

Repairs Services Improvement Plan

March 2020

Overview of the Repairs Service

The housing repairs service provides a range of services to people living in council homes throughout Southwark. This plan relates to responsive repairs in tenants' homes and communal areas, including the repairs needed to get homes that people have moved out of, which we call voids, ready for the next tenant.

Southwark Building Services (SBS) provides housing repairs and maintenance, voids and communal works in relation to all of our council housing. Total spend is approximately £21m per annum. They are the operational team that undertakes the repairs required through an in-house team (including staff transferred in to the council in October 2018 from Mears) and a range of contractors.

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

The service provides a 24 hours a day seven day a week repairs and maintenance service to the residents of Southwark's housing stock. The service delivers approximately 100,000 individual repair orders and over 1,000 refurbishments to void properties each year.

The team consists of over 140 mobile craft operatives and apprentices and 60 office based staff located at Frensham Street Depot. The depot has an in-house stores facility, this holds some 2,500 items of stock and a workshop facility.

	Average jobs for Period April 19- Jan 20 per week
Painting	31
Plumbing	898
Wet Trades	95
Electrics	362
Carp	275
Leaks from Above	77

The council's Contact Centre and website provide the main communication tools for tenants who wish to book repairs.

Rationale

In September 2019 Cabinet reaffirmed its commitment to an in-house repairs service and recommended that a three-year improvement plan be developed and brought back to Cabinet in March 2020 for approval. The improvement plan is required to continue the improvement of the internal repairs service and to ensure that the needs of our residents are at the heart of the delivery of this service.

Vision

A service that puts residents at the heart of delivery, with a skilled and motivated workforce who are equipped to deliver good quality repairs, backed by supportive management and leadership and providing a service that is good value for money.

Engagement Work

HouseMark Consultancy were engaged to work on planning and facilitating effective meaningful engagement activities with our residents who are at the heart of the repairs service improvement plan. HouseMark engaged with some of the existing engagement structure and held discovery sessions with members of the tenant council. These included:

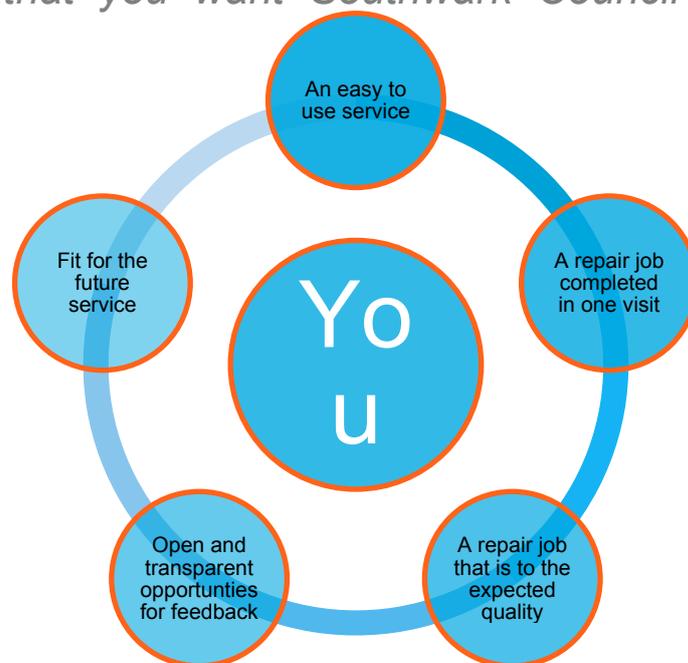
- Tenant and Homeowner Councils (6th & 8th January)
- South Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) Committee (16th January)
- SGTO board (6th February)

HouseMark also engaged with residents who were not involved in the formal engagement structure via face to face discovery sessions and telephone interviews.

The feedback and findings from the engagement activities has shaped what we refer to our Priorities for Improvement which are set out below.

Priorities for Improvement

You told us that you want Southwark Council to provide you with...



1. An Easy to Use Service – because you want a service that makes it easy to book and track your repair and that is flexible to your needs

2. A repair job that will be completed right first time – because you want a service that delivers the repairs right first time

3. A repair job that treats me and my home with respect – because you want us to treat you as if you are a valued member of our family

4. Open and honest opportunities to feedback on the quality of the repair – Because you want the job done to your expectations and for us to know if we have fallen short of this

5. A Fit for the Future service that puts your needs at the heart of the service – Because you want repair jobs conducted by competent and skilled operatives who are sympathetic to your needs and an overall service that spends money as if it was from our own pocket

What does this mean to me as a tenant?

Southwark Council will embark on a three-year improvement plan that will bring about a modern, fit for purpose service that puts your needs and concerns at the heart.

The next section will outline the feedback that you provided and our response and plans to improve our service. Some of the improvements that you will see are summarised as follows:

- Clearer information before, during and after your repair
- SMS notifications on the status of your repair
- Improved online ability to schedule, reschedule and check on the status of your repair
- New ways of providing feedback on your repair
- A compassionate workforce that care about your needs

1. An Easy to Use Service

Our staff are already cross skilled to provide support in all areas so are on hand to provide clarity across multiple services including housing repairs queries. We will review how best we can support the volume of calls and maintain consistency in the information you receive regarding your repair

You are already able to raise a repair query online or through our website which goes directly to a team who will contact you to schedule in a repair job. We will be enhancing this over the next few years to introduce a fully self-service online portal to sit alongside our current phone line.

We have also recently launched an SMS message which is sent to you once you have made your appointment.

You told us	What we'll do	What will I see change in the next...		
		6 - 12 months	12 – 18 months	18 months+
At times, you have difficulties reporting your repair	You can already report your repairs online or via our call centre. Most of the time the wait for a call is short but at busy times it can be long. We will reduce these longer waits and we will also make it easier to report repairs online.	We will pilot a call back service so at busy times, rather than you having to wait on the line, we will call you back as soon as a member of the team in our call centre is free	We will plan for and will start to procure a new online repairs system	We will introduce a new online repairs system that will allow you to more easily report your repair
You often have to phone us to chase up	We will review our processes to address the 40% of calls currently being	Review the initial engagement you make with us and seek to use	We will plan for and will start to procure a new online repairs	We will introduce a new online repairs system that will allow

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

your repair	related to existing repairs	our resources better to ensure that our staff have all the relevant information and skills to respond to your query on your first call	system	you to track your repair on line so you don't have to call us to find out what is happening
You want to book your repairs to take place at a time that works for you	We will be able to book you into a specific repair slot with the relevant operative on your first call or online	We will ensure you can choose your appointment time We will update our systems so you can choose your appointment time on your first call	We will plan for and will start to procure a new online repairs system	We will introduce a new online repairs system so you can choose and track your appointment time online
You would like it to be easier to raise your repair issue online	You can currently raise a repair which goes to our customer services team to deal with. However we plan to introduce a fully online self-service portal for you to report your repair issue and book an appointment	Highlight the existing online repairs service on our website so you can raise you repair requests through our existing online channel		We will introduce a fully online repairs portal on our website for all housing repairs
You sometimes have difficulties to change the appointment time	We will make it easy for you to reschedule your appointment online or directly with a member of	We will update our systems so you can change your appointment time in one		We will introduce a fully online repairs portal that lets you change your



Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

once booked	our team	call		appointment time online
You don't have visibility of where the status of your repair is	We will introduce an online portal for you to track the status of your repair and we will introduce SMS updates to keep you informed	We will send you a text message to confirm your appointment and we will notify you when the operative is on their way for your repair or if there are any issues with your repair appointment	SMS update on the status of your repair job	Introduction of a vehicle tracking system to allow you to know what job number you operative is on and their estimated time of arrival We will introduce an online portal for you to track the status of your repair
On some occasions, repair staff do not turn up	Our staff will commit to attending the appointment or informing you a minimum of 24 hours before if there are any issues In the event of a no-show we will have dedicated ways to communicate with us in the event of a no-show	SMS or call a minimum of 24 hours prior to the repair job if there are any issues or emergencies		Dedicated online facility to raise any issues regarding no-shows
You sometimes feel like the council is not prioritising your repair	We will be clear and transparent on our pledge to prioritise and deliver repairs on time. We will commit to	If your work is incomplete, the operative will not leave without scheduling a	We will review our emergency/priority repairs process and seek to create a	

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

	achieving a 95% success rate	<p>follow on repair appointment</p> <p>You will also be issued with a “What happens next card” and this will clearly explain what to expect from us</p>	dedicated team to deal with these within 24 hours	
You would like the council to be more flexible in the way that they contact you	We will contact you in your preferred contact method	<p>When you call us, we will always confirm your preferred method of communication</p> <p>Our operatives will also confirm your preferred contact method on completion of your repair job</p>		

2. A repair job that will be completed right first time

We have introduced better internal processes to code the types of repairs required which have allowed better management of our operatives’ diaries and therefore provided a better service to you when confirming your appointment. We will roll this out across all of our repairs as part of this improvement plan.

You told us	What we'll do	What will I see change in the next...		
		6 - 12 months	12 – 18 months	18 months +
You are sometimes unclear on the details of the repair job	We will ensure that when you call us, our staff will provide clear information on what the repair job will consist of	Our call centre workers are skilled to provide advice across multiple council concerns. We will review this internally and ensure that the appropriate information is provided to you when you contact us Creation of guides detailing what will happen at each type of repair e.g. leakage		Introduction of an online system to raise repair requests including uploading photos
You are not always clear on what your responsibilities are as a tenant	We will be clearer on tenants responsibilities and our responsibilities with regards to repairs	We will review tenant responsibilities and ensure this is communicated widely	We will look at introducing DIY workshops for you to learn skills for repairs that you are responsible for	We will look at opportunities to provide discounted decorating equipment

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

<p>You sometimes feel the operatives undertaking the repairs are not equipped appropriately</p>	<p>We will ensure we equip our operatives with the right materials and tools to do their jobs</p>	<p>We will review our internal processes to ensure the relevant operative will attend and will have the right materials to do the job</p>		
<p>You are unclear at times as to why we are unable to conduct the repair job in one visit</p>	<p>We will seek to complete your repair job in one visit. Where it can't be completed in one visit we will complete your repair job in as minimum number of visits as possible</p> <p>Your operative will be clear as to why we are unable to complete the repair and ensure that we schedule the correct repair job with the respective service</p>	<p>If your work is incomplete, the operative will not leave without scheduling a follow on repair appointment</p> <p>You will also be issued with a “What happens next card” and this will clearly explain what to expect from us</p>	<p>We will review our processes to seek to avoid the need for further visits.</p> <p>We will also ensure that we work seamlessly with other contracted services</p>	<p>You will be able to review all updates regarding your follow on repair jobs through our online portal</p>

3. A repair service that treats me and my home with respect

We have introduced the Southwark Ways of Working which ensures staff align to our council values and that all staff at Southwark work in ways that prioritise the needs of our residents and service users.

You told us	What we'll do	What will I see change in the next...		
		6 – 12 months	12 – 18 months	18 months +
You feel like sometimes the operative undertaking the repair left your home not in the condition they found it in	Our operatives respect your home environment. We will ensure consistency by setting a minimum standard which will include wearing overshoes whenever entering your home and they will always leave your home in the condition they found it	We will work with tenants and our operatives to design a set of standard responsibilities instilling our council value to treat you as if you are a valued member of our family		
On some occasions you were unsure if the person that has come for the repair job is a Southwark employee	Our operatives will be clearly identified as Southwark Council employees through the wearing of uniform and official identification	We will work with tenants and our operatives to design a set of standard responsibilities instilling our council value to treat you as if you are a valued member of our family. This will include the wearing of Southwark branded uniform and ID		
You sometimes feel that no one is taking	Our team will take responsibility for ensuring			

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

responsibility for getting your repair done.	each repair is finished			
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4. Open and honest opportunities to feedback on the quality of the repair

Our operatives sign off all jobs using their handheld device. This is only done when an operative has explained the job to you and that you are happy with the repair job. We will be enhancing this function to ensure consistency and allow you to provide instant feedback via SMS which has completed testing and will be rolled out soon.

New internal reports have been created for managers detailing performance of teams and individual operatives in line with our key performance indicators. These are used in formal monthly performance meetings are under taken with the operational Managers. We also review our customer satisfaction surveys to identify trends and actions that our teams can support.

You told us	What we'll do	What will I see change in the next...		
		6 – 12 months	12 – 18 month	18 months +
You would like the opportunity to feedback soon after the repair	<p>A job will not be closed until you say it has been completed to your satisfaction</p> <p>We will ask you to grade your satisfaction with the repairs based on the whole process</p> <p>If you have a dispute, an inspector or surveyor will attend your home and agree</p>	<p>Ability to sign off the job at the point of completion</p> <p>Review and re-implementation of a process around disputes that is responsive to your needs</p>	We will launch an SMS feedback facility which will allow you to feedback to us	You will have the ability to grade the quality and service of your repair via SMS or through our online portal

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

	<p>the next steps with you</p> <p>We will also provide clear information on how to provide feedback post repair</p>			
<p>You sometimes feel like we are not listening to your feedback</p>	<p>We will review feedback on an on-going basis seeking to continually improve our working practices</p>	<p>We are developing a complaints dashboard which allows us real time data for us to proactively address your concerns</p> <p>We will introduce recurring feedback review meetings between teams involved in your repair</p>		
<p>You would like to be contacted after the repair</p>	<p>We will introduce follow up calls with 20% of jobs completed within the month</p>	<p>Introduce a call-back process from our call centre to you</p>		
<p>You don't know where to raise issues/complaints</p>	<p>We will make it clear online where to provide feedback</p>	<p>What happens next card to include information on where to provide feedback</p> <p>Clear information online on where to raise feedback</p>		<p>Our online portal will make it very clear where you can provide feedback</p>
<p>You would like the ability to engage with</p>	<p>Introduce on-going engagement between</p>	<p>We will report progress with this plan, including</p>	<p>Drop in surgeries linked to Local</p>	

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

<p>the council on an on-going basis</p>	<p>Tenant representatives and Operatives</p>	<p>against Key Performance Indicators, every quarter to the Tenants Forum (or a working group of that forum)</p> <p>Workshop between tenant representatives and operatives</p>	<p>Housing Forums</p>	
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5. A Fit for the Future service that puts your needs at the heart

With regards to our workforce we are invested in their development as we want to build a competent and skilled team that provides the best service to you. We already commit to a well-established apprenticeship programme and are now working with managers on introducing our recently launched internship programme across the service.

You told us	What we'll do	What will I see change in the next...		
		6 - 12 months	12 – 18 months	18 months +
You would like consistency in the experience you receive from all our operatives	We will treat you as a valued member of our family and ensure that we support our operatives and provide them with the skills where required to undertake the repairs in a safe and friendly manner	Establish a standard approach to the repairs experience with our operatives putting customer service and your needs at the heart	Introduce a consistent training offer for all our operatives in practical, soft skills and customer services	
You are not always assured that staff are being supported to deliver their jobs	We will consult with our Operatives regarding their needs and seek to bring a consistent approach and equip them with the most up-to-date skills, tools and technologies to deliver the job as efficiently as possible	Review current workforce skillset, tools and technology and ensure there is a consistent base amongst all operatives We will put in place a comprehensive training and development plan to ensure all of our operatives are supported to develop the skills they need to	Review of tools to ensure operatives are equipped with the most up-to-date technology and tools to ensure they are conducting their jobs in the most efficient way	In the spirit of continuous improvement, we will review technological and digital innovation in the industry

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

		deliver high quality repairs		
You want a service that is value for money	We will ensure that our services are always value for money through benchmarking with other local authorities and will review our internal processes to ensure efficiency in how much we are spending	We will re-procure our materials supply contract to ensure the tools and materials we use are value for money	We will produce an easy to understand overview of how much the service is spending on repairs	
You would like assurances that the repair service employs local people	We are committed as a Council to employ and develop local people from Southwark. We have an embedded apprenticeship programme and have recently launched an internship programme to support Southwark residents	Continue with and extend our apprenticeship programme and launch the internship programme in the organisation		
You would like a service that is responsive and proactive	We will be proactive in making sure tenants homes are in a good state of repair, providing more information to tenants on how to raise repairs and using our visits to tenants homes, especially vulnerable tenants, to make sure their homes are in a good state of repair.	Review the current process of tenant checks to ensure that these are consistent in reporting the needs for repair works We will use data and analytics to predict trends to ensure we are proactive in our approach and make contact with those who	Introduction of intelligent reporting that will inform us on areas that we need to focus on through the analysis of data and trends	

Repairs Service Improvement Plan – Our Priorities for Improvement

		may not usually contact us with repair queries		
You want a more sustainable approach	In line with our Climate Change Emergency, we will replace our existing fleet with more sustainable vehicles	Pilot electric vehicles		Introduction of a fully zero-carbon fleet