



IMPROVEMENT WORKS REFUSALS POLICY

Proposals for dealing with resident refusals for works, surveys and servicing

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To be reviewed annually.

South Essex Homes – Keeping you informed

www.southessexhomes.co.uk 0800 833 160

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1. Introduction

The publication issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) entitled A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation states: “Where an individual tenant does not want work carried out to their home to bring it up to the Decent Homes Standard, then the home can remain below the standard until the property is vacated, at which point the necessary work can be undertaken”.

Exceptions to this are where works are required to maintain the structural integrity of the dwelling or to prevent other components within the dwelling from deteriorating or where a category one hazard must receive early attention.”

If residents refuse to permit works to be carried out on their homes to bring them up to the Decent Home Standard (DHS) the property is not considered as failing the DHS whilst the resident continues in occupation. However refusals disrupt work programmes and can damage the economies of scale offered by larger improvement programmes.

2. Objective's of the Policy

This policy is required to ensure fairness when dealing with all residents who refuse elements of planned works or access for stock condition surveys to determine the extent of future planned works. This needs to be clear to all stakeholders in order that partner contractors, surveyors and staff can implement this policy in a fair and consistent manner.

Whilst acknowledging that the works proposed are designed to enhance the condition and appearance of properties, South Essex Homes respects all residents' rights to the quiet enjoyment of their homes, so long as this right does not have a detrimental effect on the fabric or structural condition of a property, wind and weather tightness or health and safety.

The implication of resident refusals for South Essex Homes is that the works will have to be carried out at a future date. Out of sequence, this is harder to administer and less cost effective.

3. Impact on the Business Plan

The South Essex Homes Business Plan details the works required over the next 5 years to meet the Decent Homes Standard, to ensure all homes are adequately insulated and heated, are safe for occupiers and visitors, are wind and weather tight and have reasonably modern facilities.

South Essex Homes will consult and discuss the works with residents to address any concerns and to encourage all residents to have the necessary repairs and improvements carried out to their homes.

However, it is recognised that certain residents including those who may be frail and or elderly or have health problems may not want to accept the disruption of certain improvement works.

4. Policy

It is South Essex Homes policy that the following works **may be refused** by residents although every effort will be made to persuade them to have the works done including reminding the resident of their tenancy obligations.

- Non-essential repairs;
- Kitchens (except where full rewire is needed at the same time)
- Bathrooms;

- Window and door renewals (except where it affects wind and weather tightness)
- Heating upgrades (except where no heating exists at present or when the boiler is past its effective life).

It is South Essex Homes policy that residents **shall not be allowed to refuse** the following works and that South Essex Homes will implement action under the terms of tenancy to undertake works. This does however depend upon the individual circumstances of the resident and the actual works required.

- Stock condition and asbestos surveys;
- Essential repairs;
- Electrical rewires
- Electrical upgrades including modern consumer units (fuse boards)
- Re-roofing;
- Boiler replacements
- Installation of loft and cavity wall insulation;
- Where moderate or severe hazards exist, as assessed under the indicative Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
- Where refusal of the works will be detrimental to other residents

Note: Gas servicing (covered under the gas procedures)

South Essex Homes will encourage residents' to reconsider their decision not to have the works undertaken by:

- Using the contractors' Resident Liaison Officers to outline the benefits of the works on the first visit;
- The supervising officer for the project visiting the resident
- Providing resident information packs and information on the website;
- Outlining the choices available;
- Reassuring residents that disruption will be kept to a minimum;
- Organising open meetings on relevant sites including sheltered schemes;
- Providing packing boxes for cupboard emptying etc;
- Outlining the contractors code of conduct when visiting and working in properties;
- Reassuring over the strict timescales in place to complete the works;
- Encouraging residents to visit other properties already improved and to talk to other residents about their experiences;
- Explaining that there will not be any rent increases as a result of the work to be undertaken;
- In certain circumstances explaining what respite facilities are available whilst works are carried out; and
- Visits by their Neighbourhood Services Officers to encourage residents to have all work carried out.

5. Refusal of Particular Work Elements

Where a new kitchen, bathroom and rewire are required, residents cannot refuse just the rewire and still have the kitchen and bathroom upgrade. Similarly if a heating upgrade is required in conjunction with replacement of windows residents cannot refuse the heating but expect to have the windows replaced.

Where residents have failed to provide access for decent homes work or have not responded to at least two letters and an additional 'appointment card' they will be deemed to have automatically refused the works. In these circumstances a final letter (Appendix five) will be

issued before the property is removed from the decent homes works programme. No access to the property will be recorded using a special form (Appendix One) and amendments made on the data management system.

When an initial 'works are about to start' letter is sent to residents advising them of the proposed works, it will be made clear that if access cannot be gained after three attempts then this will be treated as a refusal.

Where access has been refused to service gas appliances (covered under the Gas Procedures), no improvement works will be undertaken until the gas equipment has been serviced.

Where residents have refused works they will be required to sign a disclaimer (Appendix Three) stating that they have refused the works and accept that they may have to wait until the end of the Decent Homes programme before they will be offered the works again. However, this will not apply if the improvement relates to items of a health and safety nature such as electrics or boilers as these elements will need to be replaced. This is to guard against increases in repairs expenditure not allowed for in the Business Plan, as older boilers and wiring systems are more prone to failure.

6. Works to Void Properties

South Essex Homes Asset Management strategy sets out to avoid major works to a void property, especially if those works are defined under the Decent Home criterion. This is to ensure residents choice and for works to be part of a larger cost effective programme as opposed to expensive "one offs". Therefore any new incoming resident will be advised of when the works will be done and such works will be added to the current programme.

7. Anti Social Behaviour by Residents.

Where, residents are known to be 'Potentially Violent' due to their previous actions and are still considered a risk to staff or operatives they will be excluded from the programme until the risk has been reviewed and their anti-social behaviour ceases.

8. Supporting Information

In order to ensure that South Essex Homes provide transparency in this process the following template letters / forms will be used:

Appendix 1. No-Response form.

Appendix 2. No response letter

Appendix 3. Refusal form for residents to sign (including reason for refusal)

Appendix 4. Enforcement letters for works of a health and safety nature

Appendix 5. Final letter

9. Complaints

Our commitment to you

We are committed to improving our services, and one way we can do this is by listening when somebody sends us a comment, complaint or compliment. We always try to get things right first time, but we appreciate that this might not always happen, and your comment, complaint and compliment is valuable to us.

If you want to tell us what you like about our services, or if you want to say 'thank you' to us. Or, if you are not happy with the service you have received from South Essex Homes please contact us on freephone 0800 833 160.

10. How to contact us

South Essex Homes Customer Contact Centre;

Freephone: 0800 833 160

Minicom number 0800 833 162

Email us: customerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk

Visit us: Central Housing Office, 49 Alexandra Street, Southend on Sea, SS1 1BW.

Visit our website: www.southessexhomes.co.uk

11. Translation request

This can be obtained from the Communications and Media Manager but must not be distorted in anyway.

Bengali

যদি আপনার মাতৃভাষায় এই ডকুমেন্টটির একটি কপি পেতে চান অথবা যদি আপনি আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করুন। আমাদের টেলিফোন অনুবাদক আছে যারা আপনার প্রশ্নের উত্তর দিতে পারবেন।

Albanian

Nëse dëshironi një kopje të këtij dokumenti në gjuhën tuaj ose nëse dëshironi të na kontaktoni, ju lutemi telefononi në numrin e mëposhtëm. Ne kemi përkthyes nëpërmjet telefonit të cilët mund t'iu përgjigjen pyetjeve tuaja.

Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી પહેલી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય, અથવા જો તમારે અમારો સંપર્ક સાધવો હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર ઉપર કોલ કરો. અમારી પાસે અનુવાદકો છે, જે તમારા પ્રશ્નોના જવાબો દોન ઉપર આપી શકે છે.

Cantonese

如果你想要一份中文譯本，請撥打以下號碼與我們聯絡。我們有翻譯人員透過電話來解答你的提問。

French

Si vous souhaitez obtenir une copie de ce document dans votre langue maternelle ou si vous souhaitez nous contacter, veuillez téléphoner au numéro indiqué ci-dessous. Nous avons des traducteurs qui peuvent répondre au téléphone à vos questions.



0800 833 160

This document is also available in large print, on audio tape or CD, Braille or on CD rom. Please contact the number above and this can be arranged for you.



Decent Home Programme

NO RESPONSE

Contractor:		
Contract No.:		
Work Element:	Electrics	Heating
	Bathroom	Kitchen
	Roof	Windows

Name:	
Address:	
Contractor Comments:	
Contractors Signature/Date: (to verify full 'No Access' procedure adhered to)	
Contract Administrator Comments:	
Contract Administrator Signature/Date: (to verify full 'No Access' procedure adhered to)	

APPENDIX 2

Central Area Housing Office, 49 Alexandra Street, Southend on Sea, Essex
SS1 1BW

This matter is being dealt with by	Direct Line:	01702
Our Ref: RH/MJ 334807	Facsimile:	01702
Your Ref: 214201	Switchboard:	01702

29 September 2008

**Re: Contract
No. M/..... – Kitchen Replacement**

I am informed by my Surveyor that you have not responded to requests for access to survey your kitchen to enable planned improvement works to be carried out.

These works are programmed to meet the Government's "Decent Homes" initiative which is intended to ensure that life expired equipment is replaced for the benefit of residents.

It is essential that this work is carried out. Would you please contact my Surveyor, Mreither by telephone (01702) or by letter to make arrangements for access within the next 14 days.

Please note the following condition of your tenancy:

4.5 ACCESS TO PROPERTY

To allow the Council access to the property at all reasonable hours through its employees or agents, or other duly authorised persons for the following purposes:

- a. **Inspection of the state of repair and condition of the property or adjoining property.**
- b. **The carrying out of repairs, alteration or improvement to the property.**

Failure to contact us and arrange for the works to be carried out will mean that the property will be put at the end of the decent homes programme.

Yours sincerely

Building/ M&E Projects Team Leader



Decent Home Programme WORKS REFUSAL

Contractor:		
Contract No.:		
Work Element :	Electrics	Heating
	Bathroom	Kitchen
	Roof	Windows

Address:	
Reason for Refusal:	
Signed:	
Date:	

APPENDIX 4

Central Area Housing Office, 49 Alexandra Street, Southend on Sea, Essex SS1 1BW

This matter is being dealt with by:	Direct Line:	01702 214223
Our Ref:	Facsimile:	01702 334807
Your Ref: No access	Contact Centre	0800 833 160

28th August 2008

Dear

Rewiring/ Boiler

As part of the Decent Homes improvements, we have planned to rewire/ replace the boiler within your home. We have been unable to do this because of your refusal to allow access or due to no response from letters and calls. It is very important that you contact us so we can arrange for the rewire/ boiler installation to be carried out.

The work is to replace old life expired equipment and improve the design of the electrical services/ boiler installation to benefit you and your family and **for your safety.**

It is considered essential that this planned work is carried out to improve the Health and Safety of your home. Refusal may cause problems in the future with safety or repairs due to age.

Please contact the Supervising Officer, Mr, at the Central Area Housing Office within the next 14 days, either by telephone on 01702 2142..., or alternatively by letter, to make arrangements for access. If you have difficulties with arranging access you must still contact us as we may be able to help.

Please note that we are considering giving priority for Windows, Kitchens and Bathrooms replacements etc to those residents that have previously co-operated in allowing access. Therefore refusing this work may affect your future Decent Homes improvements.

Please also note the following condition of your tenancy:

4.5 ACCESS TO THE PROPERTY

To allow the Council access to the Property at all reasonable hours through its employees or agents, or other duly authorised persons for the following purposes:

- a. Inspection of the state of repair and condition of the Property or adjoining property.
- b. The carrying out of repairs, alteration or improvement to the Property, including electrical wiring, gas and water pipes, drainage and heating installation.
- c. To ensure compliance with these Conditions and Health and Safety Regulations.

I must advise you that should you fail to respond and agree to make arrangements for access then the matter will be reported to the Neighbourhood Services Manager for possible action against your tenancy.

Yours sincerely

ASSET & BUSINESS INVESTMENT TEAM

APPENDIX 5

HOUSING OFFICE, 2 MENDIP ROAD, WESTCLIFF ON SEA, ESSEX SSO
OHD

Our Ref: PL/JJ
Your Ref:

Direct Line: **01702** 236182
Facsimile: 01702 510313
Switchboard: 01702 236100

Date: 5th February 2008

Dear.....

We have been informed by our Decent Homes Contractor that you have refused to have the following improvement works undertaken to your property.

.....

The reason given for the refusal is

Therefore, unless you contact the South Essex Homes Asset Team within the next 14 days on 01702 236182 and confirm that you require the works to be carried out, your property will be placed at the end of the Decent Homes Improvement Programme which currently has an expected completion date of 2013. Consequently no works appertaining to the programme will be undertaken.

Please be aware that should the works refused be the upgrade of your heating system, , it may not be possible to repair your heating in accordance with current repair timescales in the event of a breakdown.

Yours sincerely

Asset and Business Investment Manager