

Repairs and Maintenance Policy

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Policy Owner:	Director of Property Maintenance
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Accountable Executive:	Executive Director of Property
Approved by:	Executive Team
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For the full version history of this document, see the back page	

Please avoid referring to printed versions of this policy. Printed versions may quickly go out of date – the latest version will be on the Policy Hub or contact the Governance Team. For support and advice regarding the policy, please contact the Policy Owner.

1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1. The effective repair and maintenance of customers' homes is a fundamental requirement of Gentoo as a social landlord. Carrying out repairs and maintenance is therefore one of the most important elements of our service to customers and aligns with our core purpose of providing "safe and decent homes for customers of today and tomorrow."
- 1.2. This policy supports Gentoo's objective to carry out repairs and maintenance in ways that are valued by customers, are efficient and effective, compliant with relevant regulation and legislation and represent value for money.

- 1.3. It applies to:

Gentoo Group	✓
Gentoo Homes	
Gentoo Developments	

- 1.4. Where applicable, the landlord functions within the scope of this policy are where we provide:

- Responsive Repairs (including Emergency Out of Hours).
- Cyclical Maintenance.
- Right to Repair.
- Empty Homes Repairs.

- 1.5. The types of property/tenures within the scope of this policy are:

General Needs rented properties	✓
Supported Housing	✓
Sheltered Housing	✓
Leasehold/Shared Ownership properties	✓
Rent to Buy properties	
Market Rented properties	✓
Temporary Accommodation	✓
Stock owned but not managed by the Group	
Communal Areas, including those relating to Leasehold/Shared Ownership properties	✓
Commercial Property	✓
Stock managed by Gentoo on behalf of a third party	✓
Garages and outbuildings	✓
Remote plant (district heating, electrical pumps etc.)	✓

- 1.6. Where properties are managed on behalf of external property owners, the statutory responsibility will be detailed in individual management agreements.
- 1.7. The statutory responsibility for Leaseholder properties will be detailed in the individual Leaseholder agreement. Gentoo have a responsibility to consult on

chargeable repairs over £250. Further information can be found in the [Leaseholder Information Booklet](#).

1.8. **Safety and Compliance**

- 1.9. Gentoo manage property safety in customers' homes in compliance with the relevant regulations such as gas, electrical, asbestos, fire and water safety. The detail of how Gentoo manages property safety in customers' homes will be contained within the relevant policy relating to these areas.

1.10. **Damp and Mould**

- 1.11. Gentoo is aware of the responsibilities for managing reports of damp and mould and will modify services in line with the development and phased implementation of Awaab's Law. Gentoo deals with damp and mould separately under our [Damp and Mould Procedure](#).
- 1.12. Customers experiencing damp or mould should report this to us on 0191 525 5500.

2. **Links to Strategy and the Business Plan**

- 2.1. We have a clear purpose, vision and values which set our direction and shape the culture of our organisation.
- 2.2. Our core **Purpose** is to provide warm, safe and decent homes for our customers of today and tomorrow.
- 2.3. Our **Vision** is to provide great homes, strong communities and inspired people for Sunderland.
- 2.4. Gentoo's **Values** are:
- We care about people.
 - We take accountability.
 - We shape the future.
 - We bring leadership.
 - We deliver.
- 2.5. Our **Priorities** make clear that safety of our customers and colleagues will always be our number one priority.

We have identified six further priorities which will guide the delivery of our services. We live our values in everything we do from the board room to the front room, to deliver our priorities for our customers.

- We know our customers.
- We provide great homes.
- We help communities to thrive.
- We are a great place to work.
- We spend our money wisely.

- We are well governed.

2.5 Gentoo's policies support the delivery of our Purpose, Vision, Values and Priorities.

3. Regulation and Legislation

3.1. The Director of Property Maintenance 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. Our Policy Statement

- 4.1. Our Repairs and Maintenance Policy aims to provide a customer-focused service, maintaining our properties to a safe and habitable standard, including the Decent Homes Standard.
- 4.2. Gentoo aims to provide an efficient and responsive service to our customers, which also provides value for money. Gentoo seeks to take advantage of the latest innovative technology, and our Repairs and Maintenance Team will work in partnership with our Asset and Sustainability Team to support an effective approach to Planned Maintenance which will reduce the demand for Responsive Repairs 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 how to access the service and the importance of reporting a repair.
- 4.4. We will put in place the systems and resources to deliver the requirements of this policy and the performance targets that apply to the service.
- 4.5. As set out in our tenancy agreement, customers should also play a role in maintaining their home by reporting repairs to Gentoo when they become necessary and should not cause avoidable damage to their home. Customer and Landlord responsibilities for repairs are clearly set out in the [Tenant Handbook](#) and the Repairs and Maintenance Standard.
- 4.6. We will use feedback and other contact opportunities with our customers, to understand how we can improve the Repairs and Maintenance Service. We will also consult with our customers on the service through a variety of methods and look to incorporate good practice where appropriate.
- 4.7. Gentoo is committed to diversity and inclusion and aims to:
 - Meet the needs and choice of people from all backgrounds.
 - Ensure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future customers.
 - 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 treated with fairness and respect. This means that we will be alert to the vulnerabilities that some customers may have, either permanently or from time-to-time, and will seek to adjust our service accordingly so that all customers have the same opportunity to receive our services in a manner that accounts for those vulnerabilities.

4.8. Our Repairs and Maintenance Policy will ensure that customers are treated as individuals and with fairness and respect. An Equality Assessment has been completed regarding this Policy and is attached in Appendix 2.

5. Communication

5.1. Gentoo provide our customers with clear and simple information about our Repairs and Maintenance service. We do this through:

- [The Customers Handbook](#).
- The Repairs and Maintenance Standard.
- [Gentoo's Website](#).

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1.

Organisation, group or individual	Key Responsibilities
The Regulator of Social Housing ('the Regulator')	<p>The Regulator has set out its Consumer Standards which Gentoo must meet. The Regulator will carry out inspections based on a range of factors, including consideration of risk, and data from our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) results. Any judgements from an inspection are made public and the Regulator has enforcement powers to ensure compliance with its standards.</p> <p>The Regulator's Home Standard contains a set of responsibilities that Gentoo must meet (see also Appendix 1). Failure to properly discharge these responsibilities could mean that the regulator will investigate and take action where there is evidence about potential landlord failures.</p>
Group Board and Risk and Audit Committee	Responsible for seeking information and assurance that the service is achieving performance targets and that all applicable health and safety legislation relating to repairs and maintenance are being met.
The Executive Director of Property	Ensuring that Group Board/Committee have a clear line of sight and are informed on all relevant repairs and maintenance matters where appropriate and for ensuring the effective delivery of this policy.
The Director of Property Maintenance	Overall accountability for ensuring the effectiveness, compliance and performance of the Repairs and Maintenance Service and the ongoing fitness of this policy. They are responsible for managing repairs and maintenance resources well and addressing any emerging resource issues or requirements.
The Assistant Director of Maintenance Operations, the	Responsible for the daily operational management and performance of the service, ensuring the operation of this policy is embedded within the service, using available resources optimally, developing and managing effective business processes to achieve performance

Assistant Director of Property Safety and the Head of Support Services (Property)	requirements. Ensuring repairs and maintenance staff are aware of their responsibilities and are well managed, developed, trained and qualified to successfully implement this policy.
Head of Safety, Risk and Assurance	Providing advice and guidance on the appropriate methods of risk assessment, control measures required and the management of works, as appropriate to the areas covered by this Policy
Property Maintenance Senior Leadership Team	Ensuring that the Repairs and Maintenance Policy and its processes are adhered to and that all colleagues are appropriately trained.
Property Maintenance and Housing Management colleagues	When relevant, both are responsible for ensuring the service is delivered in accordance with this policy and any related procedures.

7. Vulnerability

- 7.1. Whilst the policy issues set out below will apply in most instances, Gentoo will be conscious of the permanent and temporary vulnerabilities that many customers experience.
- 7.2. Given this, Gentoo will ensure all relevant staff are trained to recognise signs and circumstances relating to customers that may indicate vulnerability and will adopt approaches that account for clear or potential vulnerabilities in the delivery of our repairs and maintenance service.
- 7.3. Gentoo will retain and access customer profile information to support service delivery, allowing for the individual needs of customers to be met and our [Vulnerability Policy](#) sets out our approach to supporting vulnerable people.

8. Customers' Responsibilities

- 8.1. Our customers have a responsibility to keep their property in a reasonable condition so that the need for repairs is minimised. Whilst Gentoo will undertake most types of repairs to customers' homes, customers will be required to arrange certain repairs. The list of customer repair responsibilities can be found in the [Tenant Handbook](#) and in the Repairs and Maintenance Service Standard.
- 8.2. Customers should report repairs that Gentoo are responsible for promptly to ensure that any further damage that could result from the repair not being carried out quickly are avoided.
- 8.3. **Chargeable Repairs**
- 8.4. Most of our customers take great pride in their homes, but there are a minority who cause damage either deliberately or through lack of care. Customers will be charged for any damage to their home which has not been caused by fair wear and tear, but has occurred through wilful neglect, misuse, malicious damage, lack of care, or repetitive damage by the customers, other household members, or authorised visitors to the property. This applies where the customer has not taken reasonable steps to prevent the damage being caused.

- 8.5. We will also charge for certain repairs items which fall outside our responsibility.
- 8.6. In addition, we will charge customers who misuse the Emergency Repairs Service, or leave refuse, furniture, personal belongings in empty properties where relevant and where lock changes are carried out during any forced entry necessary to meet our compliance requirements. Further information can be found in the [Chargeable Repairs Policy](#).

9. Responsive Repairs

- 9.1. As a landlord, Gentoo has a statutory duty to carry out repairs and maintenance to our customers' homes where we have a repairs obligation. This may involve attending to:

- The structure and exterior of homes - including the roof, walls, windows, hard surfaces, external doors and loft insulation.
- Heating systems - including central heating, radiators, flues, ventilation and chimneys.
- Water-related services - 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.

Note: This list is not exhaustive or detailed and the Repairs and Maintenance Service Standard should be referred to.

9.2. Repairs Reporting

- 9.3. Customers may report repairs to their home or garage in a number of ways, including:

- By telephone (on 0191 525 5000).
- Via '[My Gentoo](#)' on our website.
- By email to (CSC@gentoogroup.com).
- By sending us a message on Facebook or X with their address and repair details.
- By reporting a repair at any of our [offices](#).

- 9.4. Customers should ensure Emergency Repairs are reported by the quickest means available so that we can be made aware of the repair as soon as possible.

9.5. Our Operating Hours

9.6. Our normal operating hours for reporting repairs are:

Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 5pm, and Friday, 8:30am to 12:30pm.

Outside of these hours we operate an in-house 24-hour Emergency Out of Hours Service. (see below)

9.7. **Our Repair Priorities**

9.8. Each task or job will have a priority response time allocated to it which reflects its degree of urgency.

9.9. The detail of the Gentoo's repair priorities is contained within our Repairs and Maintenance Standard.

9.10. These are:

- Emergency Repairs - within 24 Hours.
- Urgent Repairs - within 7 calendar days.
- Routine Repairs - within 28 calendar days.
- Planned Repairs - within 180 calendar days.

9.11. Remedial Repairs from Cyclical Maintenance programmes within 90 calendar days

9.12. It is expected that all Urgent, Routine or Planned Repairs, including any measurement, pre-inspection and making good, will be carried out within the priority timescale.

9.13. 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.

9.14. **Appointments**

9.15. Gentoo will offer flexible appointment slots for both internal and some external works (excluding Emergency category works which are carried out within 24 hours).

9.16. **Emergency Out of Hours Service**

9.17. Gentoo have an Out of Hours repairs service, which is available for Emergency Repairs only. Under this service, Gentoo will attend to the repair if there is an immediate danger to a customer's health and safety or where further damage will be caused to the property if the repair is delayed.

9.18. If a customer's repair is not classed as an Emergency Repair, Gentoo will arrange a mutually convenient appointment within our priorities and timescales during our normal working hours.

9.19. Gentoo defines an Emergency Repair as any of the following:

- A report of a gas leak or emissions from a gas appliance.
- A report of exposed electrical cables / unsafe fitting.
- A total loss of heating, with no available secondary source of heating (e.g. fire) – during the period 31st October – 1st May.
- A total loss of electrical power (not including power cuts in the area or loss due to pre- payment meter credit running out).
- Water leaks that cannot be reasonably contained.
- Loss of water supply.
- 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 Detectors.
- Blocked toilet (if only one toilet in the house).
- Exit door or ground floor window not secure.

9.20. When called out to an Emergency Repair, it may sometimes only be possible for us to 'make safe' or carry out a temporary repair. If this happens outside of our normal operating hours, the permanent repair may be addressed at a later date during our normal working hours. In these cases, we will arrange a mutually convenient appointment, or an appointment at the earliest available opportunity – taking into account the urgency, nature and/or scale of repair required.

9.21. If Gentoo attend out of hours and the repair work requested is not classed as an Emergency, we may consider charging the customer for the visit following an assessment of the circumstances.

10. Empty Homes Repairs

10.1. Gentoo aims to minimise Empty Homes repair times to reduce the time properties are unoccupied and increase rental income.

10.2. Gentoo have three category timescales for Empty Homes repairs:

- Minor works – 7 calendar days.
- Routine works – 14 calendar days.
- Major works – 28 calendar days.

10.3. 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.

11. Access

11.1. In the event of access not being gained to a customer's home to undertake a repair, an access card will be left at the property notifying the customer that a visit has been attempted to carry out the repair. Gentoo have a dedicated Customer Access Team who manage follow-up contact with customers where Gentoo has been unable gain access.

- 11.2. There can be occasions where the Gentoo has attempted to access a customer's home to complete a repair that has been reported - but have been unable to do undertake the repair due to the availability or unresponsiveness of the customer.
- 11.3. In such instances - where the usual customer access process has been exhausted - and providing the repair does not affect the safety of the customer or the property (for instance where the visit is safety/compliance-related or related to damp/mould or an HHSRS hazard), Gentoo may close the repair and request that a new repair is raised by the customer. In these circumstances Gentoo may close the repair request, sending a letter to the customer giving 7 days' notice of the closure of the repair".
- 11.4. Note: Where we fail to gain access regarding a safety-related check, gaining access is dealt with under the relevant customer access procedure.

12. Right to Repair

- 12.1. All Assured Tenants have the right to repair to ensure that urgent and minor repairs are carried out quickly if they affect their health, safety and security. Gentoo have procedures and process in place detailing our Right to Repair scheme which is outlined in our [Tenant Handbook](#).

13. Disrepair Claims

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

14. Complaints and Compensation

- 14.1. Gentoo's Customer Voice Team co-ordinate responses to complaints about the Repairs and Maintenance Service. Repair-related complaints will be dealt with under our [Complaints and Compliments Policy](#).
- 14.2. There may be occasions where compensation may be due to a customer because of Gentoo's handling of a repair. Guidance on this can be found in Gentoo's Compensation Policy.

15. Engagement

- 15.1. We place customers at the heart of the organisation. We recognise the influence customers can have on services via the feedback they provide on a daily basis. Therefore, we aim to provide customers with an array of opportunities to get involved. For instance, we may do this via surveys where we

want to understand our customers' views on a specific service, or via "deep dives," where customers are invited into Gentoo to talk to us about ways we can improve services.

15.2. Our Customer Engagement Strategy sets out that we will involve our customers in three key areas:

1. Collaborating to enhance services.
2. Reviewing our performance and ensuring we deliver.
3. Influencing decisions at local and national levels.

16. Qualifications and Training

- 16.1. All colleagues 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.
- 16.2. We will ensure any sub-contractors/agency carrying out any works on the Gentoo's behalf are qualified to the appropriate standards. Their qualifications will be checked and recorded as described above.
- 16.3. Training and qualifications requirements relating to Gas Safety, Water Safety, Solid Fuel Safety, Asbestos Safety, Lift Safety, Electrical Safety and Fire Safety are detailed in each policy.
- 16.4. Where appropriate, officers will be qualified in line with the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

17. District Heating

- 17.1. 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.
- 17.2. Gentoo will manage our appointed supplier to ensure our customers are treated fairly and are fully represented to address any issues that may arise regarding their comfort in their homes.
- 17.3. Processes for repair work to these heating systems and individual properties are agreed and overseen by the Repairs and Maintenance Team with support where necessary from housing colleagues.

18. Monitoring and Review

- 18.1. This Repairs and Maintenance Policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or in line with service changes, legislative or regulatory requirements.
- 18.2. Overall responsibility for this Policy lies with the Director of Property Maintenance, accountability lies with the Executive Director of Property.
- 18.3. This policy may be subject to an audit in line with Gentoo's Internal Audit plan.

- 18.4. This Policy is Grade 2 and changes will need the approval of the Executive Team.

19. Key Performance Indicators

- 19.1. Gentoo's Repairs and Maintenance Service aims to achieve performance targets based upon a comprehensive set of KPIs including:

- Repairs Completed at First Visit - Right First Time.
- Percentage of Emergency Repairs Completed Within Target Time.
- Percentage of Non-Emergency Repairs Completed Within target Time.
- Average Days Taken to Complete an Emergency Repair.
- Average Days Taken to Complete a Non-Emergency Repair.
- Percentage of eligible properties that have a valid LGSR.
- Average Cost of a Repair.
- Total number of Overdue Property Repairs.
- Empty Homes – Average number of days Let-to-Let.
- Empty Homes Average Number of Days at each stage (Major Minor Asset).
- Empty Homes – Average Cost of EH.

- 19.2. In addition, Gentoo will measure performance against the Regulator of Social Housing's [Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#):

- TP02: Satisfaction with Repairs.
- TP03: Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair.
- TP04: Satisfaction that the home is well maintained.
- TP05: Satisfaction that the home is safe.
- RP02: Repairs completed within target timescale.

- 19.3 Relevant KPIs will be reported to the Groups Executive Team, Customer Committee and Group Board at quarterly intervals.

20. Policy Outcomes

- 20.1. The policy outcomes expected from this policy are:

- The effective repairs and maintenance of our customers' homes resulting in well maintained, warm, safe, and decent homes, where customers value the service and satisfaction is high.
- Compliance with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Cost-effective services that provide value for money.
- Positive liaison with other Gentoo services where collaboration can improve our service and/or our efficiency.
- The use of best practice in the delivery of repairs and maintenance wherever achievable.
- A highly motivated and satisfied workforce who are proud of the service they provide.

21. Records

- 21.1. Gentoo will maintain an accurate database which identifies all properties for which they have a responsibility under this service area.
- 21.2. All repairs will be recorded on the appropriate corporate ICT systems. Where relevant, Repairs and Maintenance colleagues will work with the Asset and Sustainability Team to ensure their records and databases are updated accordingly.
- 21.3. 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.
- 21.4. Data Assurance is currently provided through a reconciliation of the Housing Management and Asset Management systems and the Fixed Asset Register (or equivalents), and data held within service specific spreadsheets.
- 21.5. Further information is provided within the Data Governance Policy.

22. Version Control

Version	Reason	Issuer	Date
1.0	Initial version	Melanie Smith	November 2016
1.1	Added new repairs priorities	Diane Carney/Kirsty Collins	March 2017
1.2	Light touch review	Kirsty Collins	February 2018
1.3	First draft produced	Kirsty Collins	February 2018
1.4	Amendments to draft	Kirsty Collins	March 2018
2.0	Approved version	Kirsty Collins	April 2018
2.1	Added in local service offers	Sarah Treadwell	Jan 2019
2.2	Removed KPIs and inserted link	Michelle Green	February 2019
2.3	Amended dates for total loss of heating Oct- May (was March)	Michelle Green	April 2019
2.4	Amended names to job titles and added accountable Executive Director	Sarah Treadwell	September 2019
3.0	Initial version	Diane Carney	May 2021
3.1	First Full Policy review draft	Steve Lowther	February 2025
3.2	Second Full Policy review draft, incorporating suggestions from Ark Consulting	Terry Bonner	March 2025
3.3	Further amends.	Steve Lowther	April 2025
4.0	Approved by the Executive Team.	Chloe Appleby	30/04/2025