

# **REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE PROCEDURE**

## REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

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Repairs & Maintenance

## REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

### SECTION 1

#### 1.1 MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a quality, cost effective repairs service that meets the needs of residents and the Association.

#### 1.2 MAINTENANCE STATEMENT

*Vectis HA pledges to maintain all its properties over and above the statutory legal requirements to the benefit of both the organisation and residents. Vectis HA also pledges that all repairs will be cost effective and in line with needs of our residents.*

#### 1.3 OBJECTIVES OF VECTIS HA MAINTENANCE POLICY

The key objectives of our maintenance policy are in line with current best practice to comply with legal obligations, maximise the life of our stock, achieve high standards of customer care and satisfaction, achieve value for money, provide a prompt, efficient and effective service, to minimise expenditure on responsive repairs, minimise the level of emergency repairs, ensure we have an effective procurement and contractor management strategy and involve tenants in decision making about the service.

#### 1.4 Regulator for Social Housing

Whilst Vectis Housing Association are currently unlikely to be affected by an in-depth review by the Regulator for Social Housing, we will ensure that meet best practice and value for money expected by such a review.

#### 1.5 TERMINOLOGY

PSM – Property Services Manager  
PSO - Property Services Surveyor  
PSA - Property Services Administrator  
FD - Finance Director  
CE - Chief Executive

## SECTION 2

### 2.1 LEGAL & STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Below is a list of some of the legal and statutory obligations that Vectis HA adheres to in formulation of its policy on maintenance. The list, which is not exhaustive, is obviously subject to change with new legislation that Vectis HA will always keep abreast of.

Statute	Obligation
Landlord & tenant Act 1985 s11	Implied covenant of repair which requires landlords to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep in repair the structure and exterior of the dwelling house including drains, gutters and external pipes.</li> <li>• Keep in repair and proper working order installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity and installations for sanitation, space heating and heating water</li> </ul>
Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 s.11 (1A) (tenancies let after 15 Jan 1989)	Extends the repairing obligation to common parts of building, of blocks of flats including lifts, communal lighting or central boilers which serve more than one dwelling
Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 s11 (6)	Implied covenant permitting the landlord or its agent to enter the dwelling at any reasonable time in order to view the condition and state of repair, provided that the occupier is given at least 24 hours written notice.
Housing Act 1985 s96	Introduced and extended the Right to Repair scheme
Defective Premises Act 1927	The Landlord has a duty of care; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ To prevent injury to people or damage to their property which might be caused by relevant defect</li> </ul>
Occupiers Liability Act 1957	The landlord has a duty to ensure that all visitors will be reasonably safe when using the common parts for the purpose for which they were invited.
Environmental Protection Act 1990 s79-82	Provides for legal remedies to statutory nuisance where; premises are in such a states to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance' defined as premises which are 'injurious or likely to cause injury to health'.
Gas Safety (installations and Use) regulations 1998	Landlords must; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that only persons approved by health &amp; Safety Executive may carry out work on gas fittings (i.e. such a person must be C.O.R.G.I registered)</li> <li>• Not permit a gas appliance to be used if he/she knows or suspects it to be unsafe or inadequately ventilated.</li> <li>• Undertake an annual safety check by an approved person on pipework and appliances owned by them</li> <li>• Keep records of all inspection defects and actions taken and make such records available to tenants</li> </ul>

## 2.2 FURTHER OBLIGATIONS INCLUDE

- ❑ Building regulations
- ❑ European Community regulations
- ❑ Construction, design and management regulations
- ❑ Health & Safety regulations
- ❑ Fire regulations

## 2.3 RIGHT TO REPAIR (RSL'S) – ENGLAND & WALES

~~Homes England~~ The Regulator for Social Housing requires RSL's to meet the requirement of the their policy on Right to Repair contained in Circular R3-33/9 4 *The Right to Repair and the Right to Compensation*

**Appendix 5 details Vectis HA procedure on the Right to Repair**

## SECTION 3

### 3.1 CLASSIFICATION OF REPAIRS

Vectis HA as with other registered social landlords classifies repairs in two main areas, those repairs which the association is aware of and has planned for, repairs that are carried out with forethought, control and the use of records- ***planned maintenance*** and those repairs which are unplanned, sporadic, ad-hoc, and cannot be deferred - ***responsive maintenance***.

### 3.2 PLANNED MAINTENANCE

#### 3.21 CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE – see separate Cyclical Maintenance Policy for full procedure

Cyclical repairs including external decoration and repairs completed on a cyclical basis. These include painting & decorating of all communal areas and common hallways, repairs to fencing and paths, washing down of UPVC items and clearance of rainwater goods.

Cyclical maintenance of properties should normally take place every 6 years for each property.

**3.211 Properties Included:** Properties normally included will be all properties which have not been decorated for at least 6 years

**3.212 Properties Excluded:** properties which will probably not be included will be; properties due for major improvement, HAL properties which are short life, properties not wholly owned by Vectis or excluded by nature of current management or lease agreement.

**3.213 Placing Orders** - A schedule of properties to be included in the cyclical maintenance programme shall be drawn up by the PSO/PSM. This list shall be compiled with the input of PSA following a review of the most recent Estate Inspection report.

The list of properties for cyclical maintenance shall be drawn up around the last quarter of the financial year for work to commence in the second quarter of the financial year to take advantage of the summer months. This is taken from the cyclical programme.

The PSM shall select the appropriate contractors to carry out the cyclical maintenance and seek quotations in accordance with Section 5. Contractors will be drawn for the Approved List of Contractors. Works orders will be issued to cover each group of properties and payment will be made for works 100% complete, following an inspection by the PSM/PSO. At the end of the process, satisfaction surveys will be undertaken by the PSA.

**3.22 PLANNED MAINTENANCE– see separate Planned Maintenance Policy for full procedure**

Providing something new or upgrading what is already there, these are large replacement items such as kitchen renewals, windows replacements, retiling roofs, etc. They enhance the quality and value of the building and improve the living conditions in the properties. Examples of replacement/ improvement items and possible life spans include the following;

Item	Life span
Kitchen units	20 years
Bathroom fittings/suite	30/years
Roof	55 years
Central heating boilers	15 years
UPVC windows	30 years

**3.221 Properties included:** all Vectis owned properties or properties which Vectis have a lease or management agreement obligation which place an all-encompassing maintenance responsibility.

**3.222 Properties Excluded:** properties which are short life, properties not wholly owned by Vectis or excluded by nature of current management or lease agreement.

**3.223 Placing Orders-** List of properties that require improvement shall be co-ordinated by the PSM. They shall seek the views the PSO and PSA. The final list shall be subject to approval by the Board with reference to annual budget for improvement.

The list shall be finalised in the last quarter of the financial year with for works to commence in the following financial year. This will generally be based on the Stock Condition Survey 2014 but linked with works being undertaken on a cyclical basis.

The PSM shall select the appropriate contractor to carry the cyclical maintenance using the set procedures to select the contractor (see section 5)

**3.23 GAS SERVICING - see separate Gas Safety Policy for full procedure**

Vectis HA has a legal responsibility to undertake an annual safety check by an approved person on all gas pipework and gas appliances owned by them, keep records of all inspection defects and actions taken and make such records available to tenants. This record is known as the LGSR.

**3.231 Properties included:** All Vectis owned properties or properties which Vectis have a lease or management agreement obligation which place all maintenance responsibilities on Vectis HA.

**3.232 Properties Excluded:** Properties that do not have a gas supply and shared ownership properties.

**3.233 Placing Orders-** A single order is placed annually with the gas servicing contractor that is invoiced on a monthly basis throughout the year. This will be 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the total annual contract sum.

The PSA shall co-ordinate the contractor and keep records of all gas servicing. The PSA shall instruct and monitor the gas service contractor in line with the Vectis HA procedures for contracting and gas servicing.

### 3.23 SERVICE CONTRACTS

In addition to gas servicing annual maintenance contracts should be entered into at the end of the manufacturer's guarantee period. Testing and servicing should be carried by appropriately qualified staff in accordance with statutory requirements and manufactures instructions

Items to have maintenance contracts should include; (this list is not exclusive or exhaustive)

- Fire equipment
- Lifts
- Laundry equipment
- Portable electrical appliances
- Communal lighting
- Water systems & pumps
- Door entry systems

**3.241 Properties included:** All Vectis properties in which these items might be present

**3.242 Properties excluded:** Any property in which Vectis manages but a superior landlord or agent has claimed official responsibility for the maintenance of the particular item.

**3.243 Placing Orders-** the PSA shall instruct contractors (see section 5). The PSA will also monitor the performance of the contractors and ensure records are kept that show evidence that the maintenance has been carried out.

### 3.3 RESPONSIVE MAINTENANCE

#### 3.31 DAY TO DAY

Whilst these repairs should not comprise more than 30% of maintenance budget, in terms of actual work and contact with tenants this is the most important aspect of maintenance in particular and to wider extent the what many residents would feel is the most important service provided by Vectis.

Day to day repairs are those repairs that cannot be deferred and in the most part are brought to the attention of Vectis by tenants or through Estate Inspections.

**3.311 Properties included;** All Vectis properties

**3.312 Properties excluded:** Properties which Vectis manage but there is management agreement and/or lease agreement which give maintenance obligations to another landlord.

#### 3.32 VOIDS – see separate Void Policy for “key to key” procedure

These are repairs works carried out to any of our properties which has been permanently vacated by the current residents/ tenants. Work to be carried out in our ‘void properties’ should be of such a nature to make the property desirable to prospective tenants and/or nominees.

##### **3.321 Standard void**

The following are the minimum standards that Vectis will ensure that all our void properties prior to letting;

- Proper water supply & safe means of heating
- A sink unit bath and/ or shower
- Fully functioning WC and waste water
- Safe electrical supply and appropriate number of electrical sockets
- Safe electric and/or gas points to which a fire or heater can be connected
- Ensure gas service certificate is provided (where appropriate)
- Windows that open and close effectively and no cracked/broken panes
- All essential fitting and fixtures in a good state of repair and operating properly
- At least one lock on the entrance door
- In good decorative order ( this can be done by issuing decoration vouchers)
- All void works shall take no more than 10 working days to complete

### **3.322 Major void works**

All void works which include the replacement of at least 2 major components will be considered 'major voids works'.

In these cases the works will take approximately 4 weeks to complete

### **3.33 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NOTICES**

These are statutory notices served on the association by the Environmental Health Dept of the Isle of Wight Council. In responding to notices the initial responsibility shall be with the PSM. The PSM shall;

- Assess work to be done (including inspection if necessary).
- Issues work order in line with section 4 of the maintenance procedure.
- Write to the local authority before and after the works order is issued. Initial letter to the local authority should be within 10 working days (unless the notice requires a shorter period).
- A record of the notice and response should be kept centrally on the property file on Omni.

If the works to be carried are complex, expensive or planned the PSM shall invoke the major works procedure.

The PSM shall write the local authority advising of the nature of the works and indicating expected completion date and/or whatever action has been decided by the association.

The PSM shall keep in constant contact with the relevant officers in the local authority and always keeping record of meetings and/or telephone conversations.

It is important to note that Vectis HA intentions is to ensure minimum disruption to our residents and ensure that there is no adverse confrontation with the local authority but rather an agreed plan of action.

### **3.34 AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS – see separate Aids and Adaption Policy**

These are adaptations or aids required improve the lives of people of disabilities. For Vectis to provide an aid and/or adaptation the following must be met,

- A tenant of the association and or a member of the tenant's household who normally lives with the tenant.
- Registered disabled
- Have written support from a medical consultant and/or an Occupational Therapist.

Vectis HA reserves the right to expand or reduce these criteria on appraisal of individual cases by the senior management team or board.

#### Procedure for dealing with Aids & adaptations

- PSA shall advise tenant that application is under review (by letter & telephone).
- PSA shall either request if not already received a written request of the nature of work required from the tenant's occupational therapist and/or doctor. PSA shall pass this information to PSM.
- PSM shall investigate possibility of either internal funding or seek external funding from the relevant local authority.
- PSM shall visit residents home to carry out survey and explain to resident what the work involves including any likely disruption.
- Prepare specifications and in line with section 5 issue works to relevant contractor.
- Advise tenants of likely start date, keep tenants informed of the progress of work especially if the tenants not currently living in the property (e.g. in hospital).
- Advise FD of any likely service cost (e.g. passenger lift) so if necessary levy for the service charge can be added to the rent.
- On completion of the work inspect the quality of the work (preferably jointly with the occupational therapist), ensure the aid/adaptation is working properly.
- Ensure the tenant is satisfied with the work.
- Set up a service contract if appropriate.

#### 3.35 MAJOR RESPONSIVE REPAIRS

Any responsive repairs that will be expected to cost in excess of £2000 will be considered a 'major repair'. All decisions regarding major repairs should be taken after a full appraisal including, possible deferment of the work, planned maintenance, effect on residents and long-term nature of the scheme.

In the absence of a pre-agreed schedule of rates with an approved list of contractors any repair work which is expected to cost over the following amounts will require a number of different quotations.

- Up to £5000 will require a minimum of 1 quotation.
- Over £5000 and less than £20,000 will require a minimum of 2 quotations.
- Over £20,000 and less than 100,000 will require a minimum of 3 quotations.
- Over £100,000 full tender required. Minimum of 3 contractors invited.

If a repair is of particularly urgent nature, such as affecting health & safety of the residents, the PSM will be expected to approach the CE for his/her authority to issue work orders in exceptional cases without the quotation process.

## **SECTION 4**

### **4.1 REPORTING REPAIRS**

Repairs in the first instance will most likely be reported by tenants and/or residents. Repairs can also be notified by members of Vectis staff, contractors, and any other concerned party such as a neighbour. Repairs can be notified in as many ways as possible, in order to make our services more accessible, but repairs will most probably been notified by telephone, in person in our offices, by letter, fax or email.

All repairs will be logged onto our computer system using the maintenance requests module by the member of staff taking the report. The PSA will review the unactioned maintenance requests and raise repair orders. The PSA will also allocate a priority to the repair and in line with the maintenance procedure raise a works order to a contractor or pass the maintenance request to the MS for a pre-inspection or his/her opinion of the repair and update the appropriate screen in the management system accordingly.

The PSA will then arrange for authorisation of the order in conjunction with the signing limits outlined in 4.3 (below) so that it can be print and sent to the Contractor for action.

### **4.2 REPAIR TARGETS**

Vectis use two agreed priorities:

Priority 1 – works completed within 24 hours (emergencies) – 95% target

Priority 2 – works completed with 10 working days (an average of 5 working days) – 90%

Examples of work order priorities are shown in appendix 1

The PSA must when receiving a maintenance request determine whether the request is the responsibility of the Association, if it is, then they must inform the Resident and/or any other concerned party what priority the work order is and a possible start date.

### **4.3 ISSUING WORKS ORDERS**

Works orders will be raised by relevant staff

(i.e. PSM/PSO/PSA) and authorised prior to being issued to the relevant contractor. Contractors can in the first instance be informed of repair over the telephone but a hard copy of the works order must be emailed to the contractor within 24 hours of the initial telephone order.

The following table shows that works order can be raised by all staff however, they can only be printed for issue following correct authorisation by the following staff

Officer	Raise repair Order	Invoice authorisation
PSA	No limit on est. cost	None
PSO	No limit on est. cost	Up to £5000
PSM	No limit on est. cost	£250,000
Chief Executive & Director of Finance (in CEO's absence only)	No limit on est. cost	No limit

#### 4.4 POST & PRE INSPECTION

##### ***Pre-inspection***

The following are conditions which it would be expected that the PSO/PSM would pre-inspect a potential repair;

- All major repairs
- All planned works including cyclical, improvement works and major repairs
- All void works
- Any work which is complex or of a technical nature.
- Any work required in the home of a vulnerable tenant/resident who may require further assistance
- Where the repair is recurring
- Where there are threats of legal action

##### ***Post inspection***

And the following are the conditions which it would be expected that PSO/PSM would post inspect repairs carried out;

- All planned works over £1000
- All day to day responsive works over £1000
- 5% of day to day responsive works

#### **4.5 VARIATION ORDERS**

Contractors will often have to change the terms of an original works order upon assessing a repair whilst on site. This is known as a 'variation order'. The contractor will be expected to inform Vectis at the earliest possibility of the need to vary a works order. This can be done by telephoning the office and speaking to a member of the Property Services Team.

Depending on terms of the contract, contractors will be expected to confirm all variation requests and detail these on subsequent invoices.

The PSA will find the order on the system and select variation order, the order will be updated with the variation information and passed to the PSM for authorisation.

#### **4.6 MONITORING PERFORMANCE**

Vectis will constantly monitor the performance of all our contractors. Monitoring will be carried out by,

- Post inspection of completed repairs and recorded in the QS points assessment form on the system
- Telephone/text survey of at least 60% of all residents/ tenants whom have repairs carried out in their homes and responses recorded on the Omni/Deeplake system
- Tenant feedback and satisfaction forms information entered onto the planned maintenance satisfaction spreadsheet.

The PSM and other relevant staff shall have periodic meetings with contractors to discuss matters arising from the contract such as invoice, quality of work, response times, etc.

### **SECTION 5**

#### **5.1 CONTRACTORS**

Vectis shall maintain a list of approved contractors. Vectis shall make a concerted effort to enter into the following arrangements with contractors;

### ***Partnering arrangement***

Contractors will expect to become partners with Vectis where appropriate. This will mean a relationship with how works orders are issued, level and amount of work issued to a particular contractor, how invoice are settled, monitoring contractor performance, etc. Vectis will value the works based on the National Housing Federation Schedule of Rates, version 6.2

### ***Tendered contract***

Contractors will provide a price to complete works and will deliver these in accordance with a specification/schedule of works.

### ***Specialist contractors***

Vectis will also shortlist contractors for specialist work such as gas maintenance, fire equipment maintenance, void repairs. Whilst Vectis may engage the services of large sometimes national contractors for specialist work, Vectis may also seek smaller, local contractors who have the necessary skills, expertise and ability to carry out the work required of them. These contractors will expect to become partners with Vectis and Vectis can use its bargaining position to ensure levels of work and consistency and quality of work, i.e. a small electrical company might carry out all Vectis planned works as a part of a 'semi internal planned team'.

### ***Quotations***

In the absence set schedule of rates with our contractors it will be necessary for Vectis to seek quotations from contractors for works above a certain amount, as set out in section 3.35;

- Over £5000 and less than £20,000 will require 2 quotations from suitable contractors.
- Between £20,000 and £100,000 will require 3 quotations from suitable contractors.

If a repair is of particular urgent nature, such as affecting health & safety of the residents, the PSM has authority to issue work orders in exceptional cases without the quotation process.

## **5.2 APPROVED LIST**

All contractors must possess the following;

- Valid employers and public liability insurance
- Relevant qualifications and official registrations such as, Gas Safe registrations for gas servicing contractors
- Contact details – please see appendix 2 for contractor contact list & See Code of Practice for Maintenance Contractors in appendix 5

### 5.3 MONITORING CONTRACTORS

The following tools will be used to monitor performance of contractors. Vectis will reserve the right to end contracts of under performing contractors (within the terms of contract). Vectis in the initial instances will seek to ensure that under performing contractors improve their performance and provide support to the contractors to enable them do this. Vectis will set fair but firm standards for our contractors. Tools to be used will include;

- Post inspection
- Telephone survey
- Periodic joint meetings
- Tenants' feedback

## SECTION 6

### 6.1 INVOICING

Contractors will be expected to invoice within 4 weeks of work being completed. It will not be acceptable for contractors to batch up invoices over an unacceptable period of time (such as over and above 2 months after work has been completed) as this makes it difficult for Vectis to verify the work carried out and causing unnecessary pressure on Vectis's finance procedures.

Contractors shall ensure that invoices detail the works order number, date of start, date of completion and nature of works undertaken. All invoices will be entered onto Omni to ensure that financial reporting is accurate and the necessary reporting is available.

The PSM shall check all invoices adhere to Vectis HA's financial procedures prior to passing to the FD or CE for final authorisation.

### 6.2 PAYMENT OF INVOICES

Vectis will endeavour to pay invoices within 28 days of receipt of the invoice on the first day of each month.

### 6.3 QUERIES

The PSM/PSO shall investigate all queries on in

**Appendix 1 Repair Priority List**

	<b>COMPLETED WITHIN 24 HOURS</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Doors	External door if the only one and jammed shut, or if external doors cannot be made secure. Includes faulty locks where not secure.	1
Drains	Blocked sewers / main drains, soil pipe (not gulleys).	1
Electrical	Complete failure of plug/lighting circuits or total loss of electrical supply.	1
Fire Damage	Assessment.	1
Gas	All gas leaks to be reported to Transco immediately. Leaks to internal gas service repaired by Vectis following Transco's attendance.	1
Heating	Boiler malfunction	1
Water Leaks	Pipes/cylinders/tanks/cisterns - serious leaks and bursts or running taps.	1
Windows	If broken, boarded up the same day. Faulty locks, if cannot be secured.	1
WC Pan	If blocked. However, if another toilet is available in the property, a blocked WC is not an emergency.	1
Ceilings	Fallen down (survey required)	1
Garages	Doors if jammed and cannot be used.	1
Hot Water	Loss of hot water.	1
Manholes	If covering is broken or in dangerous condition.	1
Overflows	If water running.	1
Pipes	If frozen or broken.	1
Roof	Leaks (subject to inclement weather conditions)	1
Staircase	Faulty stair treads, handrails or banisters.	1
Taps	If running.	1
Boilers	Minor repairs.	1
Toilet Seats	Broken - elderly and disabled only.	1

COMPLETED WITHIN 14 DAYS		
Item	Description	Priority
Doors	Entrance doors if jammed shut and another is available.	2
Glass	Broken windows (subject to availability of glass)	2
Gulleys	If blocked or damaged.	2
TV Aerials	Communal Systems Only	2
Windows	Latches/stays if difficult to secure.	2
Basins	If leaking or cracked.	2
Cisterns	If loose, handle broken, overflowing or leaking.	2
Electrical Faults	Minor repairs if not hazardous.	2
Fencing	Damaged - Urgent repairs (ie storm damage) or to remove hazard if no repair required.	2
Garage Door	Locks if faulty but not jammed shut.	2
Gutters / Downpipes	If blocked.	2
Lights	Broken pendants etc, unless in bathroom or kitchen where priority 1	2
Radiators	If some only are cold (not whole system)	2
Stopcock	If sticking.	2
Taps	Dripping.	2
Walls / Floors	Defects / severe dampness (survey required).	2
Ceiling / Wall Cracks	Where minor works required.	2
Floor Covering	Repairs / Replace.	2
Gutters / Downpipes	Repair / renew if required.	2
Locks and handles.	Repairs to locks or door handles not working.	2
Sanitary Ware	Replacement if broken (unless WC pan).	2

Windows / Doors	Easing / adjusting / minor repairs.	2
Garages	Repairs	2
Kitchen	Repair units / cupboards.	2
Paths	Repairs and trip hazards	2
Airbricks & Vents	Repairs / Renew.	2
Outbuildings	Repairs	2
Plasterwork	Minor repairs.	2
Wall Tiles	Repair / Replacement.	2

**Appendix 2** Approved Contractor  
Contact List

Contractor Name	Trade	Telephone No.	Fax	E mail

**Appendix 3** Standing Orders

<b>Officer</b>	<b>Raise a repair Order</b>	<b>Authorise a repair order</b>	<b>Invoice authorisation</b>
PSA	No limit on estimated cost	£2500	None
PSO	No limit on estimated cost	£10000	£2500
PSM	No limit on estimated cost	£500,000	£250,000
FD	No limit on estimated cost	£1,000,000	£500,000
CE	No limit on estimated cost	Unlimited	In line with standing orders

**Appendix 4** Works Order Monitoring  
Form

Name & address	Telephone No.	Brief description of works & priority	Contractor	Dated ordered	Expected completion date	Customer comments

## CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MAINTENANCE CONTRACTORS

### Introduction

The Code of Conduct (The Code) outlines Vectis Housings's expectations of overall service delivery where a Contractor is employed to undertake work on its behalf.

Whilst we recognise its duty of care to all its appointed contractors, and their employees, whilst undertaking work on its behalf, contractors are expected to reciprocate this duty.

### Aims

This code has been prepared to:

- ensure that contractors and tradesmen are aware of the standards required of them when accepting orders for carrying out work on our behalf;
- promote reliability, efficiency and best practice;
- bring about, and retain, the confidence and trust of residents;
- ensure good practice and the highest possible standards of workmanship and customer service generally;
- maintain our reputation as a provider of excellent service to its residents.

### Context

The Code forms part of the agreement between Vectis Housing Association Ltd and the contractor, for works and services carried out by the contractor on our behalf.

Any queries the contractor may have regarding the requirements contained within the Code should be taken up with an officer in the our Property Services Department.

Our staff and its appointed contractors are expected to deal with tenants promptly and courteously, and to show patience, understanding, and sensitivity at all times.

### THE CODE

#### 1. Access to premises

- 1.1 No work will be expected to proceed without proper authorised access to the dwelling concerned.
- 1.2 Visits should be at reasonable times, except in the case of emergencies. This would normally exclude visits before 8.00 am or after 5.00 pm or weekends, except by prior agreement with the tenant.

- 1.3 If after a reasonable period of time the Contractor fails to obtain access, or otherwise fails to receive a response from the tenant, the Contractor should endeavour to make personal contact to arrange access.
- 1.4 If personal contact is not obtained, our maintenance staff must be notified. Officers will then take responsibility for arranging access to the property concerned.
- 1.5 Except in the case of emergencies, or by prior agreement, tenants must be given adequate, and not less than 24 hours, notice before commencing work.
- 1.6 When access arrangements have been successfully negotiated with the tenant, the contractor must ensure the time scale is in accordance with the given response time on the works order.
- 1.7 All appointments made between the tenant and the contractor must be kept. Punctuality is a pre-requisite. If failure to keep the appointment is unavoidable, contractors must ensure that early contact is made to:
  - a) apologise to the tenant;
  - b) explain the reason for failing to attend;
  - c) establish a revised mutually convenient appointment.

**If the tenant fails to keep an appointment without prior notification, the contractor should contact us at the first available opportunity.**

## **2. Identification**

- 2.1 All contractors are required to carry appropriate identification, which shows clearly their name, photograph, and the name and telephone number of their employer.

## **3. Behaviour/Conduct**

- 3.1 Contractors must be polite to tenants, leaseholders and Association staff alike. They must behave in a proper and professional manner at all times. Over familiarity and arguments with tenants are not acceptable behaviour, whatever the provocation. Racist or sexist remarks or insinuation thereof by any contractor, will result in their being removed from our Approved Register.

**We expect our tenants to behave likewise, and any contractor offended by behaviour of the nature described above, is entitled to leave the premises immediately, and report the incident to us.**

- 3.2 Contractors are required to dress in a manner appropriate for their work, and the premises in which they are working.
- 3.3 Special consideration should be shown to those who are elderly, disabled or have other special needs.

3.4 Contractors should explain to the tenant, the work to be carried out and approximately how long it will take.

3.5 Contractors must:

- not smoke on the premises, or work under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- not play or use a radio without the tenant's permission;
- make as little mess and disruption as possible and have regard for tenants' belongings. (See also 5 below.) Whenever possible, work should be limited to one room at a time.
- not use any of the tenant's property or facilities without the tenant's permission:

#### **4. Home standards**

4.1 The standard of people's homes vary, according to their chosen way of life. It is however, important that the quality of workmanship remains high, irrespective of the general state of the property.

4.2 In order to avoid draughts, or loss of heat, contractors should not leave doors and windows open, except with the express permission of the tenant.

#### **5. Protection of dwellings and tenants' effects**

5.1 Contractors must treat the homes of tenants with respect, and ensure that suitable protection is arranged for the customer's property and that delicate or valuable items are removed from the work area. Contractors are expected to move large items of furniture etc., but if breakable or valuable, it is advisable to request the tenant to move them to a safe place.

5.2 Furniture and carpets should be protected by dust sheets where appropriate.

5.3 Damage to plants, trees, paths, etc., should be avoided as far as possible. If some damage is inevitable, this should be discussed and agreed with the tenant and VHA beforehand.

5.4 Power (electricity or gas) may only be used with the tenant's permission. Fair payment, where appropriate, must be offered to the tenant prior to use.

5.5 Any damage to the tenant's property resulting from negligence by the contractor, must be compensated for by the main contractor.

#### **6. Health and Safety**

6.1 The contractor must not cause the tenant's home to become unsafe or insecure at any time whilst work is being undertaken therein.

- 6.2 When working in communal areas, fire exits, staircases, corridors and doorways must be kept clear, and not blocked by the contractor's tools or materials.
- 6.3 If, during the course of work, the property becomes dangerous or unsafe, the contractor must ensure that adequate warning is given. Particular attention is to be given where young children or elderly are present. We must be notified immediately.
- 6.4 Neither plant nor materials should be left in dangerous or inconvenient places at the property, particularly where children are present, and agreement should be reached with the tenant on the placing of such items. Ladders must be removed overnight.
- 6.5 Substances which are likely to give rise to risk to residents or visitors, cause offensive odours, or require temporary evacuation of the work area, we must be notified before being taken to the property.
- 6.6 All substances must be used in accordance with manufacturers and suppliers' health and safety information, stored safely whilst on the premises, and removed at the end of each working day.
- 6.7 Contractors should have access to adequate first aid provision at all times.
- 6.8 All "hot works" must be undertaken in accordance with good practice.
- 6.9 All scaffolds should be erected in accordance with TG.20:13 and tagged with weekly scaffold checks undertaken. Where ladders are fixed to a scaffold these should be protected when not in use by a ladder guard. Foam protection and fans should be used in pedestrian access ways.
- 6.10 Where a required, RAMS must be issued to the Property Services Officer/Manager prior to works commencing and a copy maintained on site.
- 6.11 All contractors must comply with their written Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and a copy of this must be held by each operative.

## **7. General**

- 7.1 If particular parts are required for a job but are not readily available, the tenant should be advised accordingly and given some indication of the likely delay. Officers of the Association must be kept informed of progress on a regular basis, as a further means of keeping tenants informed. It may be necessary to make new access arrangements for a later date.
- 7.2 Tenants sometimes request additional work to be undertaken whilst the contractor is at the property. This is not normally allowed, but in the event of an emergency the contractor should use common sense in such circumstances. Otherwise, we must be contacted before proceeding.

Additional work may be undertaken if:

- a) The tenant has personally made the request to VHA, either by telephone or in writing (letter, email or fax);

- b) We have given approval;
  - c) The work does not interfere with the contractor's present work schedule.
- 7.3 Contractors are not allowed to carry out "private works" for residents without the express approval of VHA.

## **8. Leaving the property**

- 8.1 When the order has been completed, the contractor **must** ensure that the tenant is satisfied.
- 8.2 Reconnection and testing of the customer's services, such as water, gas and electricity is to be undertaken at the end of each day throughout the duration of the work period, if any have been disconnected for the purpose.
- 8.3 If it has not been possible to complete the work, the contractor is required to ensure that the property is safe, and proper arrangements made for the work to be completed.
- 8.4 All dust, waste material, and other rubbish should be removed from inside, and outside, the property at the end of each working day.

## **9. Failure to comply with The Code of Conduct**

**Where contractors are found to repeatedly breach this Code of Conduct without having reasonable mitigating circumstances, the contractor will be suspended from working with the Association for a period of 3 months. If further instances of breaching the Code are found, the contractor will be removed from the our Approved List.**

**Any queries concerning the content of this Code should be addressed to the VHA Property Services Department.**

## INCLUSION ON APPROVED LIST

For inclusion on the Vectis HA approved contractor list the following must be met;

**References** – the Association reserves the right to take up references for any of our contractors before issuing any work. References can include;

- Bank references
- Trade references
- Previous / current clients

**Legal requirement** - Contractors will be expected to satisfy all legal requirements such as;

- Current tax certificates (as current legislation dictates, such as 741, IP or S)
- Relevant membership or registration such as Gas Safe registration for gas servicing contractors or NICEIC for electrical contractors.

**Insurance** - Contractor will be expected to have relevant insurance;

- Public liability insurance to cover £10,000,000
- Employer's liability insurance
- Other relevant insurance e such as insurance for and other documentation for contractor vehicles, etc.

**Policies & Procedures** - The association will be expect that our contractors have the following relevant policies

- Health & safety policy
- Equal opportunities policy (towards organisation employment practices and contact with general public)
- Data Protection policy

## REPAIRS PROCESS

**Works orders** - Works will be issued to the contractor via works order, which is an official pre printed form which contains details of

- Specification of works required
- An official order number
- Address of the property
- Where applicable the tenant's telephone number
- Any known arrangements for access

Works orders will in most part be emailed over to the contractor. Works orders can also be posted or collected from the office by the contractor's representative.

### **Emergency works**

In the case of emergency works instructions may be given to the contractor over the telephone with the intention that they will attend to the repair within 24 hours (or as agreed on the telephone). An official works order will then follow in the usual manner.

### **Execution of work**

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that plant, materials and labour will be available to undertake the work at the arranged time, or to immediately seek approval of tenants and the Contract Administrator as soon as it becomes apparent that they are unable to undertake the work at the appointed time.

### **Access**

Wherever possible, work should be carried out or access obtained to premises when the tenant or representative is present. Any other arrangement for key holding or unaccompanied access should be discouraged, or if absolutely necessary, kept to a minimum. Work should be carried out where ever possible during office hours except obviously in emergencies.

In the event of tenant breaking arrangements or refusing access, the MS must be informed as soon as possible. Association staff will accompany contractors to a call if necessary.

### **Quality**

It is taken as given that any work undertaken by a contractor must meet acceptable standards of the trade in question. The association will constantly monitor the performance of all contractors. (See below)

### **Variation Orders**

If there is a significant addition to work specified on the works order the contractor must seek authority from the PSM/PSO before carrying out such work. An additional works order may be issued or the initial works order cancelled and another works order covering the additional work issued.

### **Loss of Power, Heat, Water, Sanitation, etc**

Should work in a tenant's home involve loss of power, heat, water, sanitation or other such services, then the contractor should not leave site until these are restored at the end of a working day unless there has been a pre arranged agreement otherwise with the tenant and the association.

### **Voids/ Abandoned Property**

Abandoned property from voids may only be removed by contractors with the written permission from the Association.

### **Confidentiality**

Particular note must be taken to instruct operatives not to involve themselves in discussion with tenants, or others, of matters that may contravene reasonable requirements of the confidentiality concerning the association's business or concerning other tenants, other properties or other contractors.

### **Monitoring**

The PSM will retain the prerogative to visit at any time to inspect work in progress and will have the authority to reject any material or performance as sub standard. Inspections will be made at the discretion of the PSM and any necessary comment will be passed to the contractor as soon as possible.

The PSM will respect the position of the contractor's workforce and their management and will not expect to countermand instructions given to the workforce by the contractors without consultation with the appropriate manager.

However, the Association reserves the right to order work to be stopped at any time and contractor personnel ordered to leave site.

The PSM will make themselves available whenever possible to meet contractors on site to discuss problems

### **Disputes/Complaints**

Any complaint arising from a dispute in any form between the tenant and the contractor must be referred immediately to the PSM. If for any reason the contractor feels unable to undertake specified work on the Association property the PSM must be contacted immediately.

If the cause of the dispute is damage to the tenant's property by the contractor, then the contractor will be liable for any compensation payable. If this is disputed then the Association will arbitrate and the Association's decision will be final.

If contractors encounter a particularly difficult or even potential violent situation, they must leave the site immediately and contact the contract administrator.

## **COST AND PAYMENT**

### **Invoice Content**

Invoices should be clearly legible, preferably type written and submitted within two weeks of completing a job. An invoice should contain the following information,

- Contractor's official address, business heading and telephone number
- An invoice number

- Vectis HA works order number
- Address of property attended
- Brief description of work done
- Details of hours worked and hourly rate (if applicable)
- Details of material used and cost (if applicable)
- VAT number and tax point (if applicable)
- VAT separately listed for material and labour (if applicable) ⑦ Gross total including VAT (if applicable)
- Preferably an attached copy of Vectis's works order.

### **Timescale**

The association will undertake to process invoices and settle accounts as soon as possible after submission. Normal period for paying invoice is 28 days.

### **Queries**

Any query concerning the contents of an invoice will be brought to the notice of a contractor as soon as possible to minimise delays in payment

### **Inducements and Gifts**

Any attempt to offer any form of inducement to the association staff to influence placing of orders or payment of costs will result in immediate removal from the Association approved list

The Association will only accept gifts that are minor in nature such as calendars, small gifts of limited value at Christmas. Any gift or hospitality received from a contractor will be recorded and kept in central register, open to inspection.

### **Private Work**

In the event of work undertaken privately for a member of the association staff or their close relatives, such work must be appropriately paid for and receipts issued. The undertaking of such work must be recorded in the register mentioned above.

Any private work undertaken for tenants must be completely separate from the Association, with no responsibility for payment on the Association. Whilst it is the tenant's responsibility to inform the Association of any major work or structural work they wish to carry out to the Association's property, any contractor undertaking such work will be advised to inform the Association before commencing such work.

## **TERMINATION**

In the event of ceasing work for the Association contractors will be required to hand back key, plans, other documents or equipment issued by the Association.

## TENANT INFORMATION LEAFLET: REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

### Introduction – How to use this booklet

The Home Information Manual has been prepared to help you look after your home with the minimum of disruption. It follows consultation with the Association's Tenant Forum, guidance taken from relevant organisations and publications, and experience gained from working with residents over many years.

There are sections on:

- what to do when you require the Association to carry out a repair, and how soon you may expect a visit in that connection;
- whether a particular repair is your responsibility, or that of the Association;
- what to do in the case of an emergency, both during, and outside normal office hours;
- how to avoid some repairs being necessary;
- tips for maintaining your home in good running order; and
- General advice on a variety of related subjects.

**We recommend you keep the manual in an easily accessible place.**

Please remember that we endeavour to provide an excellent service in all that we do for you, and this includes our maintenance service. In order for that to work effectively, however, we do need your help, and we ask you to assist in whatever way you can by following the guidance included in the manual.

Constructive comments on how we can improve our service are always welcome, so please contact us if you have any observations to make.

An ability to monitor our performance is important, and we therefore rely on your completion of the satisfaction section contained at the foot of each works order issued. Any serious problems will be recorded and investigated.

The performance of our contractors is equally important, and we will be asking residents to respond to occasional surveys in this respect following completion of some repairs. If there is any delay in a contractor visiting you (beyond the response times shown in the manual), you should always contact us, so that we can follow this up.

Our own staff may also ask to inspect the work undertaken.

Finally, we hope you find the manual useful. Please tell us if there is anything in it that you do not understand, or if you want any further advice or guidance.

**Let's work together!**

## YOUR HOME INFORMATION

### **Your heating**

Comprehensive instructions on the use of your system are explained in the system manual (a copy of which is included in your home pack). If you have difficulty in understanding the manual and would prefer someone to show you how to use it, please call the Repairs Line and arrangements will be put in hand.

It is a legal requirement that your boiler is serviced annually by a registered Service Engineer. The association arranges this service and you are required to provide access to your property for this purpose.

### **Installing Your TV**

TV sockets have been provided. You are responsible for the supply and installation of the aerial for which there is a lead in the loft space ready for connection.

### **Installing your Telephone**

Telephone points are installed. However, you will need to contact British Telecom to arrange for an exchange line to be connected for your use as and when applicable.

### **Smoke Detectors**

Smoke detectors are fitted in your home. When the battery is running low the unit will emit an intermittent warning bleep. If you have a battery operated only detector, please make sure that the battery is replaced with a new one immediately. Never be tempted to remove the battery, however temporarily, for use elsewhere.

If you have a mains operated detector, a backup battery will ensure continuity of operation in the event of a power failure. However, when the warning bleep is activated, please contact the Association. Do not attempt to remove the battery.

### **Washing Machines**

Hot and cold water feeds and a waste outlet are provided for connection of a washing machine.

### **Extractor Fans**

Are fitted in your bathroom and kitchen

### **Cooker**

Utility points for either a natural gas or electric appliance are provided. A Gas Safe Registered plumber or qualified Electrician will be required to connect a gas/electric appliance and any of your own such appliances fitted will be at your own expense.

### **Washing Lines**

These have been fitted in your back garden. Replacement lines will be your responsibility (except communal areas).

### **Car Parking**

There is/are car parking space/s allocated to your property. Where there is/are spaces provided for EMERGENCY VEHICLES, these MUST be kept free at all times. Major vehicle repairs must not be carried out within the estate.

## REPAIRS /MAINTENANCE SERVICE

### Contact

#### TELEPHONE THE DIRECT REPAIRS LINE – 520353

(This will connect you directly with STEVE OR SAM)

Officers can be contacted during normal office hours by calling the REPAIRS line – 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.

You must NOT use this number for any other type of call. You will be asked to redial the main line number.

If either of our Officers are not immediately available to answer your call, please leave a message on the answerphone service unique to that line. Your call will be returned as soon as possible.

You can also call into our office in Newport, or write. Repairs should not be reported direct to Contractors.

### **OUT OF HOURS** **EMERGENCY** **REPAIR LINE:**

#### VECTIS OUT OF HOURS ON 520353

This service should only be used in cases of EXTREME difficulty. The Out of Hours Service will arrange to resolve the problem as soon as possible. They will advise you on the help available and if necessary, arrange for a contractor to call and attend to the repair. The operator will not be able to help with non-emergency problems. The service is monitored very closely to ensure it is not abused.

Some problems may seem at the time like an emergency and are extremely inconvenient, such as central heating and immersion heater malfunctioning, especially at weekends. However, in nearly every case there will be an alternative means of overcoming the problem temporarily until the matter can be reported to the Association on the next working day. The Association reserves the right to make a charge for visits that it subsequently considers to have been unnecessary in the circumstances.

An “**emergency**” is defined as a situation where there is an imminent risk of health and safety to the tenant or a third party or that affects the structure of the building adversely. The Association aims to make the problem safe on the day we receive your call. As the aim is to make safe, a temporary repair may be necessary, pending a further visit as soon as possible. The Contractor will not always have the materials to complete the repair in one visit but will return as soon as practicable.

## REPAIRS /MAINTENANCE SERVICE

### REPAIRS/ MAINTENANCE SERVICE

The Association aims to provide an efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service. It undertakes to attend to certain internal repairs and the external decoration and repair to your home. The external repair & painting of all homes is called 'Cyclical Maintenance' and is carried out approximately every five years.

It is in tenants' interests to take every precaution to avoid unnecessary expenditure, since there is only a fixed amount of finance available each year to cover items of repair.

As a tenant you can help in several ways, when reporting a need for repair. You should:

- a) before making the call, ensure that the repair is a genuine fault and not something you can easily carry out yourself.
- b) make as clear as possible the precise nature of the problem.
- c) include arrangements for access to the property to avoid contractors making wasted visits. A charge may be made to you if this happens.
- d) notify the Association/or Contractor immediately if you are unable to keep an appointment, otherwise you may also be charged.

### RESPONSE TIMES FOR REPAIRS

The Association will ensure that urgent and important repairs are carried out as a matter of priority, in so far as these are accepted as our responsibility. However, if there are some special circumstances that make you feel the repair should be carried out more quickly than the given time, then please let us know. You have the right to complain if repairs are not responded to within the periods specified below. The complaints procedure is covered in the Tenants Handbook.

The maximum target times from the reporting of the repair to the time the Contractor attends your property to assess or carry out the repair are as follows: (Note: category is recorded on your copy of the Repair Works Order)

CATEGORY	PERIOD OF RESPONSE
E1	24 Hours or less from time reported
R1	10 working days (average of 5)

## RESPONSIVE REPAIRS CATAGORIES

COMPLETED WITHIN 24 HOURS		
E1	Doors	External door if the only one and jammed shut, or if external doors cannot be made secure. Includes faulty locks where not secure.
E1	Drains	Blocked sewers / main drains, soil pipe (not gulleys).
E1	Electrical	Complete failure of plug/lighting circuits or total loss of electrical supply.
E1	Fire Damage	Assessment.
E1	Gas	All gas leaks to be reported to Transco immediately. Leaks to internal gas service repaired by Vectis following Transco's attendance.
E1	Heating	Boiler malfunction
E1	Water Leaks	Pipes/cylinders/tanks/cisterns - serious leaks and bursts or running taps.
E1	Windows	If broken, boarded up the same day. Faulty locks, if cannot be secured.
E1	WC Pan	If blocked. However, if another toilet is available in the property, a blocked WC is not an emergency.
E1	Ceilings	Fallen down (survey required)
E1	Garages	Doors if jammed and cannot be used.
E1	Hot Water	Loss of hot water.
E1	Manholes	If covering is broken or in dangerous condition.
E1	Overflows	If water running.
E1	Pipes	If frozen or broken.

E1	Roof	Leaks (subject to inclement weather conditions)
E1	Staircase	Faulty stair treads, handrails or banisters.
E1	Taps	If running.
E1	Boilers	Minor repairs.
E1	Toilet Seats	Broken - elderly and disabled only.

<b>COMPLETED WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS (AVERAGE OF 5 DAYS)</b>		
R1	Doors	Entrance doors if jammed shut and another is available.
R1	Glass	Broken windows (subject to availability of glass)
R1	Gulleys	If blocked or damaged.
R1	TV Aerials	Communal Systems Only
R1	Windows	Latches/stays if difficult to secure.
R1	Basins	If leaking or cracked.
R1	Cisterns	If loose, handle broken, overflowing or leaking.
R1	Electrical Faults	Minor repairs if not hazardous.
R1	Fencing	Damaged - Urgent repairs (i.e. storm damage) or to remove hazard if no repair required.
R1	Garage Door	Locks if faulty but not jammed shut.
R1	Gutters / Downpipes	If blocked.
R1	Lights	Broken pendants etc., unless in bathroom or kitchen where priority 1
R1	Radiators	If some only are cold (not whole system)
R1	Stopclock	If sticking.
R1	Taps	Dripping.
R1	Walls / Floors	Defects / severe dampness (survey required).
R1	Ceiling / Wall Cracks	Where minor works required.
R1	Floor Covering	Repairs / Replace.

R1	Gutters / Downpipes	Repair / renew if required.
R1	Locks and handles.	Repairs to locks or door handles not working.
R1	Sanitary Ware	Replacement if broken (unless WC pan).
R1	Windows / Doors	Easing / adjusting / minor repairs.
R1	Garages	Repairs
R1	Kitchen	Repair units / cupboards.
R1	Paths	Repairs and trip hazards
R1	Airbricks & Vents	Repairs / Renew.
R1	Outbuildings	Repairs
R1	Plasterwork	Minor repairs.
R1	Wall Tiles	Repair / Replacement.

## REPAIRS /MAINTENANCE SERVICE

### Tenants Maintenance Responsibilities

You are under a general implied responsibility to use the premises in a tenant-like manner: You must take proper care of your home.

You are responsible for:

- The internal decoration of the property.
- Maintenance of your garden area in clean and tidy condition. Unwanted furniture, appliances and domestic refuse must not be allowed to accumulate.
- The replacement of broken fixtures or fittings if damaged by you or members of your household, such as electrical fittings, locks, keys, door furniture, glazing, doors, windows, WC pans and seats, wash-hand basins etc.
- Keeping clean all sanitary ware and fittings and drains and replacing sealant around baths, worktops and wash hand basins.
- Cleaning chimneys (if applicable) when necessary
- Cleaning windows
- Cleaning & maintaining smoke detectors by checking weekly and fitting new batteries (if not mains connected)
- Replacement of light bulbs, including fluorescent tubes.
- Clearing blocked sinks and baths when blocked by your domestic waste.
- Keeping bin areas clean and tidy.
- Replacing washing lines (communal washing areas excepted).

In short, you must do the little jobs about the home which a tenant might reasonably be expected to do. You must, of course, not damage the house wilfully or negligently and see that your family and guests do not either. If they do, you must repair it.

You are liable to pay the cost of any work under the above headings which the Association arranges at your request, or otherwise by default. Moreover, should you fail to meet your obligations in these respects it may well constitute neglect of the property and may lead to more costly repairs at a later date for which the Association may not accept responsibility.

The Association insures the building you are living in, but not your belongings. We **strongly recommend** that you obtain contents insurance. A good contents insurance policy will cover you if you are burgled or if something you own gets damaged. This type of policy will often cover things like the contents of your freezer if there is a power cut.

The Association does not take responsibility for equipment or fittings installed at your own expense.

## REPAIRS /MAINTENANCE SERVICE

### Co-operation with Contractors

In return for the foregoing, we ask you to:

- provide access or make arrangements for access to be given by an adult
- be co-operative about making appointments and to provide 24 hours notice if you really must cancel
- clear the area of work of any belongings (contractors may be willing to help you with any heavy furniture)
- keep your children away from the work area and from the contractor's tools
- if necessary, allow contractors to use your gas, electricity or water (you should come to an arrangement about payment if usage is more than just minor repairs)
- not leave young children on their own while contractors are on site
- fully complete satisfaction section on copy works order provided by contractor when work has been completed

### Satellite Dishes

The Association will not unreasonably refuse permission to erect a dish upon receipt of a written request.

However, there are circumstances where planning permission is also required from the Local Authority, the cost of which will be your responsibility. In these circumstances the Association will with-hold its approval until such time as you have acquired the appropriate planning permission from the Local Authority.

### Discrimination

The Association applies policies on equal opportunities to all its services. Our contractors are expected to be equal opportunities employers. Our code of

Practice sets out that we will not tolerate any form of racial, sexual or other harassment.

Vectis Housing Association will also not tolerate harassment of its contractors, agents or third parties.

**Disabled**

The Association tries to assist wherever it can with aids and adaptations. **Facilities** If you are experiencing physical difficulties using your home please contact us to discuss whether we can be of assistance. The Association will endeavour to provide adaptations provided the property is suitable for the purpose and there is funding available. In most or certain circumstances, the recommendations of an Occupational Therapist from the Local Authority's Social Services Department may be required.

## HANDY HINTS

### CONDENSATION

If your home appears damp, first check that the problem isn't condensation. Condensation is when warm air touches a cold surface, like a window or wall, and turns into water, condensation can cause mould in your home and on your belongings.

As moisture enters your home and evaporates, condensation may appear on internal windows. To help discourage the formation of condensation, leave windows and doors slightly ajar, but remember to close them if the property is left unattended. Cupboards benefit from the same attention but keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when cooking or washing. After such activities open windows or switch on extractor fans, this will allow excess water vapour to be expelled from your home.

#### **ALLOW AMPLE VENTILATION WHEN COOKING AND DRYING CLOTHES**

Modern buildings are designed to eliminate draughts and do not have the natural ventilation that some older houses have with the chimneys and ill fitting doors and windows. Houses which have been completely sealed by the installation of cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, double-glazing and draught proofing throughout are likely to become moisture traps. Condensation is a ventilation problem.

**By reducing the moisture content of room air you will avoid excessive condensation so:**

- It is essential that kitchens are well ventilated when drying clothes and cooking. If your windows show signs of misting, open a window or switch on an extractor fan. Remember to keep doors closed.
- After bathing, switch on your extractor fan, shut the door and wait until the water vapour has vanished.
- Keep rooms ventilated: Because modern flats and homes are so well insulated, a window or ventilator will need opening for sufficient periods each day; this is especially important if the room is in use. Windows only need to be slightly open. Remember in cold weather an open window wastes heat and money so leaving windows with a 10mm gap should be adequate.
- Keep trickle vents in the open position.
- Windows that are draft stripped will not allow condensation to escape off the glass. The windows will require wiping using a dry cloth before opening. Windows that are not wiped regularly may cause the sill to rot.
- Portable heaters or flue less gas heaters produce large quantities of water vapour and their use is not recommended or necessary, particularly when your home is fitted with central heating.

- Do not use the airing cupboard or radiators to dry clothing. Choose a well-ventilated room instead.
- Allow sufficient gap between walls and large items of furniture to allow a free flow of air between.
- Drying clothes in the winter is difficult, try to use the bathroom with the extractor fan turned on. Keep the door closed; you do not want moist air travelling around your property. If you use a tumble dryer, ensure it is properly vented through an outside wall.
- Do not use the bathroom for a laundry or leave washing soaking in the bath or sink
- Wipe condensation from windows as it occurs

### **In the cold evenings and months provide reasonable heating**

- Try to make sure that all rooms are at least partially heated. Condensation often occurs in unheated and unventilated rooms.
- To prevent condensation keep room surfaces reasonably warm and ventilated. It takes a long time for a cold building structure to warm up. It is better to have a small amount of heat for a long period, than a lot of heat for a short period.
- Houses and flats left unoccupied and unheated during the day get very cold. Whenever possible, it is best to keep heating on, even at a low level.
- In houses the rooms above a heated living room will benefit to some extent from the heat rising through the floor. Unfortunately, in bungalows and some flats this does not happen. Some rooms especially ones with large areas of outside wall are often cold. These rooms are likely to have condensation and therefore require some heating. Even in well-insulated homes, persistent cold weather will require heating to a reasonable temperature to avoid condensation. When living rooms are in use, their temperature should be raised to about 17oC (65oF).
- In general new buildings take a long time before they are fully dried out; while this is happening they need extra ventilation. Normally the first winter in your new home will require more heat than subsequent winters. Allowance should be made for this.

### **EFFLORESCENCE**

Efflorescence is salts coming out of building materials. These leave white deposits on internal and external walls but cause no harm. On external walls the efflorescence will gradually disappear; internal walls can be brushed clean. A water leak could show as persistent efflorescence on internal ways, please report if it reappears.

## **DAMP**

Your property has a damp-proof course to stop rising damp. Make sure that earth and paving is kept a minimum of six inches below this to prevent damp.

Airbricks are also installed to help stop timber floors rotting by allowing air to circulate underneath. Do not block them as they must be kept clear and clean.

If dampness in your home isn't caused by condensation, let the Association know.

## **MOULD GROWTH**

Mould growth normally indicates a moist atmosphere in your home. This gives warning that heating or ventilation needs increasing. Mould that does appear will need careful removal, as well as heat and ventilation to prevent any re-occurrence. Call the Repairs line for advice.

## HEATING

If you use your heating sensibly you can maintain a comfortable house temperature without undue heating bills.

### REMEMBER

- In “vented systems” never suppress the flow of air to your boiler.
- Boilers must be serviced once a year. Vectis will arrange this.
- Never allow the flue to be blocked or obstructed, this is considerably dangerous.
- Occasionally look for signs of water leakage from the system.
- Never leave the central heating switched off for long periods or time in cold weather. Keeping the system turned off can lead to freezing, burst pipes and damage to your home and possessions. If you can, ask a friend to operate the system each day. Otherwise, keep the system turned on, setting the room thermostat to around 10 degrees C (50 degrees F) with the programmer set to provide constant heat. In very cold weather this may not be sufficient to stop the system freezing.
- Report electrical faults in the manner advised by your Association; never be tempted to repair problems yourself.
- If you have a wet system (boiler and radiators), on the side of your radiators, near the top, you will find bleed valves. Be careful not to paint over these because they are used to free trapped air in your system. Your property has been provided with a radiator key for this purpose. However, if you have mislaid it these are available from most local plumber’s merchants at a very low cost. If your system is unvented, **after** bleeding your radiators, it is **IMPERATIVE YOU IMMEDIATELY** check the boiler pressure and top it up accordingly.

If you are unsure about undertaking any of the foregoing procedures, please telephone the maintenance team who will be able to offer advice and if applicable, provide further training.

***Failure to take proper care of your boiler could lead to a potentially dangerous situation arising.***

## ENERGY SAVING

### FUEL ECONOMY

Insulation is built into your property helping to minimise heat loss. Even so, careful use of your heating, hot water and electrical appliances can reduce bills further. Here are a few tips to save you money;

### CENTRAL HEATING

- Most people find 17 degrees C (65 degrees F) a comfortable temperature in a centrally heated house.
- Adjust the time switch to a minimum, especially during the night; people rarely require heating at night. Although it is important to maintain warmth to your individual needs.
- Vary the settings on your room thermostat to suit the time of year. During the summer you may never require additional heating. Even in the winter, if you are working around your home, thermostats can be turned down.
- If you have an electrical system whereby heating is provided by individual storage heaters, these are charged up at night using cheap-rate electricity.
- Always pay considerable attention to other members of your family, although you may be warm, other, and especially old, may not be.
- Drawing curtains early in the evening will save heat, but be careful; curtains that hang over radiators will allow heat to escape out of the window.
- Do not allow temperature to drop below 10 degrees C (50 degrees F) in unheated rooms. Always remember to keep doors closed in unused rooms, otherwise cold air can circulate around your home.

### APPLIANCES

- Turn off electrical units; switch off lights and cooking appliances etc., as soon as they are not needed.
- Small electric fires are expensive to operate so avoid their use if possible.
- Use low energy light bulbs
- Don't keep TV, video and Hi-Fi equipment on standby for long periods

### WASHING MACHINE/FRIDGE/FREEZER

These appliances should be checked regularly for leaks which should be repaired immediately. Any damage arising from such neglect could result in your being invoiced for the cost of the repair. Or, if the repairs are covered by the Association's insurance, you may only be invoiced for the cost of the policy access applicable to the claim.

## SERVICES

### WATER

The underground service pipe supplies water to your home. Upon entry, the pipe goes through a stopcock which is normally located beneath the kitchen sink. It is important that you locate this main stopcock in case of an emergency. All cold taps are fed direct from the rising main.

### SHOWERS

If showers have been provided, ensure that you regularly (monthly) clean the shower head (removing any scale from the tiny pin holes in the head). Failure to do so may cause the shower to cease operating and in extreme cases may require replacement of the shower. If negligence on your part is proved to be the cause, then you will be invoiced for the replacement/repair accordingly.

If a shower curtain has been provided, further replacement curtains will be your responsibility. DO NOT allow children to swing on the shower curtain. The cost of repairing damage arising from such action will be your responsibility.

### REMEMBER

- All stopcocks should be operated at least once a year to keep them in good working order. Pipe joints and water resistant seals should be checked regularly for leaks.
- Do not run the water taps if the pipes are already frozen, you run the risk of emptying the system and rupturing tanks.
- Do not allow water to overflow from the storage tanks or cisterns. Warning (overflow) pipes positioned on the outside walls of your property will alert you to such a problem.
- Do not allow taps to drip. A dripping tap will stain the bath or basin and may result in frozen waste pipes in the winter.
- When fixing carpets, make sure you investigate the location of hidden pipes so you avoid nailing into them. Ask the Association if you are unsure.

### ELECTRICITY

Electricity is supplied to your home through the meter. The cables entering the box are the responsibility of the Electrical Company and must not be tampered with. Cables exiting or “home side” are your Housing Association’s responsibility.

Inside your home there is a Consumer Unit which contains the master switch and individual (miniature) circuit breakers (MCB). Each circuit breaker may have been labelled by the electrician for easy identification. If an MCB is tripped, firstly disconnect the appliance you believe caused the problem then

reset the switch. An MCB that continues to trip indicates faulty circuits; by resetting the MCB you cure a symptom, not the problem. Report the circuit fault in the usual way and if the suspected fault is an appliance either replace or repair before reconnecting.

For extra safety the electrical circuit in your home may be protected by “Residual Current Devices” (except lighting). These are highly sensitive safety devices that cut the current immediately there is an overloading or shorting in the circuit. Individual electrical tools should be protected by plug-in RCDs. Lawn mowers, electrical drills and saws can be considered high risk apparatus and need protecting. Portable RCDs can be found in many DIY shops.

Care must be taken when drilling into walls where cables may be hidden. Use a cable detector, a small hand-held battery powered device for detecting and locating concealed electric cables and metal pipe runs behind walls and under flooring. If you are not confident contact an electrician. ***Electricity is highly dangerous and can kill. Do not undertake any electrical work if you are not suitably qualified.***

## ALWAYS REMEMBER

- Switch off the main switch before attempting any work on an electrical circuit.
- Unplug the appliance you are working on, this isolates the appliance completely.
- Locate the position of your main switches and meter box. Unplug any appliance that has caused an MCB to trip before resetting.
- Never use electrical appliances in the bathroom, the moist atmosphere can cause the unit to short circuit. Built-in wall fires and shaver points where fitted by an experienced electrician are exempt.
- Always use the correct fuses recommended by the manufacturer, never be tempted to use a wrong rating.

## Choose the correct fuse

The cartridge fuses in plugs are there to prevent the wiring to an appliance being overloaded if a fault develops. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES**, use foil/silver paper to over-ride a blown fuse. This can cause a fire in your home.

Many appliances are now sold with plugs and the correct fuse already fitted to the flex. If they are not, the flex usually carries a label which tells you which fuse to use. When you buy a plug, it normally comes with a 13 amp fuse. If the appliance is rated at more than 720 watts, use the same fuse (unless the manufacturer has stated differently). Otherwise change to a 3 amp fuse.

Examples of items needing each type of fuse are:

3 amp fuse (red)	13 amp fuse (brown)
Lamps	Electric fires
Hi-Fi	Toasters
TV (some may need 5 amp)	Kettles
Video	Microwave ovens
Electric Blanket	Irons
Hairdryer	Fan heaters
Power Tools (some may require higher rating fuse)	Freezers
Clocks	Washing machines
Slow cooker	Vacuum cleaner
Tumble Dryer	

### Extension Leads

These are mainly available with two ratings shown below:

Amps	Watts	Appliances
6	1440	Small appliances & light fittings
13	3120	Larger appliances

Ensure the total wattage of the appliances to be connected to an extension lead with a particular current rating (amps) is not more than the figure in the table.

### POWER CUTS

Make things easier for yourself by planning for power cuts. Keep a supply of torches and lamps in a place where you can find them easily in the dark. The use of candles in such circumstances **IS NOT** recommended.

Switch off lights and electrical appliances such as blankets and cookers as they could cause an accident when the power is switched back on.

- Leave the fridge and freezer switches on, but check the fridge drip tray is in position and keep the door closed. The freezer contents should remain unharmed for at least eight hours but it may be an idea to insure your freezer contents anyway.
- Never let children carry candles unless accompanied by an adult. Give them a torch instead.
- When the power is restored remember to extinguish all candles if used.
- Reset all electric clocks, including those which control the central heating.

## GAS

The Association is responsible for the annual servicing of its own gas appliances in your property. However, if you have any other gas appliances, you are recommended to call someone into service them regularly. Gas appliances can be dangerous and many repairs must only be made by a GAS SAFETY Registered gas fitter.

In your gas meter box you will find the emergency shut off valve. No other part of the gas installation should be tampered with. Report defects as before and in an emergency contact **Transco**

### In case of suspected gas leak

- Extinguish all naked flames and cigarettes.
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter. Consult your manual for meter box position.
- Open all windows and doors.
- Call **Transco** using the emergency number, do not be deterred by call out charges, there is no charge for this service.

**TRANSCO: 0800 111 999**

- **Never** operate an electrical switch; the smallest spark could ignite the gas.
- Leave the building. Inform neighbours if you suspect a major leak.

*Locate your gas stop valve*

## PEST CONTROL

If you need to deal with the problem yourself, you can telephone The Environmental Health Department who will provide you with contact details of their Approved Contractors for dealing with the following :

- rats (inside and outside your home)
- bed bugs
- fleas ( indoors)
- mice (indoors)
- wasps (inside and out)
- cockroaches
- some flies

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPT: 01983 823000**

## AVOIDING ACCIDENTS

Most people who have accidents are at home when they happen. You can avoid many accidents by taking a few simple precautions.

Make sure that carpets and rugs are in good condition and secure and that floors are not slippery.

Change lightbulbs as soon as they stop working, so that your home is always well lit.

Be careful on stepladders. Make sure they are steady before you use them and never reach out when you are on one.

Put dangerous things out of reach of children. Don't forget to include cleaning materials and medicines. Never touch electrical items with wet hands.

### Fires

- You can also avoid fires if you are careful:
- Don't leave chip pans on the cooker when you are not in the room
- Make sure cables to electrical appliances are not damaged. Don't overload sockets with too many plugs.
- Don't smoke in bed and always be careful how you put out cigarettes. Make a double check on ashtrays before going to bed to ensure all cigarette ends are out.
- Keep matches out of reach of children
- Use a guard around an naked flame or open fire and never dry washing in front of it
- Close doors in the house at night to prevent a fire spreading
- Keep hallways, stairs and landings clear
- Regularly check your smoke alarm to ensure it is in full working order. In a fire, they can give you valuable extra time to escape

## EMERGENCIES

### FIRE

#### What to do if fire breaks out:

Remember that smoke can kill as well as flames.

***If there is smoke, or whenever the fire is too big to tackle quickly and safely:***

- Shut all doors behind you and call the:

**FIRE SERVICE: 999 or 112**

***If you are trapped in a room:***

- Keep the door shut.
- Put a blanket or carpet at the bottom of the door.
- Go to the window and call for help.

***If you have to escape:***

- Throw a mattress out of the window and lower yourself out of the window – feet first. Hold on to the sill with your hands and drop onto mattress.

### CHIP PAN FIRES

- Switch off the heat
- If using an overhead cooker extractor hood **TURN OFF IMMEDIATELY.**
- Smother the pan with a large lid or damp cloth.
- Do not move the pan or throw water on it.
- **Do not go back to the pan for at least ONE HOUR.**

### ELECTRICAL FIRES

- Switch off at the socket and unplug.
- Never use water whilst the power is on.
- Use a dry powder extinguisher to put out the fire.

### FLOODING

#### Natural Disasters

Emergency services automatically move into operation when an area is flooded or likely to flood through adverse weather or other nautical conditions. Switch off your electricity supply at the mains if it is accessible (make sure your hands are dry). If possible move onto an upper floor and wait for help to arrive.

DRAFT

## KEEPING YOUR HOME SECURE

### HERE ARE SOME USEFUL TIPS

- Avoid leaving a small gap in a window for the cat, it may let an uninvited visitor into your home, contemplate fitting a cat flap (ask the Association for permission first).
- Make sure security locks on windows and doors are locked when not in use. These offer formidable deterrents to burglars. (leave a front-door key where you can get it quickly in an emergency)
- Burglars only need a few minutes, so always secure your home before you go out. Even small trips away from your property require the same procedure.
- Insure your contents to adequately cover loss. Items of significant value should be photographed and insured separately. Electrical equipment will have a serial number stamped on them, make a note of this number.
- Never leave valuable things where they can be seen through the window, or leave ladders and steps visible in gardens.
- Check on all callers. Don't allow anyone into your home unless you know them, or you are sure they are who they say they are.
- When you go out at night, leave a light on and draw the curtains so that it looks as if someone is in. Never leave notes for callers – they tell a thief you are out.
- Consider marking your possessions with an ultraviolet pen. Write your postcode and house number on each item. This can improve your chances of getting your things back if you are burgled. You can also take photographs.

### LEAVING YOUR HOME FOR LONGER PERIODS OF TIME

- Conceal valuables, portable objects and take small items of value to a bank or other similar secure location.
- Stop deliveries of papers; milk etc. before going on holiday. Mounting piles of milk and papers announce an unoccupied property.
- Leave a light on in the evening, but consider time switches for longer periods of time.
- Ask someone you trust to keep an eye on your home when you are away.

**Remember: when your home is unoccupied make it look occupied**

## TAKING CARE OF YOUR HOME

### TROUBLE SHOOTER

All homes need care and attention. Problems may arise and should be reported in the usual way. Some problems however are recurring:

**Q: My front and back doors are difficult to open ?**

**A:** Check your carpet does not obstruct the weather cill, never remove the weather cill if this proves to be the cause.

**Q: Dirty Water enters my washing machine ?**

**A:** When connecting your machine to the waste pipe ensure the waste pipe is higher than the waste connection. This is easily achieved by putting an upward bend in the waste pipe.

**Q: What shall I use to clean my sanitary ware ?**

**A:** Use only recommended cleaning products for baths, showers etc. Special care will be needed when cleaning plastic surfaces. Try to avoid gritty scouring powders, these can scratch your surfaces. Avoid using bleach with other lavatory powders and never leave it standing in stainless steel sinks.

**Q: Why is my WC pan badly stained?**

**A:** Usually due to irregular flushing and/or not regularly cleaning with bleach or other such toilet cleansers available on the market. Scale can build up but this should not be removed with a sharp instrument. Please contact the Repairs Line for advice.

**Q: What shall I use to clean my PVCU (plastic) windows**

**A:** Never use abrasive cleaners on your PVCU units as this will scratch the surface and trap the dirt. Wash the frames with a mild solution of washing up liquid. If any stubborn marks remain, lightly rub with a cream household cleanser. Use this very sparingly, otherwise the shine will be removed from the surface.

**Q: What can I store in the loft ?**

**A:** Your loft is **NOT** normally designed to accommodate items for storage. A small area may have been boarded out for this purpose. Tread very carefully while in the loft in order not to cause damage to the ceiling below. You will be charged for the cost of any such damage. Ensure you do not obstruct any access to pipes and tanks which may be in your loft. Always check before leaving, that you have not accidentally dislodged the insulation or an overflow pipe from a tank.

**Q: What can I do to make my door and window locks easier to open ?**

**A:** At regular intervals, spray WD40 into all the locks and onto any metal contact surfaces around your doors or windows. This will help to keep them operating smoothly.

**Q: How do I unblock my sink ?**

**A:** "Prevention is better than cure", refrain from pouring fat down the sink, this solidifies when cold. Tea leaves can cause a blockage as do large food pieces. Place fats etc, into an empty carton and deposit into your dustbin. If your sink does become blocked try using a flexible rod pushed down the plughole, or use a suction cap to force water up and down the pipe (flexible rods and suction cups are available at Hardware Stores). If your sink has an overflow, block this up with a rag. As a last resort, empty the sink by hand, pour boiling water and soda crystals down the pipe and use the suction cup.

***Under your tenancy agreement, Vectis will be responsible for large and small defects, but a common-sense approach to household problems should not be disregarded. Always seek permission from the Association before carrying out major repairs and home improvements; your tenancy agreement may be breached if you ignore the Terms and Conditions. Neglect or unnecessary damage will not only make your home uncomfortable, it will also reflect a lack of responsibility and breach of contract.***

## DO-IT-YOURSELF

### IMPROVEMENTS

If you wish to undertake improvements to your home, please write to Vectis Housing with full details, and sketch plans if appropriate, of the work you wish to undertake. No **reasonable** request is refused, but we cannot help towards the cost. You must also be sure that all appropriate planning permissions or building regulations are complied with. The Association will require a copy of any such Approval.

### HANDY HINTS

#### WALL FIXINGS

##### Fixing to partition walls

##### *Stud and Plasterboard*

Walls need careful consideration. First you must locate the position of the framework by tapping the wall and listening for the change of tone. If you are not totally positive, make a small hole using a bradawl where you believe the frame to be. After finding the stud, use a woodscrew as normal. In some situations there will not be a stud for your fixing, in this case you will need a special fixing available from all DIY shops.

These can either be:

- Gravity toggle fixing and spring toggle fixing, used for small cabinets.
- Rubber grommet fixings, these are used to seal separating walls.

***WARNING: Be careful when drilling into or nailing into walls, electric cables, and in some case pipes, lay underneath. A cable detector will give positive recognition of cables and is available from DIY shops. A 6" vertical strip should be left fixing free around electrical outlets. If using power tools to drill holes, make sure are you protected by a circuit breaker.***

#### WINDOWS

The double glazed UPVC windows should be cleaned only with a damp cloth and washing detergent. Do NOT use abrasive creams or cloths.

Recesses to windows and doors should be regularly cleaned and left free of grit/dirt.

Hinges and mechanisms should be sprayed at least once a year with WD40.

Child restrictors, where fitted, should always be used. The maintenance facility (you will be given instructions on use) should only be used when cleaning the external face of the glazing.

## YOUR GARDEN

### GARDEN TIPS

The Association encourages the planting of shrubs and flowering plants which will make your home and garden more attractive. Hanging baskets can be used, but contact the Association before drilling holes in the brickwork.

**DO NOT** plant large trees, they draw large quantities of water from the soil and may undermine the foundations. Planting flowering plants in the front and back garden adds to the presentation of the estate. Small garden plants are inexpensive and if chosen carefully, easy to grow and to look after. Planting small vegetable gardens and herb gardens are another option to consider.

Choose plants carefully, making sure they are suited to your garden, you must take into account position, soil type and drainage. Garden Centres and shops will give valuable advice regarding the best species for your particular requirements.

By spending a few hours a week you can cultivate a pleasurable, respectable garden. Not only will this improve your property, but may also encourage wildlife into your back gardens.

### VEHICLE REPAIRS

Major vehicle repairs must NOT be carried out within the estate.

### REFUSE

Do not leave rubbish or bins at the front of the property until the night before or morning of the weekly refuse collection day.

It is recommended that you purchase a regular dustbin. Plastic bags tend to split resulting in spilt contents which may attract vermin to the area.

It is important that all residents share in maintaining the communal areas in a clean and tidy state. In keeping with respect for all residents and the locality, residents are urged to ensure that children take their toys, skate boards, ramps etc., back home when they have finished playing with them and likewise any such items as sweet wrappers, crisp bags, drink cans etc.,