



Places to live. Space to grow.

Maintaining Your Home Policy

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1 Introduction: the purpose of this policy

1.1 We are dedicated to providing quality, safe, and affordable homes for all of our residents. We believe that housing is more than just a roof over your head, it is about creating a space where you and your family can thrive. With this in mind, we want each of our residents to have a comfortable and secure living environment through our 'Maintaining Your Home' standard.

The Maintaining Your Home standard is designed to uphold high levels of maintenance and care across all of our properties.

We understand that a well-maintained home contributes to your overall well-being and quality of life. That is why we are committed to listening to resident feedback and adopting best practices in property management.

2 Policy Statement

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to give clear guidance on responsibilities, repair types, inspections, timescales and access.

3 Repair responsibilities

Our repair responsibilities

3.1 We are responsible for keeping the home in good state of repair and completing any repairs or servicing that we are responsible for.

*Please see Appendix 1 for a list of key items.

Resident repair responsibilities

3.2 Residents are responsible for keeping the home in good state of repair and completing any repairs or servicing that they are responsible for.

*Please see Appendix 2 for a list of key items.

Fencing

3.3 There is no legal obligation on us as a landlord to put in a fence or mark the boundaries of our properties; in most cases fencing is the resident's responsibility.

3.4 We will repair or replace fencing under the following conditions:

- We will repair or replace all fencing where there is a health and safety risk, for example there is a drop in ground levels that could cause harm.
- We will repair or replace rear fencing if it is next to a public right of way.
- We will repair or replace side fencing to your rear garden if it is next to a public right of way.

3.5 You can request repairs to fences if you meet our vulnerability criteria or if there is an antisocial behaviour risk. We will decide if your need meets the criteria.

3.6 Please see our website for further information on fencing: www.westkent.org/fencing

Damp and mould

3.7 Preventing condensation and mould

Condensation is caused when excess warm moisture in the air meets a cold surface and turns into water, this can cause patches of mould to form.

You can take some simple steps to reduce condensation, helping to prevent damp and mould:

- Heat your home
- It is recommended to keep your heating on for longer at a lower temperature
- Open windows when carrying out tasks that add moisture to the air
- Ventilate your home

3.8 Please see our website for further information and our damp and mould policy: www.westkent.org/dampandmould

Information and videos to help residents

3.9 Our website, www.westkent.org contains useful information and videos to help residents with topics, including:

- Damp, mould and condensation
- Fencing
- Grounds Maintenance
- Home contents insurance
- Home improvements
- Repairs at your home
- Self-help videos

3.10 If you do not have access to online services, please contact the West Kent call centre or your Neighbourhood Housing Officer.

Guidance on reporting a repair

- When reporting a repair, you should provide as much detail as possible, this may include providing a photograph.
- We will not always know the cause, or the extent of the repairs needed, so follow on visits may be required.
- You should refer to your tenancy agreement or lease for further guidance.

Contents insurance

3.11 We do not cover your contents as part of your tenancy agreement. It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for, to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one.

3.12 Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen, so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind should the worst happen. For more information, visit www.westkent.org/homeinsurance.

4 Repairs definitions

*Please see Appendix 3 for a list of Emergency, Urgent, Routine and Planned Works.

4.1

- **Emergency:** This priority is used when there is an immediate risk to a resident's health or security, or serious damage to the resident's home. We will make it safe but may need to finish the repair at a later date.
- **Urgent:** This priority is used where there is a risk to the resident's health or security.
- **Routine:** All other repairs will be completed by appointment made with you.
- **Planned:** Some repairs, such as large-scale replacements or improvement work may be scheduled outside routine repairs.
- **Vulnerabilities:** Where there are vulnerabilities, we may make reasonable adjustments and tailor our services.

4.2 Out of hours repairs: Please note that the out of hours service is a make safe service. It is not always possible to complete the repair. In these instances, we will make safe until an operative can attend to complete the full repair.

5 Repairs timescales

5.1 The table below shows the timescales that we aim to complete repairs within.

Repairs Timescales	
Emergency	One calendar day (by the end of the next day)
Urgent	Within three working days

Routine	21 calendar days
Damp and mould	Emergency Damp & Mould - One calendar day Significant Damp & Mould – Seven calendar days
Planned works	If the works are on the current financial years programme they will be completed within 12 months

5.2 If damp and mould poses an immediate risk to a resident for medical reasons, we will inspect within 24 hours and consider if a decant is necessary.

5.3 For instance, where there is evidence of prevalent damp and/or mould which is having a material impact on the resident's health – such as where the tenant is experiencing breathing difficulties or other health symptoms linked to the damp or mould – this would be likely to constitute an emergency hazard.

5.4 It is your responsibility to provide all necessary information when reporting a repair, we will decide the repairs timescale that is assigned.

5.5 If we identify further work during an appointment, we will advise you when these will be completed. We will contact you within five working days to provide the update.

Repair appointments

5.6 Our normal repairs appointment details are:

- Monday to Friday, 8am to 5.30pm
- Morning appointments: 8am to 1pm
- Avoiding school run appointments: 9.30am to 1pm
- Afternoon appointments: 12 noon to 5.30pm

We will work with you to agree mutually convenient appointments.

5.7 Our out of hours appointment details are:

- Out of hours service commences from 5.15pm, Monday to Thursday and 5pm on Friday including weekends and Bank Holidays.
- For emergency or urgent repairs that are reported outside of normal working hours (5pm and 8am) we will attend to make safe only. We will then arrange a follow-on job to complete the work.

Exceptions to our repairs timescales

5.8 There may be times that our timescales cannot be met, this would normally be for specialist works or to abide by legal requirements that are outside of our control.

5.9 Any work to a resident's home that falls under these exceptions will be treated as planned works, with a 12-month timescale. For all planned works, residents will be contacted to

be made aware that they are on the programme, appointments can be agreed that work around your needs.

*Please see Appendix 4 for a list of key items.

6 Repairs in homes where West Kent is not the freeholder

6.1 We do not always own the buildings that our residents live in, these are normally owned by a Freeholder. Sometimes the repairs responsibilities in Freehold buildings are shared between West Kent and the Freeholder, please see below a list of these properties.

6.2 Table of properties where we are not the freeholder:

Location	Number/s
Alpha House	1 to 24
Chestnut House	1 & 4
Dame Kelly Holmes Way	25 to 26
Erica Court	4
Esparto Way	175 to 183 & 187
Grosvenor Road	39 to 45
Inglewood	1 to 43
Robina Court	All
Shipbourne Road	42
Tennyson Lodge	1 to 61
Warren Farm Cottages	All
Weald Road	86 to 92

How to report repairs for a building where West Kent is not the Freeholder

6.3 Residents should report all repairs to us. If it is our responsibility, the normal repairs process will apply. If the repair is the responsibility of the freeholder, we will make the freeholder aware and ask for timescales. If this deadline is not met, we may carry out the repair; we will keep residents updated at each stage of the repair.

6.4 The freeholder must be given a reasonable amount of time to investigate and arrange any necessary remedial works. If they fail to investigate or fail to act after their investigation, we may step in to resolve the matter; this would be considered on a case-by-case basis and normally if there is continued damage within a resident's home.

7 Inspections and access

7.1 We will need to access your home to complete inspections and works, for example:

- Access to install remote monitoring equipment for items, such as temperature and humidity
- Compliance Safety Checks (including Asbestos, Electrical, Gas and Fire safety works)

- General health and safety inspections
- General inspections to identify issues
- Planned works
- Repairs and follow-on work
- Stock condition surveys
- Void inspections

7.2 When a visit is booked, all residents are required to:

- Ensure someone above the age of 18 is at home for the appointment
- Ensure the working area is clear for the operative
- Ensure that pets are secured away from the working area
- Contact us to cancel the appointment if it's no longer required
- Contact us if the appointment is no longer convenient to reschedule
- Treat all operatives with respect and allow them to complete their work.

Please remember that residents are not permitted to store items in the loft space.

8 Escalation

8.1 Where residents fail to provide access, the issue will be reported to the neighbourhood housing team.

8.2 In an emergency, we may force entry to your home without notice or permission to complete essential work or to ensure that your property is compliant building safety, for example gas servicing. An example of the type of emergency would be a substantial leak from a flat above another property.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1

Our repair responsibilities

Below is a list of items that we are responsible for. This is a list of common items, not all items:

Item

Keeping the home in good state of repair and completing any repairs or servicing that we are responsible for
Arranging and managing repairs with contractors, consultants, and specialists
Communal TV aerials
Communal washing lines and posts
Completing repairs within our target timescales
Damp and mould
Electrics within your home, including the wiring and fuse board/consumer unit
Hazardous substances, including asbestos
Internal decoration, where damage was caused by West Kent or our contractors
Maintaining adaptations that were installed by West Kent
Pathways
Plumbing and pipework maintenance and repairs within your home
Repairs, maintenance and servicing to health and safety systems
Repairs, maintenance and servicing to intercom, warden call and hardwired telecare systems
Shared communal areas and repairs, both inside and outside
Shared communal services including plumbing and drainage
Smoke and CO2 alarms
Structural repairs
Taps, we will repair internal taps in your home, for example kitchens, bathrooms, ensuites and cloakrooms
Window repairs

In addition to common repair items please see below a list of common items that we are responsible for and their normal lifespans. Please remember that we will survey these items every five years as part of the Stock Condition Survey.

Item	Expected Lifespan
Air Source Heat Pumps	16 Years
Bathroom replacements	30 Years
External Cyclical Redecoration, and internal communal areas.	7 Years
External doors (GRP / UPVC)	25 Years
Gas boiler replacements	16 Years
Kitchen replacements	20 Years
Roofs (Flat) This will include any fascias, soffits and rainwater goods as required	26 Years
Roof (Pitched) This will include any fascias, soffits and rainwater goods as required	100 Years
Windows (UPVC)	35 Years

Appendix 2

Residents' repair responsibilities

Below is a list of items that residents are responsible for. This is a list of common items, not all items:

Item
Accidental or deliberate damage caused by residents, their family, pets or visitors in their home, garden, shared areas or West Kent land; or if they have asked someone to alter these items (If West Kent repairs any damage caused by the above, we charge the cost back to the resident)
Adaptations, if it was installed by someone else other than West Kent
Adjustment of doors for carpets or other flooring
Blockages to sinks, washbasins, baths, toilets (Residents are responsible for clearing blockages caused by items being put down drains such as nappies, wipes, food and cooking fats. If residents are unable to clear the blockage, we will arrange to attend and repair the problem. We may charge the cost to the resident if we find that the blockage was caused by them, their family, or visitors)
Clothes lines and posts
Decking, patios, crazy paving, and any other external surfaces not installed by West Kent.
Door locks and cutting extra keys (If keys are lost, stolen or there is damage through force, residents are responsible)
Door numbers, nameplates, doorbells (including batteries), chains, door stops, letterplates and letterboxes. Damage due to forced entry, including by the emergency services.
External buildings/ additions including conservatories, sheds, lean-tos and outbuildings
Fencing replacements, for more information please visit our website
Filling minor cracks and patching to walls and ceilings
Floor coverings such as carpets and laminate/wood flooring that were not fitted by us
Glazing, which includes glass in windows and doors (even if you have a crime reference number). We can make safe, but we will recharge you for this.
Individual appliances that residents own, for example cookers or washing machines. Residents are also responsible for the fitting and plumbing of these.
Individual TV aerials and satellites dishes.
Internal decorating, unless the resident's tenancy agreement says otherwise. Where we have caused damage, we will decorate or provide a decorating pack. If we have repaired one wall, we would only redecorate that wall, we will offer a colour choice from our standard range.
Keeping the inside and outside of the home clean and in good condition.
Keeping your home warm, ventilating the home and wiping away condensation from areas such as windows.
More information on preventing damp and mould is on our website: www.westkent.org/dampandmould
Light bulbs, fluorescent tubes, starters, fuses and batteries
Maintaining trees, hedges and grass to a reasonable standard
Managing any infestation of pests including insects, birds and/or rodents in your home or your garden
Porches - if you add a porch to your home you must leave the original door provided by West Kent in its original location, this is the door that we will continue to maintain. The new front door to the new porch will be installed and maintained by the resident
Paying costs that we incur putting right any damage that you, your family, pets, or visitors have caused, or general repairs that you are responsible for
Plug and play telecare systems
Plugs and chains to sinks, baths and washbasins

Repairing internal doors, including handles, hinges and latches (We will repair the frame. We will repair all fire doors, but you may be charged if the damage was deliberate)
Resetting the trip switch at the fuse board and carrying out appliance tests if the fuse board keeps tripping
Shower heads, hoses and brackets, shower rails, shower risers and shower curtains
Weekly checks to ensure that your smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors within your home are working
Toilet seats
Topping up boiler pressure and bleeding radiators (maintaining water pressure in your system)

Appendix 3

Repairs definitions

Below are some examples of the different repairs categories:

Emergency
Blocked drains causing wastewater to surge into the basin, bath, sink or toilet
Blocked flues
Blocked toilet (where there is only one in the home) – we may charge if the resident caused the damage
Boarding up windows or doors for security
Broken down lifts (We will attend to assess the issue; we will repair if possible or arrange for the repair to be completed as soon as possible. The repair may become Planned Works)
Damp and mould that poses significant and imminent risk of harm
Failure of warden alarms
Faults to door entry systems that leave a block closed
Leaking roofs, missing roof tiles and faulty or blocked guttering causing serious water penetration
Loss of heating or hot water in an over 55s extra care scheme
Major and non-containable water leaks from pipes, tank or cistern
Make safe after flooding, storm or fire
Make safe major damage to roof
Make safe major structural damage
Removing offensive or racist graffiti
Total loss of electrical supply – we will charge if a supplier issue
Total loss of water supply – we will charge if a supplier issue
Unsafe power, lighting or electrical fittings

Urgent
Door or window security issues
Faults to door entry systems that leave block unsecured
Loss of gas supply – we will charge if a supplier issue
Loss of heating or hot water
Partial loss of water supply – we will charge if a supplier issue.

Routine
Blocked sinks, basins, baths, or second toilets
Communal paths and road minor repairs
Damage to stair tread or handrail/banister
Damp and mould investigations and treatment (within 14 days)
Defective kitchen or bathroom flooring which is not an immediate health and safety problem
Faulty communal TV aerials
Faulty electrical fittings and minor electrical faults
Faulty extractor fans
Fly tipping and rubbish clearance
Graffiti
Kitchen repairs
Leaking roofs, missing roof tiles and faulty or blocked guttering
Partial loss of heating
Partial loss of hot water
Plumbing repairs and day-to-day replacements
Repair to flooring
Repairing and cleaning of gutters and downpipes
Repairs to external doors and windows

Planned
Communal paths and road resurfacing
Damage arising from major water leaks, fire, flood, storm or structural collapse.
Fencing/boundary wall work
Lift repairs
Major component replacements such as windows, kitchens and bathrooms
Major plaster repairs
Repairs to external walls
Replacement of misted double-glazed windows or doors
Replacement of skirting boards
Replacement of wall tiles in kitchens and bathrooms

Appendix 4

Exceptions to our repair's timescales

Below is a list of items that are outside of our control and may add time to our normal timescales. This is a list of common items, not all items:

Item
Building control
Conservation including pre advice and applications
Insurance work
Monitoring Works (for example subsidence and damp and mould monitoring)
Pests
Planning, including pre-advice and applications
Specialist contractors or consultant work
Specialist health and safety work
Specialist work (for example bespoke windows)
Statutory/legal requirements (for example nesting birds)