent delegate within Thirteen.</p> <p>Key Performance Indicators associated to the compliance aspects of Repairs and Maintenance will be monitored and reported internally utilising reporting mechanisms within our software packages.</p> <p>Where appropriate, valid certification will be issued for any works undertaken on a Thirteen asset with all electronic data being logged within a Thirteen database and managed and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.</p>

<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>As a Registered Social Landlord, we have a statutory responsibility to comply with all relevant health, safety, and compliance requirements. Failure to properly discharge these responsibilities may result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prosecution by the Health and safety executive under the Health and Safety at work Act 1974. b) Prosecution under Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007. <p>The Board and Group Chief Executive are responsible for seeking evidenced assurance that all health and safety legislation relating to repairs and maintenance is being adhered to, that the risks associated with works are identified and managed, and that a proper control and assurance framework is in place. This will be demonstrated through Key Performance Indicators reporting to the Board, Audit & Risk Committee and throughout the Group regularly.</p> <p>The accountable person with respect to repairs and maintenance under the terms of this policy is Thirteen Housing Group.</p>
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10 APPENDICES

10.1 APPENDIX A - Reference Material

APPENDIX A

Reference Material

Reference material used for consideration in formulating this document is outlined below. If a Standard or Act is withdrawn, repealed, or superseded Thirteen reserves the right to follow the new guidance:

- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Care Act 2014
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Thirteen Gas Safety Procedure
- Decent Home Standard
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Electricity at Work Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Act 2004
- Land Compensation Act 1973
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- RSH – The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from 2012
- The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Procurement Code of Practice
- Property Compliance Policy

This list is not exhaustive, and Thirteen will follow all other additional Approved Code of Practices and Regulation / Legislation applicable to repairs and maintenance.