# Community Housing
## Property Maintenance Procedure

## 1. Purpose and Scope

1.1. As a registered Tier 2 Community Housing Provider, Uniting WA is responsible for maintaining all properties used within its Community Housing service – ensuring they are of a reasonable standard, in line with the Community Housing Asset Condition Standards.

1.2. Additionally, as detailed in the Asset Management and Compliance Procedure, the Community Housing team is required to fulfil various legislative and contractual obligations relating to property maintenance.

1.3. This procedure outlines the ways in which reactive, planned and long-term property maintenance is used across the Uniting WA property portfolio to fulfil these obligations, and to ensure tenants are provided with well-kept, safe, and suitable accommodation.

1.4. This procedure does not relate to any works undertaken in response to a Property Modification Request - details of which are outlined within the Property Modifications Procedure.

## 2. Glossary of Terms/Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| 2.1. **General Wear and Tear** | Refers to the natural depreciation and normal deterioration of a property's condition over time due to everyday use. |
| 2.2. **Property Asset Report (PAR)** | Reports carried out by a qualified maintenance contractor every 3 years. PARs, through comprehensive assessment, document the status of wear and tear on certain components of properties, identify the appropriate cost of repair or replacement on certain components and estimate the remaining life cycle term, in years, of those components. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2.3. | **Property Condition Report (PCR)** | Reports undertaken by a Uniting WA Tenant Support Worker (TSW) periodically, and at the beginning / end of a tenancy, assessing the overall condition of a property prior to its subsequent occupation or vacancy. |
| 2.4. | **Property Maintenance** | Refers to any works / repairs / activities undertaken (reactive, planned and long-term) in order to maintain the property in good working order / to a general standard of decency. |

## 3.  Background

3.1.  Properties show signs of deterioration over time due to general wear and tear and exposure to everyday use. As such, ongoing property maintenance and repairs are required to ensure properties continue to meet expected standards of decency and habitability.

3.2.  A proactive approach to property maintenance can also:

- Support budgetary planning activities and mitigate prospective financial liabilities by reducing the likeliness of major unexpected repairs / replacements
- Preserve and increase the residual value of the property as a capital asset
- Improve tenant satisfaction by preventing tenant disputes and grievances
- Mitigate risks and organisational liabilities by ensuring ongoing compliance with relevant legislation and contractual obligations.

## 4.  Types of Property Maintenance

**Reactive Property Maintenance**

4.1.  Reactive maintenance, otherwise termed 'day-to-day maintenance' refers to all works / repairs required to maintain the property in good working order / to a general standard of decency. Reactive maintenance refers to minor repairs / works that are generally the responsibility of the landlord, undertaken in response to a property's general wear and tear.

4.2.  Reactive maintenance may include:

- Emergency property maintenance and / or responsive maintenance and repairs undertaken following the receipt of a Tenant Maintenance Request (gas leaks, water leaks, faulty heating systems etc.)
- After hours property maintenance services
- Routine / reactive maintenance and repairs undertaken to ensure a property is at a 'lettable-standard' at the time of its allocation (e.g.,

repairs undertaken prior to occupancy and / or following a tenant's exit or transfer).

**Planned Property Maintenance**

4.3. Planned maintenance, otherwise termed 'cyclical maintenance', refers to works that are scheduled and budgeted for annually, undertaken periodically over the financial year.

4.4. Planned maintenance works may include, but are not limited to:
- Mowing and gardening
- Termite inspections and pest control activities
- Gutter cleaning and fire preparedness activities
- Compliance activities and safety checks (e.g., bi-annual testing of Residual Currency Devices (RCDs) ("Push-button Test") and Smoke Alarms)
- Preventative maintenance

**Long-term Property Maintenance**

4.5. Long-term maintenance refers to works / repairs designed to deliver lifecycle-based upgrades to a property for the purposes of maintaining the functionality, comfort, safety, efficiency and residual value of the asset.

4.6. Long-term maintenance may include:
- The replacement of kitchens, bathrooms, hot water units etc.
- Major structural repairs
- Painting.

**Structural maintenance**

4.7. Structural maintenance is the responsibility of the owner of the property and refers to major works and refers to the restoration and in-depth remedial works that aim to meet the health, safety, and fire safety standards required.

## 5. Approach

**Reactive Property Maintenance:**

5.1. The Community Housing team is committed to the timely delivery of reactive property maintenance, in line with the response timeframes identified in the Residential Tenancies Act, based on the perceived level of urgency ('Priority Rating') indicated below.

| Priority Rating | Timeframe | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Essential | 24 hours | Gas leak; burst water pipe, no hot water |
| Urgent | 48hours | Water leak; blocked toilet |

| Medium | 3 days | Pest treatment; fix a lock / door |
|--------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Low | 7 – 10 days | Fix blinds; garden maintenance |
| Non-urgent | 14 + days | Non-urgent property alterations; quotes |

5.2.  This commitment is supported through the use of regular property inspections, which facilitate the assessment and documentation of the overall condition of each property - used to inform and coordinate the scheduling of property maintenance.

**Planned Property Maintenance:**

5.3.  The Community Housing team incorporate various compliance activities and safety checks into the planned property maintenance scheduled for each property, supporting the Asset Management and Compliance Procedure.

5.4.  Preventive maintenance activities are also included as part of the planned property maintenance schedule for each property, ensuring appropriate steps are taken to preserve the condition of assets and prevent premature deterioration resulting in costly repairs.

**Long-term Property Maintenance:**

5.5.  In support of Uniting WA's Asset Management Policy, Strategic Planning and Risk Management Policy and Asset Management and Compliance Policy, the Community Housing team undertake long-term property maintenance activities to periodically perform property upgrades. These upgrades serve to reduce unexpected costs associated with reactive property maintenance by ensuring various components within each property are maintained.

## 6.  Systems

6.1.  The Community Housing team outsource contractor management services to Australian Essential Services Compliance (AESC). The external contractor management agency facilitates the timely engagement of suitably qualified contractors and tradespeople to complete any required property maintenance activities. AESC is also utilised in the delivery of the Afterhours Property Maintenance Services which can be accessed by all Uniting WA tenants and workers.

6.2.  The Community Housing team use a Property Management System (i.e., TechnologyOne ('TechOne')) to store all relevant property information against each property. This supports the Community Housing team to ensure property maintenance activities are undertaken in consideration of a property's criteria, lease agreement and program allocation.

6.3. Additionally, TechOne enables relevant property maintenance documentation to be stored against the respective property, providing an accumulative timeline of all property maintenance and compliance activities that have been undertaken.

## 7. Procedures

**Reactive Property Maintenance:**

7.1. Reactive property maintenance may be scheduled in response to a Property Maintenance Request submitted by a tenant, or a Tenancy Support Worker (TSW) - typically following a Routine Property Inspection.

7.2. Following the receipt of a Property Maintenance Request, TSWs must ensure adequate information is provided relating to the request including, the tenant's name, address, contact information, and description / detail of the fault / concern requiring attention.

7.3. TSWs must determine the urgency of the request, as defined by the Residential Tenancies Act.

7.4. TSWs are to log the maintenance request via AESC's Online Portal.

7.5. AESC will submit a 'Work Request' to a suitable contractor who can undertake to required works.

7.6. Confirmation of the Work Request will be received by email.

7.7. The TSW must then add detail of the Work Request against the property in TechOne.

7.8. Work Requests of this type should be categorised under 'Reactive Maintenance' in TechOne.

7.9. To finalise this task, a 'Work Order' must then be issued.

7.10. Once a Work Order has been completed, the contractor will inform AESC who will then send confirmation of the completed Work Order via email.

7.11. Following receipt of this confirmation, the TSW should then update the status of the Work Order to 'Completed' in TechOne.

**Planned Property Maintenance:**

7.12. Any ongoing / planned property maintenance should be identified and logged with AESC, by the Team Lead.

7.13. AESC will then schedule the related ongoing Work Request with the nominated contractor.

7.14. Confirmation of the Work Request will be received by email.

7.15. The Team Leader must then add details of the Work Request against the relevant property in TechOne.

7.16. Such Work Requests are to be categorised under 'Planned Maintenance' in TechOne.

7.17. To finalise the task, the Work Order must then be issued.

7.18. Once a Work Order has been completed, the contractor will inform AESC who will then send confirmation of the completed Work Order via email.

7.19. Following receipt of this confirmation, the TSW should then update the status of the Work Order to 'Completed' in TechOne.

7.20. Work Requests indented as Preventive Maintenance as part of the Property Asset Report (PAR) process are to be categorised under 'Planned Maintenance' in TechOne.

**Long-term Property Maintenance:**

7.21. The Long-term Maintenance Dashboard in TechOne details the estimated long-term maintenance costs and date due for all properties in Uniting WA's property portfolio, for the relevant financial year.

7.22. This data is reviewed and updated regularly on completion of any long-term maintenance works, and on receipt of Property Asset Reports which are conducted every 3 years for every property.

7.23. At the beginning of each financial year, the maintenance data available in TechOne is used to inform the forecasted long-term maintenance budget which is to be scheduled for the upcoming financial year.

7.24. A 'Memo' is attached to each relevant property identified as due for long-term maintenance within the upcoming financial year. Prior to any Routine Property Inspections, the TSW is expected to utilise the 'Memo Pop-up Alert', or Long-term Maintenance Dashboard, in TechOne to familiarise themselves with any relevant long-term maintenance that has been scheduled for the property within the current financial year.

7.25. TSWs must request (at least) two (2) contractor quotes for the required long-term maintenance via a 'Work Order' submitted through AESC.

7.26. On receipt of the quotes, the TSW should consult with the Team Leader to decide which contractor will be used.

7.27. Confirmation of the chosen contractor must be communicated by the TSW via AESC.

7.28. Contractors should be instructed to liaise closely with the relevant TSW and tenant, as required.

7.29. Confirmation of the Work Request will be received by email.

7.30. The TSW must then add details of the 'Work Request' against the relevant property in TechOne.

7.31. Such Work Requests are to be categorised under 'Long-term Maintenance' in TechOne.

7.32. To finalise the task, the Work Order must then be issued.

7.33. Once a Work Order has been completed, the contractor will inform AESC who will then send confirmation of the completed Work Order via email.

7.34. Following receipt of this confirmation, the TSW should confirm the satisfactory completion of the works before updating the status of the Work Order to 'Completed' in TechOne.

## 8. Liability for Maintenance

8.1. The Team Lead and TSW should discuss whether a tenant is liable to be charged for a specific Work Order under the Residential Tenancies Act.

8.2. If a tenant is determined to have liability for property maintenance or repair, the TSW must raise with this with the tenant before completing the related Work Order via AESC to arrange a re-payment plan

8.3. Confirmation of the Work Order should be logged onto TechOne, with the entry specifying 'TL' where the works are being charged to the tenant (for invoicing purposes).

8.4. Where a tenant is being charged for a Work Order, the TSW is required to send an accompanying Tenant Liability Letter to the tenant, with a copy of the invoice received in relation to the works.

## 9. Variations

9.1. Uniting WA reserves the right to vary or change this procedure from time to time.

## 10. Related Documents

10.1. Community Housing Asset Condition Standards

10.2. Residential Tenancies Act 1987

10.3. Uniting WA AESC Afterhours Guideline

10.4. Uniting WA Asset Management and Compliance Procedure

10.5. Uniting WA Property Standards Procedure

10.6. Uniting WA Tenant Liability Letter Template

10.7. Uniting WA Tenant Management Procedure

## 11. Authorisation of any Changes or Retirement

_(signature)_

16 August 2023

Approver's Signature                    Date

| Approver | Chief Executive Officer |
|---|---|
| Responsible Officer/s | Senior Manager Community Housing |
| Document Owner | Senior Manager Community Housing |
| Specialist Advisor/s | |
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## 12. Version Control

| Version No. | Review Date | Reviewers | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 30/07/2022 | Practice Lead Community Housing, Policy Officer | Re-branded and reviewed in light of current practice. |
| 1 | 16/08/2023 | Senior Manager Community Housing, Policy Officer | Position title changes. Minor formatting amendments. Changes to 'Reactive Maintenance Priority Rating Scale' following recommendation from CHRF. |