



North Devon Homes

Planned Improvements Policy

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1. Policy

This policy sets out North Devon Homes' principles for the Planned Improvements service delivery area and provides guidance on implementation.

North Devon Homes is committed to providing its customers with homes that are safe, comfortable and well maintained.

All North Devon Homes' staff, Board Members and contractors are expected to adhere to the principles of this policy and to have individual and collective responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied.

We aim to deliver a quality Planned Improvement service that:

- Produces good levels of customer satisfaction through delivering well planned, quality improvements whilst communicating with our customers throughout.
- Drives value for money through delivering quality products ensuring life cycles of components are maximized and contracts are competitive
- Enhances the value of our property assets.
- Provides opportunities for customers to be consulted on North Devon Homes standards, choices and programme's of work.
- Improves the energy efficiency of our properties when specifying replacement components such as gas fired boilers achieving 96% efficiency.
- Considers fuel poverty and impact for our customers when specifying energy consuming installations.
- Is compliant with Health and Safety, statutory, regulatory and best practice aspirations and the Decent Homes Standard.

2. Purpose

North Devon Homes will maintain all properties to a good standard by providing quality planned improvements ensuring effective and efficient use of resources to the satisfaction of customers.

Continual improvement of the quality of services to customers will be sought through regular service and procedural reviews.

We will regularly consult with customers, and other representatives to ensure that the policy and its procedures remain fit for purpose.

3. Principles

The following principles will apply to this policy:

- It will be open, fair and transparent.
- Above all it will promote consistency in the approach to the Planned Maintenance services.
- The Policy will undertake consultation and will reflect the Company's staff, Customer and Board members views.
- It will be realistic, achievable and provide value for money.
- It will be periodically reviewed to an agreed timescale.
- It will support all Corporate customer care standards.

4. Review

We will review this policy, procedures and staff training needs at least once every two years to ensure that it continues to operate within best practice, achieve measurable results, and achieve continuous service improvement.

Alternatively, the policy and all associated procedures will be reviewed immediately following any relevant change to government policy, regulation or legislation.

The Planned Improvements Manager will be responsible for ensuring that policy reviews are undertaken, that appropriate consultation takes place and that revisions are reported to the Board for its approval.

5. Application

North Devon Homes' Board will approve this policy and delegate responsibility to the Head of Asset Management for ensuring that it is communicated and implemented.

The Head of Asset Management will provide training for staff to ensure that they fully understand the wider issues surrounding this policy and the procedure.

6. Policy Statements

6.1 Health and Safety

To provide assurance that all works will comply with Construction Design and Management 2015 Legislation (CDM) and that all roles are appointed as per the requirements.

We are committed to ensuring that all works are delivered in accordance with current Construction and Design Management (CDM) Regulations to ensure the safety of customers, contractors and staff.

The service area will employ the services of an independent Safety Advisor who will provide consistent guidance and safety audits to active sites on a regular basis.

6.2 Customer Service (Equality and Diversity)

We aim to ensure that all of our customers regardless of race, colour, gender, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status or appearance have the right at all times to:

- To be treated fairly and equally

- To enjoy their homes quietly.

We will consider any particular requirements of our customers such as disability, age or vulnerability and where achievable shape our delivery around these needs.

6.3 Supporting Customers

We will involve customers and offer choices with planned improvement installations where flexibility is available. There are limited possibilities for this flexibility as it is more efficient for our business plan and our maintenance teams etc to be able to carry prescriptive replacement components which ultimately should provide a better faster service for our customers.

We are committed to engaging in consultation with Customers in a variety of ways. This also includes much better provision of information, how the work will affect their normal life and what is required of them to enable improvements to go smoothly.

6.4 Customer Satisfaction

We will incorporate customer feedback to inform continuous improvement of planned improvements and results will be discussed at contractors' progress meetings.

6.5 Planned Maintenance Delivery

The delivery results of Planned Maintenance refurbishments are reported on a regular basis to the Board including performance and customer satisfaction.

6.6 Stock Condition Survey

We undertake to Survey each property every five years to refresh our stock condition data which will determine our future programmes of work.

6.7 Environment and Sustainability

Planned Improvements service will:

- Consider environmental and sustainable principles in its planned improvements by ensuring project waste plans are monitored regularly and exploring new initiatives.
- Require its contractors to monitor and reduce waste
- Install 'A' rated energy efficient boilers and appliances
- Install energy efficient long-life light bulbs during electrical improvements
- Ensure lofts are topped up to 270mm (mineral wool) when we undertake any works to roofs or to improve the energy efficiency of a property.
- Set targets to increase the average energy rating across the whole stock each year. This is a measurement of how efficient each property is and provides information about what measures could be taken to make improvements.

6.8 Customer Choice

During Planned Improvement work there will be customer choice available (from a selected scope) for items such as :

- External wall paint colours
- Replacement front door style and colour
- Kitchen and bathroom floor colours
- Kitchen unit and worktop style and colour choice.

Limiting product choice is a key ingredient for the success of our maintenance teams and reduces the number of replacement components being stocked. This increases efficiencies and helps reduce costs over the longer term.

6.9 Central Heating

We will ensure a full heating and hot water system is provided for our Customers which is replaced on the prescriptive replacement life cycle. We also reserve the right to change the type of central heating in your home to improve the energy

efficiency of the property, reflect our commitment to climate change or more efficient systems for us to maintain.

When any remaining solid fuel or oil fired central heating systems expire we will install alternative forms of heating which aim to improve the energy efficiency. This may include trialing new technology particularly in off gas areas where efficient heating alternatives are more challenging to achieve.

6.10 Gas Fired Heating

Where existing gas fired systems are installed these will be replaced with new A rated energy efficient condensing boilers

Where a gas fired backboiler is fitted and replaced with a new combi boiler located in a new position such as a kitchen then the existing fireplace opening will be blocked up and gas fires will be removed.

Where E7 heating is due for replacement in an area where gas is available a gas fired heating installation will be offered. Where this is refused we will repair only any failing E7 heaters but not a full replacement E7 system.

6.11 Solid Fuel

Where an existing solid fuel heating system is fitted this will not be replaced with a new appliance but will be replaced with a more suitable heating system.

Any existing fireplaces will be permanently blocked off and the chimney may be removed particularly where it is not financially viable to repair.

All guidance relating to solid fuel can be found in the separate Solid Fuel Policy

6.12 External Decoration

External decoration and repair will be determined by the maintenance requirements for each property occurring in cycles of up to 20 years duration.

For example where a property has been updated to uPVC fascia, soffit, windows, doors and brickwork elevations very little maintenance is required and will be at the maximum cycle (20 years).

The standard maintenance approach is for fascia, barge and soffits to be overclad with uPVC and replace gutters and rainwater pipes for new components. Rendered surfaces will be painted or in exceptional circumstances have rain screens applied.

6.13 Asbestos

Prior to any works commencing on our properties we will provide the Contractor either with access to our Survey data via a portal or provide this during a pre start works survey where we ensure the contractor understands the presence of the material within the context of the proposed works. If a Customer does not provide access for an Asbestos Survey no Planned Improvements will be available to the Customer until this has been completed.

6.14 Procurement

All Asset Management procurement will be in accordance with the Standing Orders Policy, value for money and maximise value from the ASW procurement club. This allows us to achieve the best value available with the collective buying power of 90,000 homes across the south west.

6.15 Recharges

The Planned Improvements Service reserves the right to apply recharging in the following instances:

- Where we wish to undertake a Stock Condition Service we will contact you by letter, telephone and text message. Where we have escalated our attempts to contact you with further letters and calls we will outline a final appointment which if not fulfilled will require a recharge payment of £33.
- Where we have consulted with you, taken a choice and ordered a replacement door for your home we reserve the

right to recharge the cost of the door if you will not allow access for fitting.

- Where a kitchen or bathroom requires complete replacement prior to its prescriptive life cycle we will consider the length of the Tenancy in relationship to the original install date of the component. A recharge will result if we feel there is sufficient evidence to support premature failure has occurred through non normal 'wear and tear' conditions.
- Where essential planned improvements need to be undertaken such as rewiring or replacement boiler / heating works good access to the property will be required. Where instances of hoarding type activity has taken place we will work with the customer to facilitate a mutually agreeable approach. This will provide space for the contractor to undertake the works safely and within a reasonable time. We reserve the right to recover some or all of the costs relating to this approach which will be communicated right through the process.
- Where we become aware of an unauthorised solid fuel installation such as a woodburner we will engage with the customer to ensure the system is safely decommissioned. Where these installations have impacted on the structure or function of the property we reserve the right to undertake rectification work ourselves and pass these costs onto the customer.
- During planned improvement works should unauthorised alterations be found whilst particular works are ongoing such as non compliant lighting (installed by the customer) during a rewire we reserve the right to take corrective actions which we may recharge to the customer.

6.16 Refusals

As a caring responsible Landlord we understand that it may not always be convenient or appropriate for us to undertake planned improvements to your home due to personal circumstance. This could be for examples such as ill health, family related difficulties or bereavement.

Where circumstances such as this prevail we will be empathetic and explore possibilities to defer works to a more suitable time for you.

There are, however, two types of improvement work which we need to ensure are completed as soon as possible due to Health and Safety implications. They are:

- Electrical works - should a property fail a Periodic Electrical inspection or come to the end of its prescriptive life cycle we will seek to ensure that the property remains safe. This will involve heightened contact and ultimately legal implications to ensure safety is maintained.
- Gas fired boilers – once a boiler has reached the end of its prescriptive life cycle we will take additional advice from our Gas Servicing teams around replacement. Safety will be included in this assessment and legal implications could result if this work is being refused on grounds which we cannot support (outlined above).

When converting the infrastructure to a whole site to gas fired central heating any customers not wishing to have this change will be considered as a refusal and will not be offered replacement E7. E7 is less popular, less controllable and less efficient than gas which is our current favoured large scale option.

7. Consultation

7.1 Who has been consulted in developing the Policy?

<i>Date</i>	<i>Consultation Methodology</i>	<i>Challenge / Impact / Result</i>
	Asset Management C90 Executive Team Board.	

7.2 Does the Policy promote equality of opportunity?

The Policy promotes equality of opportunity within the broad spectrum of opportunities within Planned Maintenance to both influence service delivery with adjustments to service for example. It also provides an agile service which is flexible and able to respond to individual customer's needs.

Next review date	
June 2021 (every three years)	
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