

Gentoo Group Repairs and Maintenance Policy

1.0 Introduction and Scope

1.1 This section covers our policies and procedures relating to the following repairs and maintenance service areas:

- Responsive repairs and maintenance (including Emergency Out of Hours repairs)
- Right to Repair
- Compensation for improvements
- Void repairs

1.2 The scope of this policy covers:

Gentoo Group	X
Gentoo Homes	
Gentoo Genie	
Gentoo Developments	

It applies to:

General Needs rented properties	X
Supported Housing	X
Sheltered Housing	X
Leasehold/Shared ownership	
Rent to Buy properties	
Market rented properties (domestic)	
Temporary Accommodation	
Stock owned but not managed by the Group	
Communal Areas, including those relating to Leasehold/Shared Ownership properties	X
Commercial Property (offices, depots etc.)	

Stock managed by Gentoo on behalf of a third party	
Garages and outbuildings	X
Remote plant (district heating, electrical pumps etc.)	X
Curtilage	X

2.0 Links to organisational goals

2.1 Our Vision and Values set the direction and culture of the Group. They ensure that the business is aligned around the desire to create sustainable homes and communities and to improve the lives of our customers. The vision and values ensure that all of our people understand Gentoo’s ethos and are clear about what is expected of them and the contribution they can make.

Vision:

Great Homes - Strong Communities - Inspired People

Values:

Do the right thing
Make a difference
Work together
Keep learning
Give all you’ve got

2.2 This policy operates within our Vision and Values and links to the Group Asset Strategy, Gentoo Asset policies and procedures and our overall compliance reporting framework.

3.0 Regulation and Legislation

3.1 The Executive Director of Property will ensure this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice. The regulation and legislation applicable to this policy is attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 Our Policy Statement

- 4.1 Our Repairs and Maintenance Policy aims to provide a customer focussed service and maintain our properties to a safe and fit standard.
- 4.2 The Group aim to provide an efficient and responsive service to our customers, which achieves Value for Money. The Group seek to take advantage of the latest innovative technology and work in partnership with the Asset Team to develop effective programmes which will reduce responsive demand and increase efficiency.
- 4.3 To ensure our service is accessible a variety of methods can be used by our customers when reporting repairs. Customers will be provided with clear information to enable them to understand the importance of reporting a repair and how this can be done. Customer and Landlord responsibilities for repairs are clearly set out.
- 4.4 We will use feedback from our customers, which allows us to continually improve our Repairs and Maintenance service. We also consult with our customers on the service through a variety of methods and look to incorporate good practice where appropriate.
- 4.5 We are committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion throughout the organisation and aim to:
 - a. Meet the needs and choice of people from all backgrounds
 - b. Ensure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future customers
 - c. Ensure that all sections of the community in which we work have equal access to our services.

Our Repairs and Maintenance Policy will ensure that customers will be treated as individuals and with fairness and respect. An Equality Assessment has been completed with regard to this policy.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 As a Registered Provider, we have a statutory responsibility to comply with all relevant statutory health and safety requirements regarding repairs and maintenance. Failure to properly discharge these responsibilities may result in:
 - a) Prosecution by Health and Safety Executive under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - b) Prosecution under Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- 5.2 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), our Regulator, sets out the Home Standard which we must meet (see Appendix 1). Failure to properly discharge these responsibilities could lead to a RSH serious detriment judgement.
- 5.3 The Board and Risk and Audit Committee are responsible for seeking evidenced assurance that all health and safety legislation relating to repairs and maintenance is being complied with.
- 5.4 The Executive Director of Property is accountable for ensuring implementation of this policy effectively.
- 5.5 The Deputy Director (Repairs and Maintenance) and Heads of Service are responsible for adequate resourcing and having effective processes in place to implement this policy.
- 5.6 Operational management in conjunction with Health and Safety (H&S) shall provide advice and guidance on the appropriate methods of risk assessment, control measure arising and management of works as appropriate to the areas of work covered by this Policy.
- 5.7 The Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring that the Repairs and Maintenance policy and procedures are adhered to and that all staff are appropriately trained.
- 5.8 Repairs and maintenance and neighbourhood staff are responsible for ensuring the service is delivered in accordance with this policy and procedures.

6.0 Escalation

- 6.1 Where a Board has concerns about significant issues in any area of compliance with Repairs and Maintenance, they must escalate these concerns to the Executive Director of Property.
- 6.2 Where a member of staff has concerns about significant issues in any area of compliance with Repairs and Maintenance, they must escalate these concerns through their line management structure, ultimately to Group Executive Team.
- 6.3 Where a member of staff continues to have concerns about significant issues in any area of compliance with Repairs and Maintenance, they should refer to the Group Whistleblowing Policy for further guidance.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 This Repairs and Maintenance policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or in line with business need.
- 7.2 Overall responsibility for this Policy lies with Deputy Director (Repairs and Maintenance) and accountability lies with Executive Director of Property.
- 7.3 KPIs are set and monitored for this policy.
- 7.4 Any proposed changes or recommended amendments to this policy will be reported to the Executive Director of Property and the Executive Director of Corporate Services for approval.
- 7.5 The Local Service Offers can be found in Appendix 2.

8.0 Policy Outcomes

- 8.1 Our policy aims to achieve the following outcomes:
 - **Customer Focus**
 - involving customers in the continuous development of the service
 - using feedback to continually improve the service
 - aiming to achieve Group wide levels of customer satisfaction
 - **Value for Money**
 - offering an efficient service which meets our customers' needs

- minimising the level of and expenditure on responsive repairs
- maximising the lettable life of our stock
- creating and using opportunities to deliver work in a planned approach in partnership with the Asset Team.
- **Accessible and Responsive**
 - ensuring that all repairs are responded to within specified time-scales
 - offering a variety of easy-to-use repair reporting methods, including an out of hours emergency service
 - doing our best to complete repairs during the first visit

9.0 Records

- 9.1 Any repairs will be recorded on the appropriate computer system. Where relevant, repairs and maintenance staff will work with the Asset team to ensure their records and databases are updated accordingly.
- 9.2 We will retain and access customer profile information to support service delivery allowing for individual needs.
- 9.3 Gentoo keep records relating to Gas Safety, Water Safety, Solid Fuel Safety, Asbestos Safety, Lift Safety, Electrical Safety and Fire Safety and the detail for these are set out in each relevant policy.

10.0 Responsive Repairs

- 10.1 As a landlord, Gentoo has a statutory duty to carry out repairs (and/or replace or remove) to our tenants' homes which are our responsibility. Where they are present this generally includes:
- The structure and exterior of homes including the roof, walls, windows, hard surfaces, external doors and loft insulation.
 - Heating systems including central heating, gas fires, fireplaces, flues, ventilation and chimneys.
 - Water, including pipes, basins, sinks, toilets, baths, drains and guttering.

- Services to utilities including gas pipes, electrical wiring, and any fixed appliances provided.
 - Communal areas such as hallways, stairs, lifts, communal entrances and some specified external areas which we own.
 - Garages.
 - Other external areas such as paths where Gentoo has responsibility.
- 10.2 This list is not exhaustive and the individual Tenancy Agreement and relevant Tenancy Handbook should be referred to.
- 10.3 Tenants have responsibilities to keep their property in a reasonable condition so that the need for repairs is minimised. The list of tenants repair responsibilities can be found in the Tenant Handbook.
- 10.4 A tenant may report a repair in a range of ways, including via the website, in writing, in person, by telephone, by email.
- 10.5 The tenant must ensure that they report repairs promptly which Gentoo is responsible for.
- 10.6 Each task or job will have a priority allocated to it which reflects its degree of urgency. The prioritisation and timescales of Gentoo repairs can be found in Appendix 3.
- 10.7 Gentoo will aim to prioritise repairs for vulnerable customers where the nature of their vulnerability means the repair has serious implications for their health and safety.
- 10.8 It is expected that all urgent, routine or planned repairs, including any measurement, pre-inspection and making good, is carried out within the priority timescale.
- 10.9 With regard to emergency repairs, Gentoo may only be able to 'make safe' or do a temporary repair. If this happens outside of our current opening hours, permanent repairs may be left for normal working hours and Gentoo will arrange a mutually convenient appointment or earliest availability for the scale of repair requested.

11.0 Emergency Out of Hours Service

11.1 Gentoo have an Out of Hours Service, which is available for emergencies only. Under this service, Gentoo will attend to an emergency repair if there is an immediate danger to a customer's health and safety or further damage will be caused to the property if the repair is delayed. If a tenant's repair is not classed as an emergency, we will arrange a mutually convenient appointment within our priorities and timescales within normal working hours.

11.2 Gentoo class an emergency as any of the following:

- Report of gas leak or emissions from gas appliance
- Report of exposed electrical cables / unsafe fitting
- Total loss of heating with no secondary source of heating (e.g. fire) from 31st October – 1st May
- Total loss of power (not including power cuts in the area or loss due to pre-payment meter credit running out)
- Water leaks that cannot be contained
- Water on electrics
- No power to medical equipment (e.g. stair lifts)
- External communal doors not opening or closing
- Full sounding fire alarms or CO Detector
- Blocked toilet (if only one toilet in the house)
- Exit door or ground floor window not secure.

Note: Some of the above may differ depending on a tenant's individual circumstance.

11.3 Gentoo may only be able to 'make safe' or do a temporary repair during the emergency out of hours period. If this happens, permanent repairs will be left for normal working hours and Gentoo will arrange a mutually convenient appointment or earliest availability for the scale of repair requested in line with the repair priorities.

11.4 If Gentoo attend out of hours and the repair work requested is not classed as an emergency, we may look to charge the customer for the visit following an assessment of their circumstances.

12.0 Void Repairs

- 12.1 Gentoo aim to minimise the void repair time with a view to reduce the unoccupied period and increase revenue. We also aim to provide good quality homes to our customers and have standards in place to help us achieve this.
- 12.2 Gentoo has a Lettable Standard which sets out the standard that all of our properties will meet when they are let to new customers. This standard is set to ensure that the property is safe, secure, clean and in a good state of repair. A copy of the lettable standard can be found on the Group's intranet and internet.

13.0 Access

- 13.1 In the event of access not being gained to a property at any time, a card will be left at the tenant's address notifying them we have attempted to carry out the repair. Gentoo have separate procedures in place where we cannot gain access to complete a repair.
- 13.2 No access in respect of compliance related safety checks are dealt with under the relevant policies and procedures.

14.0 Right to Repair

- 14.1 Gentoo Assured tenants whose tenancies commenced prior to 9 April 2016 have the Right to Repair to ensure that urgent and minor repairs are carried out quickly if they affect their health, safety and security. This means that if 'qualifying repairs' are not completed within certain timescales, they have a right to ask that we give the work to another contractor. Gentoo have procedures and process in place detailing the Right to Repair.

15.0 Right to Compensation for Improvements

- 15.1 Gentoo Assured tenants who have held a tenancy with us since before 9 April 2016, may qualify for compensation when their tenancy ends for certain

improvements to their home carried out either by the tenant or the previous tenant (if a succession or assignment). The improvement must have been made with Gentoo consent, as required by our tenancy agreement. Gentoo have procedures and processes in place for dealing with the Right to Compensation for Improvements.

16.0 Disrepair Claims

- 16.1 A tenant may make a disrepair claim if Gentoo have failed to fix a repair after we have been notified there is a problem.
- 16.2 The Pre-Action Protocol should be used before taking court action for repair. Gentoo have a procedure in place for dealing with disrepair claims, which attempts to achieve an early resolution and avoid litigation.

17.0 Customer Requirements

- 17.1 All customers are provided with clear and simple information about our repairs and maintenance service. This information is regularly reviewed in consultation with customers and published in the Tenants Handbook and on our website.
- 17.2 All staff will have regard to the local service offers when delivering repairs and maintenance services:
 - We will diagnose your repair and respond within an appropriate timescale.
 - We will provide you with advice, support and guidance to enable you to maintain your home.
 - We will carry out the safety checks required by law to keep you and your home safe.
- 17.3 There is a system in place for gathering customers' views of our service, including complaints.

18.0 Vulnerable Customers

- 18.1 We will make every attempt to identify vulnerability at the earliest stages of the repairs process and will take an individual's circumstances into account when delivering the service.

19.0 District Heating

- 19.1 Properties benefitting from the efficiencies of District Heating are managed in collaboration with a company which provides prepayment, metering and billing services to communal and district schemes. We will meet with their representatives on a regular basis to ensure our customers are treated fairly, and fully represented in order to address any issues that may arise regarding the comfort in their homes.
- 19.2 Processes for repair work to these heating systems and individual properties are agreed and held by the relevant local depots and housing offices.

20.0 Qualifications and Training

- 20.1 All staff will receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities as stated in this policy and a record will be kept by the Learning and Development team.
- 20.2 We will ensure any sub-contractors/agency carrying out any works on the Group's behalf will be qualified to the appropriate standards. The qualifications will be recorded and checked as described above.
- 20.3 Training and qualifications in relation to Gas Safety, Water Safety, Solid Fuel Safety, Asbestos Safety, Lift Safety, Electrical Safety and Fire Safety is detailed in each policy.

21.0 Data Governance

- 21.1 Gentoo shall maintain an accurate database which identifies all properties for which they have a responsibility under this service area.

- 21.2 Written procedures and protocols are in place to control any changes made to the database which could involve adding or removing properties or changing the responsibilities.
- 21.3 Data assurance is currently provided through a reconciliation of the Orchard, Apex, and the Fixed Asset Register (or equivalents), and data held within service specific spreadsheets.
- 21.4 Further information is provided within the Data Governance Policy.

22.0 ISO 55001

- 22.1 Gentoo are now accredited under ISO 55001, which is the recognised standard for Asset Management. This policy and other Group policies contribute to the requirements of that certification.

Appendix 1 Regulation and Legislation

- RSH Home Standard, which states:

“Registered Providers shall:

- Provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time.
- Meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes. “
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994. No 613
- Section 96 of the Housing Act 1985 as amended by Section 21 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993.
- s11. The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

Legislation relating to Gas Safety, Water Safety, Solid Fuel Safety, Asbestos Safety, Lift Safety, Electrical Safety and Fire Safety and the legislation for these is detailed in each policy.

Appendix 2 - Local Service Offers

Description	We will:
<p>Repairs & Maintenance - to ensure your home is repaired and maintained, giving you a safe place to live.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnose your repair and respond within an appropriate timescale • Provide you with advice, support and guidance to enable you to maintain your home • We will carry out the safety checks required by law to keep you and your home safe

Appendix 3 Responsive Repairs – Priorities and Timescales

