

Repairs Report



Soha Tenants' Forum

Soha Housing

Tenant Inspectors

Repairs Inspection 1 Report

2 February 2007

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Jargon buster

KLOE – Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) are detailed questions that the Audit Commission use when inspecting a housing association.

KPIs – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are pieces of information collected to show a housing association's performance in a particular area.

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Introduction

It was agreed at the Tenant Forum meeting in November 2006 that a Tenant Led Inspection Team should be established. Their task would be to Audit various aspects of Soha's reactions to the needs of their Tenants.

This follows an indication of interest from the Housing Corporation in the possible viability of such investigations and their bearing on the relevant KLOE's. The particular KLOE in question is Number 3 which, among other things, covers Asset Management and in particular Responsive Repairs (this is included as Appendix A), in which the question that is asked is: How effective and responsive is the organisation in keeping its homes and communal facilities in a good state of repair?

A team of volunteers was recruited and training for them was provided by TPAS. Once this training had been completed, a further meeting was called to examine the areas of Tenant Involvement that the Forum thought would be most relevant to the operations of Soha in respect to the customers. i.e., Tenants.

It was decided that the first area to be investigated in depth should be the tenant's reaction to Responsive Repairs since this is an area in which most Tenants have some experience of the Landlord's reaction to their requests.

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It was decided that three separate months of repairs requests would be examined in detail and the months of March, June and September 2006 were selected.

The following is a report of the methodology and planning that was followed by the inspection Team.

The Team consisted of:

Carole	Burchett
Andy	Dunsmore
Gordon	Evans
Freda	Griffiths
Don	Harrison
Richard	Hurst
David	Robinson
Roy	Sadler

We would all like to express our thanks to all the members of staff, who helped in the construction of this report. In all cases, they gave of their time and interest far over the call of duty. We should especially like to emphasise that this whole operation would not have been possible without the constant help and support of Catherine Little

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Methodology

The present procedure followed by Soha when receiving a request for a repair from a Tenant is to log it and to set in motion the established procedures to have the repair dealt with in the appropriate time scale according to the nature of the repair that has been requested. At the time of confirmation to the Tenant, a “Customer Satisfaction Survey” letter is sent to the Tenant, together with a pre-paid envelope, requesting that the Tenant will fill in the questionnaire after the repair has been completed.

It was therefore decided to examine all the replies that had been received in the relevant months, and to review all the comments that had been made. A further examination would also be undertaken of all the repairs that had been requested for which no reply to the questionnaire had been received. From this second list, a sample number of Tenants would be selected at random, and they would then be contacted to enquire whether they were satisfied with the repair that had been carried out, and, as a by product of the enquiry, why they have not returned the Survey form.

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The team was divided into groups; one to investigate in detail all the replies that had been received, and to ascertain, where there was dissatisfaction with the repair, the whole story and what conclusions to the repair had been reached; while another group would follow up the random repairs requests where no satisfaction survey had been received. A further group investigated jobs that had not been completed or that had been abandoned.

In all cases the object of the exercises was to ascertain to what degree there was customer satisfaction, and where this was lacking, what was being done about it!

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The Inspection

STAGE 1

An analysis of all Repair Orders issued and Repair Data undertaken during the three months under review was carried out. The three months in question were:

1st – 31st March 2006

1st – 30th June 2006

1st – 30th September 2006.

A questionnaire is sent out to each customer when a job is first logged, together with a pre – paid envelope with a request that the questionnaire be completed and returned to Soha when the repair has been completed. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix B.

The questionnaire contains a list of items considered to be of importance and on receipt by Soha the results are recorded on a Spread Sheet. The actual sheets are collected on a monthly basis and discussed with the relevant Contractor on a monthly basis and the sheets are then handed to the Contractors for their use.

Read only files were provided for perusal on computer. – Print outs of the results of the questionnaire feedback from Tenants in respect of repairs carried out were provided, together with the names of the Contractors involved. Only

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the measures of the response to the questions asked of the Tenants are detailed as follows.

INFORMATION EXTRACTED FROM THE RECORDS.

Questionnaire Responses.

Generally, there has been a poor response from Tenants to undertake to complete the questionnaire provided on the back of the confirmation of Repair letter to Tenants.

TENANTS REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE.

Although generally, the replies to the questionnaires were reasonably consistent between the contractors who were involved in the repairs, the records show the following results for each of the three months under review:

MONTH	UNDERTAKEN	<u>REPAIRS</u>	
		NOT YET COMPLETED	NO. of TENANT REPLIES
March	1443	Nil	259
June	1265	9	245
September	1431	148	67

The response rate for September is notably lower than for March or June.

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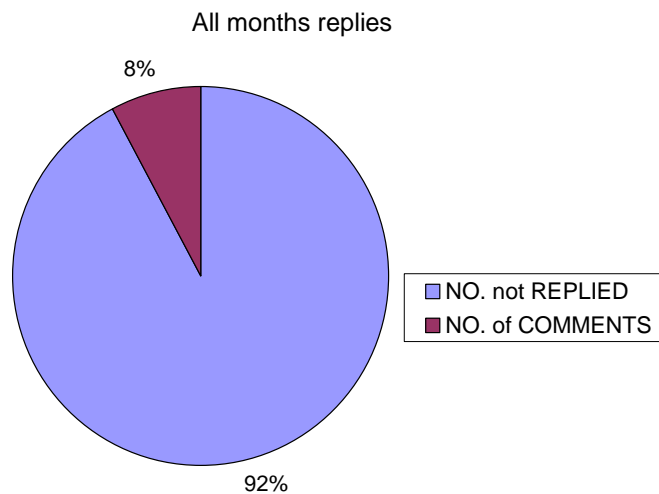
QUESTIONNAIRE

An analysis of the various questions asked was provided and is available on the computer records. The following information was arrived at after going through the comments made on those questionnaires that had been returned.

TENANTS COMMENTS

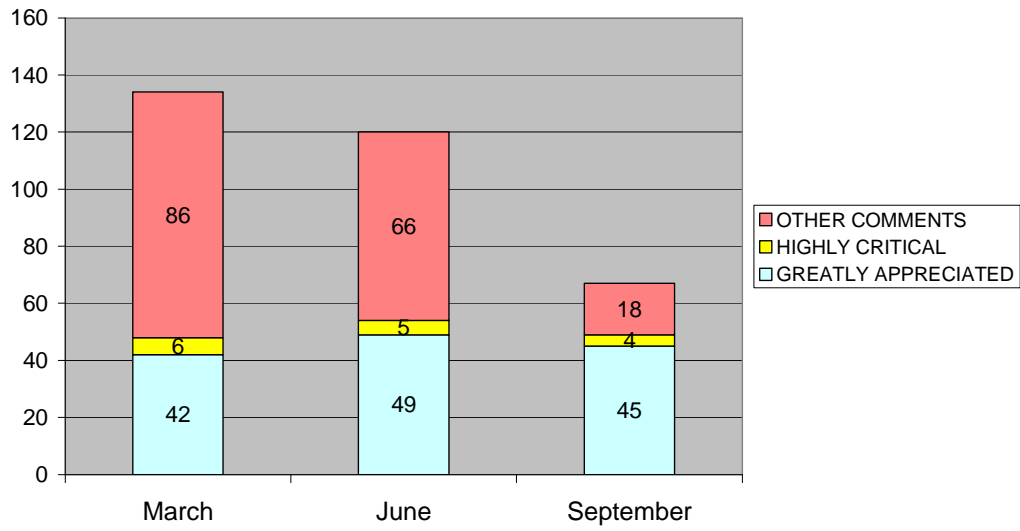
MONTH	NO.of REPAIRS	NO. of COMMENTS	GREATLY APPRECIATED	HIGHLY CRITICAL
March	1443	134	42	6
June	1265	120	49	5
September	1431	67	45	4

From the above figures it can be seen that from the number of comments which have been received the following facts can be seen in the form of a graph as follows.



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Breakdown of comments received



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STAGE 2

REPAIRS NOT COMPLETED OR ABANDONED

March 2006	0
June 2006	9
September 2006	148

All the jobs reported were investigated and the following is a report of our findings.

Analysis

June 2006

- 1 - Job was an entry error
- 3 - Reported Development Defects were passed on to the relevant Development Officer to take up with the Construction Contractor.
- 2 - Contractor had visited and was unable to gain entry
- 2 - Now completed and invoiced but missed the given target date
- 1 - Was reported by Social Services but no further action was required upon inspection.

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September 2006

- 60 - Reported as Removal of Asbestos following a Stock Condition Survey that had been carried out by Planned Maintenance and will be actioned in due course as part of their rolling maintenance plan.
- 31 - Jobs raised in response to Gas Safety checks carried out by Faulkners and were required in order to bring the systems up to their best operating performance; safety was not an issue in any of these reports. In these cases 2 jobs were abandoned due to the contractor being unable to gain entry, 2 were completed but the contractor had not returned job completed slips or invoiced. And the remainder were still awaiting parts or contractor to return job completed slips.

Of the remaining 57 jobs, 25 were checked.

- 9 - Jobs had been completed
- 2 - Jobs were duplicate entries
- 1 - Reported by Social Services where no further action was required on inspection.
- 1 - Job was found to be the Tenants responsibility

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- 2 - These were jobs concerning roofing repairs which had been covered with tarpaulin and were awaiting budget and date to complete.
- 3 - No access obtained by contractors, new jobs raised to cover at a later date.
- 7 - These were jobs where enquiries were made with contractors or tenants but no replies had been received.

Conclusions

Contractors frequently fail to return job completed slips and go straight to invoicing. For clarity and efficiency of our system there is a need to tighten up on this procedure. The removal of asbestos after Stock Condition Surveys and the ordering of spare parts for gas systems by the company carrying out safety checks causes confusion in the reporting of standard responsive repairs. In some ways it can have a detrimental effect on K.P.I's for this operation. Perhaps it would be worthwhile considering alternative ways to record this type of requirement i.e. in the manner that other planned maintenance jobs are currently recorded.

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STAGE 3

An investigation was conducted on jobs for which a reply had been returned but which the Tenants had not been satisfied with the nature of the repairs that had, or had not been carried out. The findings were of various levels of dissatisfaction, and were, by definition of a different nature in each case. Copies of the specific reports are included in Appendix C.

Conclusions

The main areas which need to be addressed are

- Job report comments should be acted immediately they are received
- On elderly, disabled and vulnerable tenants records there should be some way whereby the tenant can be identified as being in a 'Special Needs' category (this may have Data Protection implications)
- Following from the above, some means of advising the Contractor of the situation of the Tenant would be helpful.
- All members of Soha staff should have Customer relations training, not just the Customer Services Department.
- Follow ups of the comments card should be made as soon as possible and a record of the outcome of the complaint should be logged.

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Customers Non reply to Satisfaction Slips.

Some 20 Tenants who had not returned their reply slips were either telephoned or interviewed to ascertain why the slip had not been returned. The explanation given by the majority of tenants was that it was simply overlooked.

The reasons given were varied, ranging from that it was just overlooked, or they had lost it, or they wanted to keep it as a record of what had been done or, in some cases, that they thought that it would in some way, leave their ethnic background open to abuse; they were not sure that the information given by them was confidential.

Conclusions

There seems to be a consensus of opinion that returning the reply slip is not a priority in the thinking of most Tenants. In general there is satisfaction of the work done, and those that do reply are generally those with something to complain about. The majority feel that it will make no difference. Soha will only look at the positive and disregard the negative. Although the majority appreciate what Soha does for them, they are still not convinced that Soha will always do what they the tenants consider to be required.

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Recommendations

We should be looking at a more satisfactory way of receiving a feedback from the tenants. This could be in the form of one notification of the repair when the job is logged, and a two part form sent when the job is completed. One part could be retained by the tenant whilst the other could be returned to Soha. We should explore the possibility of giving some form of reward to the tenants who return their slips. perhaps a monthly draw for maybe a £10 voucher. Soha does not send out a customer satisfaction form, but when jobs are notified as complete a percentage is picked each day and a phone survey is conducted. We should investigate how this system could be improved. Currently, Soha contact 10% of tenants who return their forms, and these are more often than not from the same customers. Perhaps a random survey could be conducted of some of the remaining 90%. Alternatively a process whereby customer satisfaction forms are sent as normal, but there is a larger phone survey is conducted on a daily basis.

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Repairs and Maintenance Policy

The present Policy document was approved by the Board in 2002, and is in urgent need of updating, using clear language and explaining jargon. A copy of this document is attached at Appendix D.

There are a number of points that have been raised by our scrutiny of this document and we understand that a review of this document will be taken by Soha. We look forward to receiving the new Policy Document in the near future.

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No.	Recommendation	Soha's response	Date
R1	Speed up procedure contractors confirming job done.		
R2	Consider an alternative method of recording jobs requiring spare parts, or after property condition survey.		
R3	Satisfaction slip comments should be acted immediately they are received and a record of the outcome of the feedback or complaint should be logged.		
R4	On elderly, disabled and vulnerable tenants records there is some way whereby the tenant can be identified as being in a 'Special Needs' category (this may have Data Protection implications)		
R5	Following from the above, some means of advising the Contractor of the situation of the Tenant would be helpful.		

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No.	Recommendation	Soha's response	Date
R6	All members of Soha staff should have Customer relations training, not just the Customer Services Department.		
R7	We should be looking at a more satisfactory way of receiving a feedback from the tenants. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send satisfaction form separately from notification when job is completed• Monthly £10 draw for all forms returned• Conducting phone survey instead of paper forms.		
R8	Review of Repairs and Maintenance policy document, involving tenants.		

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Appendix A – KLOE 3 Stock Investment and Asset Management – sections relevant to Responsive Repairs

<p>Responsive repairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How effective and responsive is the organisation in keeping its homes and communal facilities in a good state of repair?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can get the necessary work done quickly and efficiently without long-winded approval systems.• Completes repairs to a high standard within its target timescales, generally at the first visit.• Uses an innovative mix of caretaker, handyperson and multi-trade working to complete repair works in a responsive and customer-focussed way.• Regularly inspects communal areas, jointly with residents' representatives, and ensures the necessary repairs are carried out within target timescales.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has a responsive repairs service that meets basic legal and contractual requirements.• Completes repairs to a reasonable standard, but too often outside target timescales and often not at the first visit.• Generally uses traditional contractor and single trades arrangements to complete all repairs.• Inspects communal areas, but not systematically. As a result communal repairs are often not completed in target timescales.
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Appendix B – Satisfaction questionnaire sent with repairs confirmation

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Soha housing is dedicated to improving the overall quality of the repairs service it provides.

To help us achieve this aim, please complete the questions below. Upon completion of the repair, please return this for to Soha housing in the envelope provided

	Yes	No
1. Were office staff polite and helpful in dealing with your repair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Was the priority of the repair explained to you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Did office staff offer you an appointment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Was an appointment made by the contractor/office staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. If an appointment was made, was this kept to?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Did the contractor clean up afterwards to your satisfaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Was the contractor carrying out the repair polite and helpful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are you satisfied with the quality of the repair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Any other comments		
.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		

We are required to monitor ethnic background to compare with customer satisfaction. Please tick one box.

A) WHITE	B) MIXED	C) ASIAN & ASIAN BRITISH	D) BLACK & BLACK BRITISH	E) CHINESE OR OTHER ETHNIC GROUP	F) REFUSED
1 <input type="checkbox"/> British	4 <input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean	8 <input type="checkbox"/> Indian	12 <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean	15 <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	17 <input type="checkbox"/> Refused
2 <input type="checkbox"/> Irish	5 <input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African	9 <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	13 <input type="checkbox"/> African	16 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
3 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	6 <input type="checkbox"/> White & Asian	10 <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	14 <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Other	11 <input type="checkbox"/> Other			

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Appendix C

Inspectors report on Job no J0010182

The tenant was very happy that someone had called her to discuss her problems the main things I picked up on during the interview was that no one had got back to her after she had sent her comment card back. Also when she called to ask why a job for a disabled person has no different priority as she was told that it would take three working days and they would have to use a bucket to flush the toilet the person the tenant spoke to at Soha a male was very blunt with her and said the job will be done in three days. I do not think this was one of the customer services team as it was a male member of staff who had spoken to the tenant, plus there was no appointment made. When the contractor arrived to do the job the tenant said that he was a very nice man and explained what was causing the problem and what he was going to do the tenant said that she was very pleased with the contractor he was polite and friendly.

The items I feel may need looking into is

- (1) Job report card comments should be acted on ASAP when they arrive at Soha offices.
- (2) Job target dates should be revised for disabled and elderly tenants especially where sewage is concerned
- (3) All members of staff should have more training in customer relations not just customer services

Andy Dunsmore
Tenant inspector

Inspectors report for job number J0011257

The above job has still not been done the tenant had appointment made for the 13th oct 06 the tenant had taken a day off work but the contractor did not turn up. There was no contact with the tenant so Soha was called to make another appointment which was made for 26th oct and the tenant was told that the 13th of oct was not kept due to rain. The 26th of oct was bright and clear, no rain, still did not turn up. Also there has been no contact from Soha and no response to the comment card which was sent back.

My recommendations are as follows

- (1) As in my last report the comment card situation is just not working this needs to be looked at sooner rather than later
- (2) If appointments are made the tenant and Soha should be called as early as possible to explain the reason for the contractor not turning up and alternative appointment made. And not left to the tenant to call.

Mr A Dunsmore
Tenant Inspector

Tenant inspector report job number J0005773

The tenant said that no appointment was made and when the contractor did arrive the Tenant said that he was very abrupt and asked the tenant what was to be done which made the tenant upset. The work has been done. The tenant

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said that there is no problems with Soha only that the comment card are not been responded to.

My suggestions are

- (1) that on the elderly and disabled tenancies there is some sort of symbol next to there file which tells customer services or the repair section that these tenants will need an appointment and to explain to the contractor that it may take some time for the tenant to answer the door.
- (2) As in my previous reports the comment card system is not working and needs looking into

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Appendix D

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SOHA HOUSING LTD REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

Soha aims to maintain its housing stock in good repair.

2. Policy

Soha will comply with the statutory requirements of section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, Housing Act 1988, the Defective Premises Act 1972 and the Housing Act 1996. Soha plans to ensure that all homes reach the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010, including the interim requirement that the number of properties failing the Standard in 2002 is reduced by one third by the end of 2004.

Soha will also comply with the Construction Act 1996, the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 1994, Health and Safety Legislation and the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 1987 (amended 1998) and other current, relevant legislation.

Soha will:

- keep in good repair the structure and exterior of all dwellings and common areas;
- keep in repair and proper working order installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity, sanitation, space and water heating;
- keep in repair and regularly service communal equipment supplied by Soha;
- ensure all properties are fit for human habitation;
- publish and inform all tenants of the respective repairing obligations of the tenants and the landlord.

Soha insures all its properties for their full replacement value and also holds an indemnity policy to protect it from third party claims. It nevertheless advises all tenants to arrange their own contents insurance.

Details of the condition of the stock will be collected and regularly updated in order to continually improve stock condition data. Planned maintenance programmes will be based on this data.

Soha will, in the procurement and administration of contracts, work towards the Egan agenda in accordance with the Client Charter Action Plan.

3. Implementation

3.1. Day to Day Repairs (Responsive Maintenance)

Tenants can report repairs to Soha during normal office hours and by e-mail. An out of hours emergency service is also in operation for repairs that would cause damage or danger to persons or property. Receipts are issued to tenants for all repair work ordered (except repairs to communal areas).

The tenancy agreement and the Tenants' Handbook (the "Little Green Book") set out the respective obligations of landlord and tenant for repairs.

Soha inspects an agreed percentage of all responsive repair work orders to check the quality of work.

Tenant repair satisfaction questionnaires are distributed in all cases where a tenant is in occupation. A tenant may be entitled to compensation if a repair is unreasonably delayed (see Soha's Compensation Policy for details).

3.2. Right to Repair

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Soha will honour the Right to Repair provisions of section 121 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993.

Certain essential repairs which Soha estimates to cost less than £250 are defined as qualifying under Regulations issued under the above Act. Also defined are the maximum number of working days they should take to be completed. The list of qualifying repairs and timescales is given in the Tenants' Handbook.

3.3. Cyclical Maintenance

Soha undertakes annual servicing of all its gas and portable electric appliances, together with all its communal lifts, warden-call and fire equipment. Detailed information concerning gas servicing can be found within Soha's Gas Safety Policy and Procedures document.

Monthly checks are carried out to all communal water systems in accordance with an Approved Code of Practice to control the risk of exposure to the legionella bacteria.

Other servicing includes emergency lighting and fire alarms to communal areas and regular checks to electrical installations in accordance with the relevant codes of practice.

3.4. Planned Maintenance

Soha has a detailed 5 Year Planned Maintenance and Improvement Programme to reflect its business objectives, the Decent Homes Standard, void expenditure, tenant surveys and SAP ratings.

In order to improve average SAP ratings and address affordable warmth issues, expenditure will be focussed on insulation and heating systems. This will also significantly reduce the number of properties presently failing the Decent Homes Standard (see paragraph 2).

Soha will reflect tenants views when compiling and delivering the planned maintenance programme through consultation and by offering choices using a variety of methods.

Further details concerning planned maintenance works, contract procurement and the Decent Homes Standard can be found within the Asset Management Strategy and the Contract and Tendering Procedures.

3.5. Voids

Soha inspects all properties where the tenant has given notice, before the property is vacated.

A thorough inspection of all properties is made after the tenant has left and repairs to bring the property up to a lettable condition are carried out whilst the property is empty. All electrical and gas fittings are checked to ensure compliance with safety regulations. Recharges are made for any repairs which are considered to be the responsibility of the outgoing tenant.

In the case of Mutual Exchanges, a gas and electricity safety check is carried out on the day that the tenants swap homes. No other works are carried out.

If the property is in a Sheltered Scheme, or is designated for elderly or disabled persons, any decoration required is undertaken. In all other cases, decorations are not normally carried out (at the discretion of the Maintenance Manager) but decoration vouchers (to enable the tenant to purchase materials) are issued to the

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incoming tenant up to an agreed value. Where tenants are unable to undertake works themselves, Soha may undertake such works on their behalf.

3.6. Aids and Adaptations

If a tenant requests the installation of aids and adaptations to meet their special needs or those of a family member up to a value of £200, the Association will liaise with the Social Services department to identify the necessary works required. The tenant will be encouraged to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant (subject to means testing) for works in excess of £200.

Soha has an agency agreement with South Oxfordshire District Council to carry out DFG works to the homes of Soha tenants on its behalf. The current agreement expires in 2005.

The Director of Customer Services will exercise discretion in the authorisation of works without grant assistance where:

- undue hardship would otherwise result;
- Local Authority grant is discretionary, and will not/is not likely to be agreed, or
- where "top up" funds are required.

Soha will maintain all aids and adaptations which it has installed and will replace such aids and adaptations at the end of their useful life, if still required by the tenant.

4. Priorities

Soha has defined priority codes for processing responsive repairs.

Any work which is identified as suitable for inclusion in a planned maintenance programme will be referred to the Asset Manager.

5. Responsibility

Both the Director of Customer Services and the Director of Property & Development are responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

Both Directors are responsible for ensuring that all expenditure incurred on repairs and maintenance does not exceed the budget provision.

The Director of Customer Services is responsible for monitoring the performance of response repairs whilst the Director of Property & Development is responsible for monitoring the planned and cyclical maintenance contracts.

6. Consultation

Soha will consult tenants and the Board on any proposed changes to this policy. It will advise tenants on its planned maintenance programme annually.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every 5 years.

Regular reports will be submitted to the Operations Committee or Board giving details of contractors' performance, budget monitoring, tenant satisfaction and planned maintenance proposals.

Approval

This policy was approved by the Board on 28 January 2003.