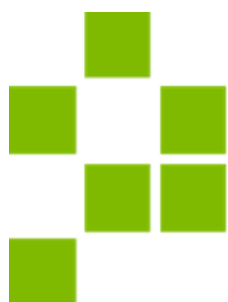


# Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy



Sandwell  
Metropolitan Borough Council

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Owner	<i>Sarah Ager</i>		
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Purpose	<i>The Repairs and Maintenance Policy outlines how Sandwell Council will provide responsive repair and maintenance services for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties and communal areas. It also details the Council's approach for implementing planned investment works.</i>		

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## 1. Purpose and Aims

- 1.1 Sandwell Council is committed to ensuring the safety, security, and comfort of our tenants and leaseholders by providing well-maintained, high-quality homes.
- 1.2 The Council want to make sure that the effect is positive and that our repairs services are easy to use and worthy of our resident's trust.
- 1.3 The Council are dedicated to treating residents with fairness, respect, and dignity, reflecting the core values that guide our service delivery.
- 1.4 Our purpose is to invest in homes and communities, fostering an environment where all residents can thrive.
- 1.5 This policy outlines the principles and standards for our responsive repairs service, detailing how the Council will:
  - a) Maintain homes in line with all regulatory and legislative requirements to ensure safety and compliance.
  - b) Deliver a timely, high-quality, customer-focused service that adopts a right-first-time approach, ensuring homes are kept in good repair.
  - c) Maximise operational efficiency and demonstrate value for money through effective decision-making and procurement practices.
  - d) Engage with residents to influence the development of the service by prioritising, measuring, and reporting customer satisfaction, and using customer feedback to drive continuous improvement.

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## 2. Scope

- 2.1 The principles and terms within this document apply to the responsive repairs process in place in Sandwell.
- 2.2 It applies to all properties and communal areas where Sandwell Council have a responsibility for repairs through tenancy and lease agreements.
- 2.3 Depending on whether a customer rents, is a leaseholder or owns/part owns their home, there will be some differences in the repairs they are responsible for within their own home and what repairs Sandwell Council is responsible for.

- 2.4 The Policy is also relevant to all Sandwell Council colleagues. In addition, contractors, acting on our behalf delivering responsive repairs are expected to align their working practices with this policy.
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### **3. What is Repairs and Maintenance to Sandwell Council?**

- 3.1 The definition of a 'repair' for the purpose of this policy is 'work that arises from damage or wear and tear to tenanted properties, communal areas and common parts.'
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## **4. Policy Statement**

### **4.1 Repairs Responsibility**

Repairs responsibility extends to all tenants of Sandwell Council properties and to leaseholders of flats and maisonettes, where SMBC owns the freehold.

All tenants and leaseholders, where relevant, are required to report any repairs which are the responsibility of the council promptly. The tenant (and leaseholder if applicable) must also allow the council and its appointed contractors, reasonable access to undertake the required repairs and any necessary surveys or inspections.

Repairs should be undertaken in all instances where required. Where a repair is no longer feasible, parts are unobtainable or it is uneconomical to repair, a replacement will be provided. There are some instances where an item may be removed, without replacement, where the service provision is not compromised.

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### **4.2 Sandwell Council's Responsibilities**

Sandwell Council is responsible for keeping the structure and exterior of your home in good repair, including:

- Drains, gutters, and external pipes.
- The roof, external walls, doors, and windows, including any necessary painting or decoration.
- Internal walls, skirting boards, doors, floors, ceilings, and plasterwork (but not the decoration).
- Chimneys, chimney stacks, and flues (but not sweeping chimneys).

- Pathways and steps that provide the main access to your home.
- Garages, stores, and boundary walls or fences included in your property.
- Fixing faulty locks on windows and doors (not replacing lost keys).
- Washing lines in communal areas.

We will also ensure that installations for heating, water, sanitation, and utilities are working properly, including:

- Sinks, basins, baths, toilets (not toilet seats), flushing systems, and waste pipes.
- Electrical wiring, gas pipes, and water pipes within your property boundaries (excluding those owned by Severn Trent).
- Water heaters, fitted fires, and central heating systems (the Council will not replace secondary fossil fuel appliances).
- Sockets and light fittings that are owned by the Council.
- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and ventilation systems provided at the start of your tenancy.
- Please note - internal repairs will not normally be undertaken in leasehold properties.

### 4.3 Tenants' Responsibilities

Under the Council's tenancy agreement, tenants are responsible for:

#### **General Upkeep**

- Keeping the property clean, tidy, and in good condition, including fixtures and fittings.
- Maintaining a tidy private garden by cutting grass and trimming greenery (e.g. trees and bushes).
- Ensuring communal areas are clear of obstructions or flammable items (e.g., tables, chairs, or mobility scooters).

#### **Minor Repairs**

- Addressing minor repairs not covered by the council, such as:
  - Replacing light bulbs, chains, plugs, and toilet seats.
  - Unblocking drains, sinks, or toilets.
  - Filling small plaster cracks and repairing or replacing lost keys.
  - Replacing batteries in smoke or carbon monoxide detectors.
  - Maintaining and repairing fixtures or appliances installed by the tenant.

## Reporting and Access

- Reporting repairs that are the council's responsibility as soon as they are identified.
- Allowing council staff, agents, and contractors access for repairs.

## End of Tenancy

- Completing all necessary repairs and making good before vacating the property.

For a complete guide, refer to your tenancy agreement. If tenants are unsure about your responsibilities, contact 0121 569 6000.

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### 4.4 Leaseholder Responsibilities

Leaseholders are typically responsible for all internal repairs and maintenance.

Leaseholders can decorate and replace fittings within your property, but they cannot carry out any structural works without getting written permission from the Council first (including building extensions, removing walls, and fitting new windows, front or rear doors or any structural alteration).

Sandwell Council is responsible for maintaining the structure and exterior of a leaseholder's home and communal areas.

The Council are typically responsible for the external structure such as the roof, gutters, outside drains, and outside walls.

Leaseholders can find detailed information about their repair responsibilities, as well as the council's obligations, in the [Leaseholder Handbook](#).

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### 4.5 Reporting a Repair

Tenants are expected to report any defects or faults to the Council as soon as they become aware of it. Tenants can report an issue in the following ways:

- Contact Sandwell Council's Housing team via MySandwell or by phone:
  - **Online:** Report the issue directly through the [MySandwell portal](#).

- **Phone:** 0121 569 6000 (office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am-5.30pm).

## **Emergency Repairs**

If a tenant needs a repair in an emergency outside office hours, please call 0800 844 112.

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### **4.6 Day-to-Day Repairs**

Day-to-day repairs are those needed when something in your home breaks or stops working and cannot wait for planned maintenance. Examples include plumbing, door and window fittings, heating systems, and electrical issues.

Sandwell Council's Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) is made up of skilled tradespeople who carry out repairs and maintenance. Contractors provide additional support for specialist repairs and during busy periods.

## **Prioritising Repairs**

The repairs and maintenance service provides a borough-wide service for emergency, urgent, and non-urgent repairs. Based at Roway Lane in Oldbury, our staff prioritise emergency and urgent repairs, such as fixing burst pipes, faulty door locks, and other critical issues, to ensure your safety and comfort.

Repairs posing a risk to your health, safety, or the property will be dealt with as a priority. Less urgent repairs will be completed within a reasonable timescale.

The Council will ensure all repairs are carried out promptly and in line with Right to Repair regulations where applicable.

The details around these standards will be reviewed in conjunction with our tenant engagement framework periodically every 2-3 years.

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### **4.7 Completion Timeframes**

Sandwell Council classifies repairs into individual categories, with each category assigned specific service standards. These standards will be reviewed periodically in collaboration with tenants and published in the [Tenant Handbook](#) to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

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## 4.8 Rechargeable Repairs

Where it is identified that a repair is the customers responsibility, Sandwell Council reserves the right to complete such repairs and recover the full cost of such work from the customer as per our Rechargeable Repairs Policy. The Council considers damage to a property by a customer a breach of the tenancy or leaseholder agreement.

Charges may be reduced or waived under certain conditions, and each case will be evaluated on its merits. These circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- Elderly residents without another able-bodied adult in the household.
- Health conditions, including mental health issues or learning difficulties.
- Disabled people.
- Being a victim of crime.
- Impacts arising from emergency access or actions.
- Faulty or defective fixtures and equipment.

Customers can find detailed information about their rechargeable repairs responsibilities, as well as the council's obligations, in our [Rechargeable Repairs Policy](#).

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## 4.9 Housing Health and Safety Rating System

Awaab's Law will bring in clear timeframes for fixing all types of hazards covered by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inclusive of damp and mould. This system looks at risks in homes that could harm people living there, especially those in certain age groups, and helps to rate how serious a hazard is.

Sandwell Council will act quickly on any risks found during inspections, especially if a serious hazard is identified. Our repairs team handles urgent issues as soon as they are reported to make sure homes are safe. If bigger improvements are needed, they will be treated as a priority under our Capital Improvement programme.

If you are experiencing damp, mould, or other issues in your home, please let us know as soon as possible so the Council can help.

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#### 4.10 **Asbestos**

Sandwell Council is responsible for managing asbestos under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. This includes identifying and managing asbestos within the common areas of its properties. Properties built before the year 2000 may contain building materials made from asbestos.

Any repairs in these areas that could potentially affect the condition of known or suspected asbestos-containing materials are carried out in accordance with our Property Compliance Policy and related procedures.

All records of confirmed and suspected asbestos are maintained on the Council's asbestos register.

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#### 4.11 **Repairs in High-Rise Flats**

Sandwell Council employs Building Safety Managers who are responsible for overseeing repairs and investment projects. They ensure that important safety information is properly maintained and shared, known as the "golden thread" of information.

Building Safety Regulations require additional safety measures for multi-occupied residential buildings, including high-rise buildings and those over 11 metres in height. These regulations ensure that residents are provided with fire safety instructions and information about the importance of fire doors. The regulations apply to both existing buildings and new ones, though the requirements for new buildings may differ.

In all relevant buildings, doors in fire-sensitive areas must be laminated, solid timber doors that are half-hour fire-resistant. The Building Safety Manager will ensure that the door, frame, and hardware meet the required standards. If a door is found to be beyond economical repair, it will be replaced, and the new door will meet the correct specifications.

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#### 4.12 **Cyclical Maintenance**

Some maintenance works are carried out regularly to ensure everything remains in proper working order. These include servicing, inspecting, and testing equipment, especially for your safety. Further information for safety-

related works can be found in the Council's [Property Compliance Policy](#). Occasionally, this might also include extra checks, such as testing or servicing ventilation units.

Other routine maintenance tasks, like cleaning gutters or painting, are done on a scheduled basis. Before starting any work, the Council will inspect the relevant areas to make sure resources are used in the most efficient way.

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#### 4.13 Capital Investment Programmes

The Council's Investment Programmes are based on data that assess the condition and energy efficiency of properties, prioritising the worst-performing ones. These improvements aim to reduce ongoing issues and are tailored to each home.

Our programmes focus on improving homes to keep them in good condition, which is a cost-effective way to manage the condition of properties. The Council is committed to investing in homes and communities across Sandwell.

Key improvement areas include:

- **Internal Improvements:** Replacing kitchens, bathrooms, central heating, and rewiring when inspections show full replacement is necessary due to age or condition.
- **High-Rise Improvements:** Refurbishing external areas of high-rise blocks, including insulation, roofing, communal redecoration, landscaping, and parking.
- **Door Programme:** Replacing wooden doors with composite ones, carried out on a 'worse first' premise.
- **Energy Efficiency Programme:** Upgrading homes with energy-efficient heating systems or external wall insulation, where funding allows.

Additional information regarding our Capital Investment Programmes is available in the [Housing Asset Management and Compliance Strategy](#).

Before any improvement work begins, Sandwell Council will send tenants the relevant details for their specific programme. If there are other programmes that may affect you, we will contact households in advance with the necessary information. Households can stay updated on upcoming investment

programmes at [www.sandwell.gov.uk](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk) or look out for information sent to your home.

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#### 4.14 Your Own Home Improvements

Tenants are welcome to make improvements or alterations to your home, but it's important to first [submit a request online](#) for approval.

Examples of Changes That Require Permission:

- Installing or replacing gas appliances, windows, external doors, or kitchen and bathroom units
- Removing walls, installing verandas, porches, or conservatories
- Adding a driveway, electric vehicle (EV) charger, gates, or fencing
- Painting external doors, windows, and walls
- Removing or pruning trees

The Council understands that tenants may want to make improvements, and your request will be carefully considered. Permission will not be withheld without good reason, but please wait for written approval before starting any work. If approved, tenants must also comply with any conditions set by the council.

If tenants make changes without permission, The Council may ask them to return the property to its original condition or carry out the necessary work ourselves, in which case we may charge tenants for the costs.

Only qualified and competent professionals should carry out alterations. For electrical or gas work, tenants will need to provide the necessary certificates.

When tenants make improvements with or without our permission, the council is not responsible for ongoing repairs or maintenance related to those changes.

If previous tenants left improvements in the property, Sandwell Council will only take responsibility for repairs if it is practical and cost-effective. In other cases, the Council may remove the improvements and restore the property to its original condition.

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#### 4.15 Non-Standard Fittings

Some tenants may choose to make improvements to their homes, such as:

- Fitted wardrobes
- Electric showers
- Built-in cookers
- Conservatories

Our surveyors will assess any potential maintenance or health and safety concerns related to these improvements. If deemed appropriate, the improvement may remain as part of the property.

It is important to note that while Sandwell Council may allow these items to stay, we will not be responsible for repairs or servicing. The upkeep and maintenance of these items will be your responsibility. Any repairs needed to protect the property or removal of these items will come as a recharge.

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#### 4.16 Aids and Adaptations

The Council can offer support to households having difficulty managing daily tasks at home, the right equipment or changes to your home. Households may be able to get help from the Council, or can contact other groups directly. Depending on your situation, households may be able to buy, borrow, or receive equipment.

To get help from the Council, your household must live permanently in Sandwell, no matter if you own or rent your home.

If the Council refers your household to our Equipment and Adaptation Service, a member of our occupational therapy team will visit and assess the home to see what may help. We may ask to speak with carers and other professionals involved with household members to better understand the needs of the individual.

Further information on aids and adaptations can be found in the [Adaptations Policy](#).

Additional information on local organisations, community groups, and charities that can assist with managing daily tasks is available in the [Tenant Handbook](#). Alternatively, households can contact [Adult Social Care](#).

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#### 4.17 Decants

In some situations, tenants may need to be temporarily or permanently moved from their home. This may be to allow work to be completed on their property

or if the home is no longer safe for continued living. This process is called a 'decant.'

A decant may be necessary in cases such as emergencies (e.g., fire, flood) or if there are health and safety risks.

Further information can be found in the [Decant Policy](#).

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#### **4.18 Leaving Your Home**

Tenants are required to provide 28 days' notice if they plan to leave the property.

Before leaving, the tenant must ensure the property is cleared of furniture, rubbish, or any other items and that it is left clean.

If any damage has occurred to the property, the tenant, their household members, or visitors must repair or replace the damaged items. If this is not done, Sandwell Council will charge the tenant for the necessary repairs, including the cost of removing items for disposal.

Further information can be found in the [Rechargeable Repairs Policy](#).

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#### **4.19 Post-Work Inspections**

To ensure the quality of repairs carried out by both Sandwell Council's in-house team and contractors, post-work inspections will be conducted on 10% of completed jobs. These may be carried out via a telephone audit or a physical on-site inspection.

Additionally:

- 100% of void properties will be audited to ensure they meet the required standards.
- All gas and electrical installations will be verified through certification checks.
- 100% of DLO (Direct Labour Organisation) and contractor works will be inspected.

If specific issues are identified, Sandwell Council will increase the frequency of post-work audits to promptly address and resolve any quality concerns.

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#### **4.20 Lettable Standard**

To fulfil our obligations to residents, Sandwell Council will prioritise the efficient re-letting of properties, ensuring minimal vacancy periods and that properties are completed to the agreed re-let standards. Properties with the potential for long-term or high-cost re-lets will be carefully assessed to ensure appropriate investment, with a focus on long-term sustainability and positive future value.

The Council's approach aims to minimise rent loss, ensure properties are brought up to the council's 'lettable' standard, and enhance overall property quality. The 'lettable' standard has been reviewed to improve both property decency and thermal efficiency, with a goal of achieving an EPC rating of C or higher prior to re-letting, where feasible.

Sandwell Council understands that accepting an offer for one of its properties is an important decision. To assist in making an informed choice, clear details will be provided on the work that will be completed prior to the tenancy, ensuring prospective tenants know exactly what to expect. The Lettable Standard complies with the Homes Act 2015 (Fitness for Human Habitation), the Decent Homes Standard, and the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS), ensuring that the property meets all necessary quality and safety criteria.

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#### **4.21 Lift Maintenance and Repairs**

Sandwell Council is dedicated to ensuring all passenger lifts and lifting equipment in our properties are safe, reliable, and fully operational, reducing the risk of breakdowns.

Sandwell Council, as owner of properties with passenger lifts and lifting equipment will endeavour to keep these in full working order. This will be achieved by identifying any faults or defects through regular inspections, routine maintenance and a programme of thorough examinations.

Sandwell Council will address any recommended repairs or improvements identified during routine maintenance or inspections, ensuring they are completed in a timely manner.

A detailed overview of the Council's process is outlined in our [Lift Maintenance and Breakdown Policy](#). Also, further information on current lift repairs and how to report a breakdown can be found in the [Tenant Handbook](#).

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#### **4.22 Driveways, Paving and Fencing**

Sandwell Council will maintain the paths and paved areas leading to the front and back doors, providing safe access from the main highway to the property.

To protect the structure of your home, the Council will also maintain a 500mm-wide area around the building's perimeter.

However, Sandwell Council does not provide maintenance or repairs for rear garden paths, patio areas, or driveways. If these areas become unsafe, we will assess the situation and carry out any necessary work to make them safe, these works may be rechargeable.

Sandwell Council is responsible for the maintenance of boundary fences that border public rights of way such as roads, fields, or car parks.

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#### **4.23 Warranties, Guarantees and Insurance**

Some works, such as installing new roofs, windows, or fire doors, come with guarantees or warranties covering a set period, as outlined in the contractor's agreement with the council. If a fault occurs within the warranty period, the council will ask the contractor to fix it. However, if misuse is identified, the warranty may be void, and repair costs could be recharged to the tenant.

Contractor response times for warranty issues may differ from the council's standard repair times, which can result in longer resolution periods.

Sandwell Council encourages tenants and leaseholders to have adequate contents insurance to protect their belongings, the Council usually cannot compensate for losses unless they are directly caused by our negligence or that of our contractors. Further information on arranging Home Contents Insurance can be found in the [Tenant Handbook](#).



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#### 4.24 **Measuring Performance**

Sandwell Council is committed to providing a high-quality repairs service and ensuring high levels of customer satisfaction. We will monitor key performance indicators and satisfaction rates to ensure we meet our targets.

In line with the Regulator of Social Housing, we are required to collect and report on Tenant Satisfaction Measures. These will be published regularly so residents can see how we are performing and compare our service with other social housing providers.

The Council will also carry out regular audits to assess the quality of repairs, and any complaints will be reviewed and investigated by a team independent of the Repairs service.

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#### 4.25 **Value for Money**

Sandwell Council is committed to providing a high-quality repairs service offering good value for money. By using an experienced in-house team, the Council will ensure resources are used effectively where they are needed most.

When the Council need extra help or specialist skills, we use a fair and competitive procurement process to bring in the right people at the best value. We regularly review our spending and services to make sure we are delivering the best for tenants.

The Council also use data to plan long-term investments in our housing. This helps us focus on improving homes in a way that reduces the need for emergency repairs, as we aim to provide a more planned and reliable service for tenants.

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#### 4.26 **Financial Implications**

The HRA 30-year business plan outlines the financial outlook for the coming years. The Asset Management and Compliance Strategy sets out SMBC's approach to investment, and this policy sits underneath that strategy, focusing specifically on repairs and maintenance. The costs for delivering the work outlined in this policy have already been factored in. However, our goal is to invest further in the housing stock through capital investment, which will help

reduce the need for repairs and, in turn, ease financial pressures on the service.

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#### **4.27 Right to Buy**

When a tenant submits a Right to Buy application, the Council will continue to carry out emergency repairs up until the purchase date. However, major repairs, replacements, and improvements will not normally be done while your Right to Buy application is being processed.

Once we receive your Right to Buy application, the Council will only carry out emergency or urgent repairs. These include:

- Repairing and maintaining the structure and exterior of the property
- Repairing the landlord's heating and hot water systems
- Fixing pipes and electrical wiring inside the property
- Ensuring the property is secure, such as windows and external doors

Sandwell Council will only carry out repairs that are legally required. Any repairs that are not legally necessary will not be completed. Any repairs still in progress or not finished by the time the sale is completed will be cancelled.

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#### **4.28 Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs)**

If the household lives in an estate managed by a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), they should contact your TMO office first for any repairs.

While TMOs manage certain repairs within the homes they oversee, the types of repairs they are responsible for can vary. Some repairs remain the responsibility of the Council, and these are outlined in the TMO handbook.

If the Council needs to carry out repairs that should have been the responsibility of the TMO, we may consider recharging the TMO for the cost. Please refer to the Recharge Policy for more information.

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#### **4.29 Complaints**

If a tenant or leaseholder is unhappy about any part of our service, they can contact a member of the Customer Feedback Team who will be happy to discuss your concerns:

**Online:** [Contact us online via MySandwell](#)

**Email:** [customer\\_services@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:customer_services@sandwell.gov.uk)

**Phone:** 0121 569 7867

**Write in:** Customer Feedback Team, Sandwell Council, Roway Lane, Oldbury, B69 3ES.

Sandwell Council will try and resolve any complaints as soon as we receive them. If that is not possible, then it will move to the formal 'Stage 1' complaints process.

The Council regularly request and receive feedback from our residents, including ongoing satisfaction monitoring of repairs, and analysis of complaints. This helps shape our approach. We also specifically consult on changes to our services, standards, policies and processes.

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#### 4.30 Compensation

Tenants and residents impacted by service failures may be eligible to claim compensation and be restored to the position they would have been in if the service failure had not occurred.

A detailed overview of the Council's process is outlined in our [Complaints Compensation Policy](#).

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### 5. Related Documents

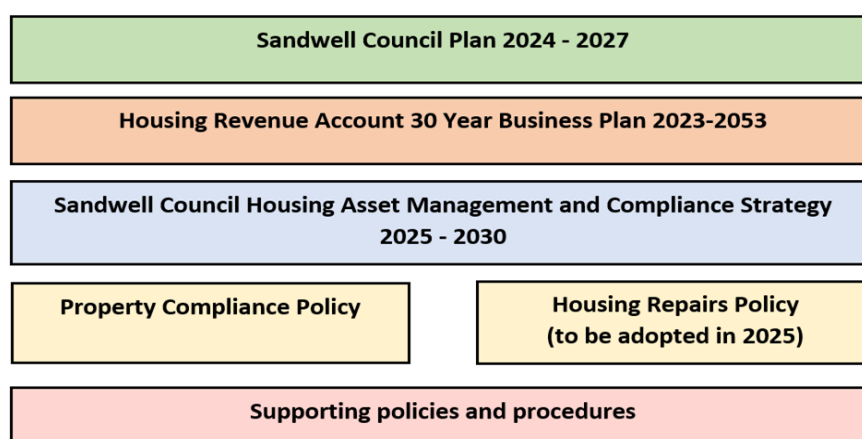
5.1 The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy will align with our existing policies and strategies but will also influence and guide a range of supporting or inter-related policies and procedures.

5.2 This will ensure that the management of our assets is part of a wider approach to delivering high quality services and places for the benefit of our residents. The key documents that should be read in conjunction with this policy include:

- [Sandwell Council Plan 2024 – 2027](#)
- [Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan 2023 - 2053](#)
- [Housing Asset Management and Compliance Strategy 2025 - 2030](#)
- [Sandwell Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028](#)
- [Property Compliance Policy](#)
- [Tenant Handbook](#)
- [SMBC Tenancy Conditions](#)

- [Leaseholder Handbook](#)
- [Rechargeable Repairs Policy \(draft\)](#)
- [Complaints Compensation Policy \(draft\)](#)
- [Lift Maintenance and Breakdown Policy \(draft\)](#)
- [Policy on Adaptations for Disabled Tenants in Council Housing](#)
- [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#)

5.3 Sandwell Council will ensure that the hierarchy of policies and strategies informs our approach to repairs and maintenance.



## 6. Legal Framework

6.1 By implementing this Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Sandwell Council aims to uphold compliance with all applicable legislation and regulatory requirements and fulfil its obligations detailed below:

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) – Housing Act 2004
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Right to Repair Regulations 1994
- Equality Act 2010
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Construction (design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM Regulations)
- Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards: Safety & Quality Standard & Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

More information regarding legislation for specific areas of our work can be found in Sandwell's [Property Compliance Policy](#).

The Regulator of Social Housing sets consumer standards, which Sandwell Council, in our role as a social housing provider, are expected to meet. Our policy and associated processes are reviewed in line with such standards. This includes:

- Our provision of a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service;
- Balancing cyclical maintenance, planned and responsive repairs;
- Meeting all applicable statutory health and safety requirements; and
- Aiming to get repairs right first time wherever possible.

## **7. Development of Policy**

- 7.1 Sandwell Council recognises the importance of clear and effective communication in ensuring housing repairs and maintenance are carried out efficiently and that tenants and leaseholders are supported throughout the process. To achieve this, the Council consulted residents on a draft version of this policy, providing opportunities to submit feedback both online and in person.
- 7.2 Incorporating resident input into the development of this policy enables the Council to enhance its approach to housing repairs and maintenance, ensuring that the services provided meet the needs of tenants and leaseholders.

## **8. Equality and Diversity**

- 8.1 Sandwell Council will ensure equal and fair access to our services; we will do this by taking into consideration the individual needs of our tenants, their family or other persons living with them. We will ensure that individual needs are considered throughout the repairs process and make reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- 8.2 The Council will treat people fairly and with dignity and respect.

8.3 All staff are trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to embed understanding about where we may need to adapt normal policies, procedures, and ways of working to accommodate resident's individual needs. This is mandatory training which is monitored by our Learning and Development Team. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework also meets our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

#### 8.4 Reasonable Adjustments

Sandwell Council will support the needs of our diverse residents by making reasonable adjustments to our repairs processes, which could be a physical change or change in work practices to avoid any disadvantage to a resident in accessing this policy. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- We will provide information in appropriate alternative formats (e.g. large print).
- We will risk assess and re-prioritise works considering the vulnerabilities or individual needs of the household where identified.
- We will use plain language.
- This policy is published on our website, and residents can do the following:
  - Change colours, contrast levels and font size.
  - Zoom in up to 300% without text spilling off the screen.
  - Access the policy from a smart phone, tablet, laptop, or PC.

Customers can also request that we make any other reasonable adjustments in the following ways:

- in person
- in writing for example by email, by post, text
- by telephone
- by a family member when we have been given permission to do so; and or
- a member of staff may suggest for one to be made, when they are aware it will support the customer needs.

For more information, please refer to Sandwell's [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#).

## 9. Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 This Policy will be reviewed periodically or sooner if there are significant changes in legislation, management, a major incident or if it is no longer suitable.

## 10. Policy Document Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Updated By	Approved By
1.0				
2.0				