

Property Services (Housing) Window Repairs and Replacement

1. **Date of Guidelines:** August 2020
2. **Review Date:** December 2021 next review December 2024 ~~August 2023~~
3. **Responsibility:** Commercial Manager
4. **Purpose of Guidelines:**

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the Council's responsibility for repair and replacement of windows within properties owned by the Council.

5. Aims of the Guidelines:

The aims of these guidelines are as follows:

- To ensure a consistent approach to repairs
- Contribute to the efficient maintenance of the housing stock
- Contribute to the effective management of the repairs budget, ensuring value for money

6. Guideline Details

6.1 Overall statement

- The Council will carry out general repairs as a result of normal wear and tear, such as ease and adjust windows.
- The Council will carry out 'make safe' repairs to any windows deemed unsafe that it is responsible for i.e. boarding up of broken windows, this includes garages and sheds.
- Any tenant damage will be recharged back to the resident. The Rechargeable Repairs Guideline and Rates sets out how the council deal with recharges, available on our website, www.welhat.gov.uk
- The Council will take into account the age of the windows including whether they are still under guarantee in determining if repair works are to be carried out.
- Leaseholders will need to refer to the Leaseholders Handbook available from the Home Ownership Team on 01707 357000 or by emailing homeownershipaccounts@welhat.gov.uk which explains in detail what parts of the property are their responsibility and what the Council is responsible for.

6.2 Procedure

Before raising any repair the Council will check to see if the windows are still under warranty or due for replacement in the near future. Where the repair item is still under warranty, this work will be carried out under that warranty.

Where the windows are due to be replaced within the next 12-18 months, the Council will only carry out minor repairs unless there are exceptional reasons for major repairs or replacement. The Council will make reference to the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, available at www.GOV.UK and consider replacement where this determines that there is significant hazard(s) caused by defective windows(s).

- ❖ Risk of falling out and cannot be refixed
- ❖ They do not protect from the elements
- ❖ Scaffolding is already erected and a replacement is deemed necessary



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7. Information for tenants

- Double glazed sealed units

Where there is a pool of water or misting between the panes of glass the council will;

- ❖ ~~Replace~~ Consider replacement of the glazed sealed unit (not the complete window) ~~but only in the lounge, kitchen or dining room. (These rooms are considered as priority for viewing).~~
- ❖ If a tenant requires other windows to be replaced this can be arranged at their own cost and undertaken privately. Before any work is undertaken you will need to complete a Home Improvements and Alterations Application form, available on our website, www.welhat.gov.uk

The replacement of the double glazed sealed unit will only be considered as below:

- ❖ Where the window is not under guarantee or due for replacement within the next 18 months.
 - ❖ Where windows are due for replacement a decision will be made on whether the severity requires it to be repaired before replacement. You will be informed of this decision within 14 working days, the works will then be raised in line with our current repair targets.
- Cracked glazed unit
 - ❖ The Council, depending on the severity of the crack, will make safe, within 24 hours, i.e. board up/apply safety film until the glazed unit can be replaced. Please refer to sub-heading “*Damage*”.
 - Single glazed window
 - ❖ The Council depending on the severity of the crack will make safe, within 24 hours, i.e. board up/apply safety film until glazing can be replaced. Please refer to sub-heading “*Damage*”.
 - Non-standard windows
 - ❖ If windows are non-standard, any repair or replacement may not be able to match the original design or style of the council’s materials used. If you live in a conservation area they should be repaired wherever possible or replaced with ones that match the originals as closely as possible. Please refer to sub-heading “*Conservation Areas*”.
 - Damage
 - ❖ Repairs that are needed because of damage or neglect to the window by tenants, a member of their household or any visitor to the property, or pets, will be recharged unless a crime reference number that identifies you have been a victim of a crime is provided.
 - Loss of window keys
 - ❖ If window keys are lost, and you require a replacement, this will be recharged in line with the Rechargeable Repairs Guideline and Rates.

8. Information for Leaseholders

- ❖ Works under warranty will be carried out free of charge by the council however on expiry of any guarantee / warranty the repair will be the responsibility of the leaseholder.

- ❖ The Council is only responsible for window frames/sashes within the property and glass in the windows of communal areas.
- ❖ We may give permission for you to carry out works such as window replacements; however **this does not remove your responsibility under the terms of your lease to contribute towards block charges** should we undertake a programme of improvements to your block.
- ❖ Before any work is undertaken you will need to complete a Home Improvements and Alterations Application form, also known as a Licence to Alter, available on our website, www.welhat.gov.uk or upon reasonable request from the Home Ownership Team. Certain restrictions may apply.

9. Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas means that planning policies are in place to preserve and enhance the character of an area and to resist poor quality development proposals that would harm its character.

The success of conservation areas often depends on the care which owners take with the maintenance and repair of their properties.

Even small changes can detract from the special character of an area. For example original doors and windows should be repaired wherever possible or replaced with ones that match the originals as closely as possible.

Nationally permitted development rights do not exist in a conservation area. Those wishing to make changes to the external appearance of their property, need planning permission. You must be mindful of even the smallest changes which might detract from the special character of the area.

The Council ranks breaches of planning control as a higher priority in conservation areas and is more likely to take enforcement action against such breaches.

Please contact planning@welhat.gov.uk if you have any queries.

10. Partners

The Council's contractors who deliver our repairs and maintenance services will carry out these repairs.

11. Health and Safety

If the Council is made aware of any Health and Safety breach, action will be taken to make safe and, where appropriate, recharge for any works undertaken.

12. Data Protection

When you make a complaint, we will log information about your complaint and your name and contact details. Information will only be collected and stored for the purposes of dealing with your complaint and improving our services. Your complaint and details will be treated confidentially.

All complaints are treated confidentially. Notwithstanding the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please refer to the council Data Protection guidelines: <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/Data-Protection>

13. Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act ensures that an individual should not be discriminated against on any of the following grounds: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.



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For more information on this policy, please visit: <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/equality>

14. Value for Money

The Council will look to achieve value for money taking into consideration the medium/longer term rather than the short term.

15. Consultation

We will consult with the Welwyn Hatfield Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel over any changes to these guidelines.

16. Key related documents

Excluded Licence Agreement
Tenancy Agreement
Rechargeable Repairs Guidelines and Rates
Home Improvements and Alterations Application form (also known as a Licence to Alter)

Most documents are available on our website, www.welhat.gov.uk or upon reasonable request.

17. Review

This guideline will be subject to review every three years, with interim revisions to be made on an exceptional basis in light of any legislative or regulatory changes, or in line with best practice.

