

## Property maintenance procedure

### 1. Purpose

Uniting complies with all relevant legislative requirements, including the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* and *Retirement Villages Act 1986* in respect of its residential tenancy practices. In addition to its range of housing and homelessness services, Uniting offers specialist disability accommodation (SDA) which is housing designed for consumers with extreme functional impairment or very high support needs. As such, Uniting provides this service in accordance with its obligations under the NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Framework.

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the process that Uniting will take to ensure:

- all properties are maintained to acceptable standards
- SDA enrolled dwellings are in a good state of repair and are being appropriately maintained, having regard to the safety, security and privacy of residents
- maintenance services consider the real impact on the quality of life of its tenants/residents
- the value of Uniting assets is protected, and available resources are utilised effectively and efficiently

### 2. Procedure

#### 2.1 General Principles

Uniting will provide tenants/residents with accommodation that is secure, safe, in good repair and of an acceptable standard through:

- Efficient, effective, reliable and timely responses to maintenance requests
- Providing appropriate information to tenants/residents regarding their responsibilities, rights, feedback and attending to complaints
- Monitoring repairs and maintenance to ensure they are done within required timelines and to an acceptable standard
- Adherence to the Victorian Housing Registrar Standards and Building Codes and Regulations

Uniting will maximise the useful life of all housing stock through:

- Developing and implementing a planned maintenance program for each property
- Conducting annual property audits and condition inspections
- Developing annual budgets for responsive, planned and cyclical maintenance and upgrades
- Conducting vacated maintenance inspections
- Only using qualified/licensed and insured contractors who have completed the agency's online induction course to complete necessary specialist tasks.

## **2.2 Building maintenance administration**

- Maintenance is reported, by phone or email, to the Maintenance Administrator.
- If a tenant /resident attempts to inform agency employee when on site for an unrelated matter, of a maintenance issue, they will be directed to call the office and log the job with the Maintenance Administrator.
- The Maintenance Administrator enters the request details, into Chintaro, within one working day. They gather clear details from the tenant/resident of the nature, extent and location of the issue to determine the level of urgency of the response required.
- The Maintenance Administrator advises the tenant/resident whether an agency Building and Maintenance employee or an external contractor will attend to fix their issue. The worker provides the tenant with an approximate timeframe for their works to commence. The worker will ask permission for agency employee to enter the premises to fix the issue if the tenant / resident is not at home when they attend. This is recorded on the work order. Where an external contractor is attending, the Maintenance Administrator will ask the tenant for permission to give their contact details to the external contractor so an appointment can be scheduled.
- Where a Building and Maintenance employee arrives to complete a maintenance job and the tenant/ resident is not home, they will check the work order to see if permission to enter has been obtained.
- If it has, the worker will complete works and will leave a business card informing the tenant/ resident of their attendance. If permission has not been granted, the worker will leave a card under the door advising that they attended but were not able to complete the task as no one was home.
- If the Building and Maintenance employee notices tenants/residents hoarding or living in a manner that is unsafe to the tenant, agency employee or their neighbours, the worker will report the details of this to the Tenancy Worker or Housing Administrator.
- If Uniting employees become aware of tenants/residents hoarding, or living in a manner that is unsafe to the tenant, agency employees or other tenants, the worker is to report this to their line manager/supervisor who will alert the relevant Tenancy Worker or Housing Administrator, who will assume responsibility for investigating and then managing the situation in consultation with the Senior Manager Housing Services.

## **2.3 Types of Maintenance**

### **2.3.1 Responsive maintenance**

Responsive maintenance describes the day-to-day tasks required to restore something that is not working as it should, to full functionality and safe working condition. Responsive maintenance occurs irregularly and without warning and may be reported by tenants/ residents or agency employees.

The Residential Tenancies Act requires landlords to undertake most repairs within 14 days. Responsive maintenance can be divided into Urgent, Priority and Normal works.

The Maintenance Administrator checks Chintaro weekly to see which jobs need follow-up or are complete. Follow-up times are as follows:

- Urgent - as soon as possible < 24 hours
- Priority < 7 days
- Normal < 14 days

The Asset Management team can be contacted via [facilities@vt.unting.org](mailto:facilities@vt.unting.org) to arrange any reactive maintenance or contact the **Senior Manager, Asset Management** if there is an emergency.

Urgent repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burst water service</li> <li>• Blocked or broken toilet</li> <li>• Serious roof leak</li> <li>• Gas leak</li> <li>• Dangerous electrical fault</li> <li>• Flooding or serious flood damage</li> <li>• Serious storm or fire damage</li> <li>• An essential service or appliance not working properly or at all</li> <li>• A fault or damage which makes the property unsafe</li> <li>• Serious fault in lift or staircase</li> </ul>	Must be fixed within 24 hours
Non urgent repairs	Any repair that falls outside the definition of an urgent repair.	Must be attended and repair underway within 14 days

Uniting will respond to urgent and non-urgent repairs promptly and within the required timeframe/s. All information about repairs must be communicated in writing and copies retained on the resident file.

If urgent repairs are unable to be effected immediately, the Work Health and Safety Manager is to be contacted to assess the safety of the premises. Note: This may result in the site’s Emergency Plan being evoked.

### 2.3.2 *After hours maintenance*

All tenants/residents are provided with information regarding Uniting’s on call after hours system when they sign their lease.

All tenants/residents are provided with a fridge magnet with after-hours contact details for urgent maintenance and given details of what is considered urgent.

The on-call worker assesses to see if the request fits within the definition below of matters requiring urgent attention.

Tenants/residents are informed that maintenance, which is not considered urgent, will be responded appropriately to the next business day during standard working hours.

*The Residential Tenancies Act lists the following as matters requiring urgent attention by a landlord in a rented premises*

- *a burst water service*
- *a blocked or broken toilet system*
- *a serious roof leak*
- *a gas leak*
- *a dangerous electrical fault*
- *flooding or serious flood damage*
- *serious storm or fire damage*
- *a failure or breakdown of any essential service or appliance provided for hot water, water, cooking or, heating*
- *A failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to a rented premises*
- *An appliance, fitting or fixture that uses or supplies water that is malfunctioning in a way that will result in a substantial amount of water being wasted*
- *Any fault or damage that makes the rented premises unsafe or insecure*
- *A serious fault in a lift or staircase.*

### **2.3.3 Planned maintenance**

Planned maintenance arises from cyclic tasks performed to maintain an asset or data obtained during annual inspection of properties. The intention of planned maintenance is to maintain assets in a functional state and minimise responsive maintenance tasks.

- The Building & Grounds Supervisor conducts an audit, in May each year, to compile a list of planned maintenance for recommendations to be completed in the new financial year for each site.
- In consultation with the Senior Manager Housing Services, the Buildings & Grounds supervisor prioritise and budget for the identified maintenance to be done over the course of the financial year.
- The Building & Grounds Supervisor manages the completion of the agreed works by external contractors or agency maintenance employee, within the agreed budget as detailed on the final Plan document.

### **2.3.4 Cyclical maintenance**

Cyclical maintenance, both task and frequency are loaded onto Chintaro by the Maintenance Administrator.

When due to be completed the system notifies the Maintenance Administrator of what task is due or overdue for completion.

The Maintenance Administrator and the Building & Grounds Supervisor monitor and update the records when tasks are complete.

<b>Frequency of Cyclical Maintenance Tasks</b>
--

<b>Task</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Cobwebs cleaned	Uniting building and maintenance employee	3 monthly
Security lighting checked	Uniting building and maintenance employee	weekly
Windows cleaned	Contractor	yearly
Gas Heaters serviced	Contractor	2 yearly
Smoke Detector batteries replaced	Uniting building and maintenance employee	yearly
Air conditioner filters cleaned	Uniting building and maintenance employee	yearly
Gutter cleaning	Contractor	6 monthly or yearly – property dependent
Hydronic heater servicing	Contractor	yearly
Lift servicing	Contractor	6 monthly
Cleaning of common areas at some sites	Contractor	monthly

Uniting’s SDA residences are maintained via a cyclic maintenance program undertaken by the Asset Management team

### 2.3.5 *Vacated maintenance*

Maintenance performed when a property is empty is called Vacated Maintenance performed when a property is empty is called Vacated Maintenance.

## 2.4 **Property Insurance**

- Uniting property insurance may cover the cost of repairs in particular instances. The Senior Manager Housing Services follows the Uniting Church Insurance Services procedures for all maintenance/repairs that are able to be claimed against property insurance.
- Where the cost of maintenance/repair is to be covered by the insurance policy, depending on amount of the cost, the Maintenance Administrator, Housing Administrator or Tenancy Worker will contact the Uniting Church Insurance Services (UCIS) and inform them of the damage or loss.
- Uniting employees will take prompt steps to minimise further loss, such as arranging emergency repairs via delegated agency authorities
- Verbal notification to be given to Uniting Church Insurance Services who will assist in arranging the claim form or appointment of a loss adjuster
  - Losses below \$500 – under excess so no claim will be made
  - Losses above \$500 - contact the UCIS who will direct how to proceed
- Uniting employees may be required to assist all parties involved, in attending to the claim.

## 2.5 Security of Keys and Locks

- Uniting is accountable for the security of all keys and locks, but delegates authority to the Maintenance Administrator to be responsible for daily management of keys and lock systems across all properties.
- The Maintenance Administrator records in Chintaro whenever keys are issued or returned.
- If the last copy of a key is issued, the Maintenance Administrator orders a replacement, so there is always a spare key for every lock.
- All spare keys are kept in the locked key room.
- The Maintenance Administrator will arrange for either maintenance employee or tenancy administrators to install key safes on properties as necessary.
- If the Maintenance Administrator is not available, all agency employee will inform the Maintenance Administrator upon return of all actions they have performed regarding keys and locks so that records are kept accurate and up to date.

## 2.6 Call centre maintenance and repairs (DHHS funded)

The following applies to repairs and maintenance for DHHS funded/Uniting managed properties except for UHV General Lease properties: (Rooming Houses and Long Term):

- Uniting reports all maintenance and damage to the DHHS Call Centre, which is responsible to arrange maintenance and repairs on all THM program properties.
- Uniting will advise responsible party that replacement water appliances should have an A rating and raise any order to this effect.
- All occupants will be provided with information regarding reporting repairs and maintenance at their sign-up. Information is also provided to all occupants with contact details to report urgent repairs after normal office hours (after 4.30pm and before 9am Monday to Friday). Urgent repairs are those described above (in line with the RTA act) as matters requiring urgent attention by a landlord in a rented premises.

### 2.6.1 Maintenance Work Orders

- Workers may observe property maintenance or damage during property inspections. Alternatively, residents, neighbours or the gardener may report problems.
- If damage or maintenance is reported and clarification is needed before a maintenance request is sent: TW goes to the property and evaluates the problem first (if possible)
- Requests for Maintenance are via computer-generated form on PAMS property database/Property/Maintenance. There is a different form if Property is tenanted or vacant (training is required)
- The TW fills out the relevant request form with the following information:
  - The current date
  - The property address
  - The correct room number (if relevant)

- Access details
- Urgent repairs are in the first instance are made by phone direct to the Call Centre and all information then entered on PAMS database.
- The work requested is given an authorisation number by Call Centre and is either raised as Normal (14 days) Priority (7 days) or Urgent (24 hours) and is emailed to Uniting this authorisation number is then recorded on PAMS for tracking purposes.
- Call Centre has a number of working days (above) to complete the order. If there has been no response after the appropriate time, Uniting will call Head Contractor direct for action and up-date (ref HP Phone Numbers).
- The occupant is advised that the relevant contractor will phone or call at the Property to arrange a suitable time to enter the property and carry out the work. Uniting is required to have the occupant's permission to give their phone number to the Contractor.
- The repair costs/inventory is placed in the tenant's personal file if the consumer caused the damage and a record is required.

## **2.7 Vetting and induction of contractors/suppliers**

- The safety and wellbeing of the residents of Uniting management properties is paramount, as the safety of the contractors we engage.
- The Asset Management team will conduct due diligence vetting of contractor/supplier's criteria - reputation, solvency, scalability, compliance using internal and online sources.
- The Asset Management will arrange that new suppliers/contractors will sign a service-level agreement or contract including a schedule of rates, terms and conditions, limit of liability and a declaration to abide all applicable laws, acts and Uniting policies.
- The declaration will also include an undertaking to declare any change in circumstance affecting their compliance.
- The supplier/contractor will also declare inform Uniting of any sub contracted suppliers outside of the Uniting approved supplier list for the purpose of vetting by Uniting prior the attendance at a Uniting site.
- The Asset Management team will ensure the contractor/supplier provides compliance documentation, including:
  - ✓ Driving licenses
  - ✓ Police checks
  - ✓ Work with Children's checks
  - ✓ Trade licenses and certificates
  - ✓ Certificate of currency
  - ✓ Other relevant documentation
- Provided the above documentation is in order, the contractor/supplier will be directed by the Asset Management team to register on the Linksafe online contract management and induction system.
- The new contractor/supplier will be required to be inducted at sites in the company of Uniting representatives for the purpose of introducing themselves to stakeholders at the property/site and

familiarizing themselves with any unique internal processes, hazards or risks. The Asset Management team will coordinate this.

- The Asset Management team will oversee more intensive monitoring of any new supplier or contractor's key performance indicators and adherence to the terms and conditions of the agreement for a probationary period of the first 3 months for quality assurance purposes. **Refer Contractor Management procedure.**

### **2.8 Arranging repairs and maintenance with contractors**

If the contractor is unable to contact the tenant and the TW has been unsuccessful in arranging a suitable time for the work to be carried out the TW will:

- Arrange a suitable time with the contractor to carry out the scheduled work
- Contact the tenant by phone or send a letter to the tenant outlining the date and time that the contractor requires entrance to the property
- Depending on the circumstances the TW may send the letter by ordinary post and by registered mail (for future legal proof of notification)
- Ensure that the time arranged with the contractor takes into consideration the time it takes for the tenant to receive the notice (a minimum of 3 days)
- Inform the tenant (if able) what work is to be carried out and the expected time required to complete the work (if known)
- In the case of urgent repairs, the TW may be required to meet the contractor at the premises depending on the circumstances. If the tenant is not at home the TW may be required to let the contractor in and stay with the contractor until the work is completed.
- If a tenanted house has been entered without the tenant being present the TW must leave an Entered Property Notice: Pad of carbon notices supplied to each TW.

### **2.9 Termination of contractors**

- The Asset Management team arrange termination letters to be sent to suppliers and contractors when their contract expires.
- If services are no longer required or the quality of work is deemed unsatisfactory by the Asset Management team and/or other stakeholders, then a termination of services letter may be sent to the contractor.

All employees are responsible for:

- Responsibility
- Complying with the instructions outlined in this procedure
- The ELT, Executive Officers and Managers are responsible for:
- Monitoring awareness of and adherence to this procedure
  - Overseeing all action and outcomes pertaining to this procedure

## **3. Related Policy, Instructions and Advice**

*Residential Tenancies Act 1997*



*Retirement Villages Act 1986*

NDIS Quality & Safeguarding Framework

NDIS Practice Standards and Rules 2018

Entered Property notice

Consumer Affairs Victoria, Renting a Home: a guide for Tenants and Landlords

Consumer Affairs Victoria, Rooming Houses: a guide for Residents, Owners and Managers

#### **Internal resources**

Asset Management Policy

Contractor Management Procedure

Community and Consumer Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Specialist Disability Accommodation procedure

Uniting SDA Service Agreement Template

Approved Suppliers Register

<b>Revision Record</b>			
Version	Date	Document Writer	Revision Description
<i>0.0</i>	<i>27/02/2020</i>	<i>Compliance &amp; Policy team</i>	<i>Redrafted as procedure and incorporate SDA requirements</i>
<i>1.0</i>	<i>27/02/2020</i>	<i>Senior Manager, Asset Management</i>	<i>Final.</i>