

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



## Contents

<b>1. Background and objectives</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Policy principles</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Repair Responsibilities	3
2.2 Repair Categories	4
2.3 Keeping Customer Informed	5
2.4 Repairs for vulnerable customers	5
2.5 Inspections	6
2.6 Customer Satisfaction and Feedback	6
2.7 No Access	6
2.8 Damp and mould	6
2.9 Empty homes	6
2.10 Adaptations	6
2.11 Major works and planned improvements	6
2.12 Right to Buy properties	7
2.13 Customer Led Alterations/Consents	7
2.14 Environmental impact	8
2.15 Value for money	8
2.16 Monitoring, consultation, and review	8
<b>3. Equality and diversity</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4. Associated documents</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. Version control and approval dates</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. Appendices</b>	<b>10</b>
Appendix 1 – Repairs Response Standards	11
Appendix 2 – Schedule of Right to Repairs Guidance	12
Appendix 3 – Programmed Maintenance	14
Appendix 4 – HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) Minimum Safety Standards for Housing	15
Appendix 5 - Equality Impact Assessment	16
<b>7. Glossary</b>	<b>18</b>

Please note that various additional resources are referenced throughout this policy. These can be access either by clicking on the highlighted text or typing the full address text into a web browser.

## 1. Background and objectives

- 1.1 Alliance Homes places its customers at the heart of the way we design and deliver our services. We are committed to delivering a 'right first time' repairs and maintenance service, which is customer focused and cost effective. In delivery of our repairs and maintenance services, we want to ensure customers are safe in their homes and happy with the service they are receiving.
- 1.2 This policy covers the responsive repairs and maintenance service to properties, garages, shared and communal spaces owned and/or managed by Alliance Homes. Excluded from this policy are rechargeable repairs, customer alterations, adaptations, damp and mould and Empty homes, Elec, Gas and all compliance programmes which will have their own policies.
- 1.3 This policy is designed to meet its statutory and contractual obligations to customers. Our intention is to extend the useful life of all its properties and reduce responsive maintenance costs, by putting in place an effective improvement programme and in accordance with the Asset Management Strategy.
- 1.4 In addition to providing a customer led repairs service, from time to time, Alliance Homes will need to carry out works under its landlord obligations to keep customers' homes safe and compliant to all relevant UK regulations. These will include, but not exclusively, the following:
- Landlord and Customer Act 1985
  - Health and safety, including gas servicing every year and electrical testing every 5 years
  - Fire risks
  - Asbestos risks
  - Water safety.
  - HHSRS-related failures (further information on this is available in Appendix 4)

At all times, the management of these activities will be managed and maintained with zero tolerance away from safety standards.

In certain circumstances, we will need to ensure access to customers' homes, this may include the use of court notice or controlled access to gain entry.

## 2. Policy principles

The core principals which sit behind this policy are that we:

- Provide a flexible, convenient, and customer centred service that gives priority to the safety, comfort, and convenience of our customers.
- To provide a service that is accessible and convenient for customers.
- Maintain Alliance Homes' properties to a good condition and to a modern 'Decent' standard.

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



- Respond to requests for repairs promptly in accordance with published time response standards.
- Carry out repairs efficiently and to a high standard adopting a right first time approach.
- Instigate a programme of improvements to bring all properties up to current standards, and provide customers with choice, wherever possible.
- Investigate symptoms (such as damp) thoroughly by inspection,
- Keep customers informed of progress and outcomes.
- Adhere to regulatory compliance including the consumer standards.

## 2.1 Repair Responsibilities

The responsibility for repairing and maintaining homes is shared between Alliance Homes and our customers.

You must report repairs that are the responsibility of Alliance Homes as soon as reasonably possible.

### Landlord responsibilities

Alliance Homes has produced a detailed guide that confirms what repairs will be completed by us as the landlord. This guide can be found on our website [www.alliancehomes.org.uk](http://www.alliancehomes.org.uk) – [https://www.alliancehomes.org.uk/media/2520/alliance-homes-ah-019\\_01-welcome-pack-2019-80240-proof2-crop.pdf](https://www.alliancehomes.org.uk/media/2520/alliance-homes-ah-019_01-welcome-pack-2019-80240-proof2-crop.pdf).

### Your responsibilities

In some instances it will be the duty of the customer to undertake repairs themselves as set out within the tenancy agreement and in the detailed welcome pack:

[https://www.alliancehomes.org.uk/media/2520/alliance-homes-ah-019\\_01-welcome-pack-2019-80240-proof2-crop.pdf](https://www.alliancehomes.org.uk/media/2520/alliance-homes-ah-019_01-welcome-pack-2019-80240-proof2-crop.pdf).

In addition, the customer is also responsible for the repair or replacement of any item in the property because of damage. Customers are responsible for reporting any damage, whether accidental or deliberate including any criminal damage. Damage that has been caused by a customer their family member or visitors to a property may be rechargeable.

Should a customer not carry out a repair that is their responsibility under the tenancy agreement, Alliance Homes reserves the right to carry out the work themselves and may recharge the customer. Please refer to the Rechargeable Costs policy.

Customers must tell Alliance Homes when a repair needs to be done and allow access to qualify for the Right to Repair scheme detailed in appendix two. Further details can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1994/133/>.

Outbuildings (sheds, coal bunkers, without cavity) are not considered habitable spaces and therefore will not automatically be considered for standard repairs. Any repairs required will be considered the responsibility of the customer.

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



Alliance Homes are committed to providing self-help guidance for repairs that are the responsibility of the customer. [Alliance Homes: Which repairs should I do?](#)

## 3rd Parties

In relation to communal areas, where there is an arrangement in place for a third party to manage the communal space, such as cleaning & grounds maintenance, Alliance Homes will ensure the area is well maintained and hold the third party to account.

## Leaseholders and Shared Owners

Leaseholders should refer to their leasehold agreements and the Leasehold Policy for details of their repairs and maintenance responsibilities.

## Commercial Properties

Customers of commercial properties should refer to their contractual agreement for details of their repairs and maintenance responsibilities.

## Reporting repairs

Alliance Homes provides a service, which is centred on repairs by appointment and prioritises the appointment.

Customers may report repairs by any of the following ways:

- Social media (online, email, web chat, twitter, Facebook)
- Customer Portal - CONNECT
- By telephone
- In person at the Alliance Homes office
- In writing

Outside normal working hours a telephone facility enables customers to request emergency repairs that pose an immediate risk to people and/or property.

## 2.2 Repair Categories

**Emergency Repairs (P1)** are any defects that put the health safety and security of properties, customers or anyone else at risk. We will attend within 24 hours. Where possible a full repair will be carried out, if this is not possible, we will provide a temporary repair and arrange a new appointment.

**Out of Hours Repairs** are emergency repairs that cannot wait until the next working day to be attended. (P99)

**Urgent Repairs (P2)** are any defect that does not cause immediate risk to the health, safety or security of a customer or third party and although therefore not an emergency, still needs to be carried out quickly to ensure that the risk does not increase. Urgent repairs will be attended within 7 days.

**No Urgent Repairs (P3)** are any defect that does not present high risk to the health, safety or security of a customer or third party. However a repairs needs to be carried out to ensure that any risk does not increase. Non-Urgent repairs will be attended within 30 days.

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



**Routine Repairs (P4)** are all repairs outside of emergency and urgent. These repairs may require specialist materials and or equipment and further time to complete. They may require more than one visit. Routine Repairs will be attended within 90 days.

These priority categories are detailed in appendix one.

Details can also be found on the website [HERE](#)

## 2.3 Keeping Customer Informed

Customers will be offered an appointment and technology will be used to keep customers up to date with the status of the repair in their home from reporting until completion, including operative on route notifications.

Customers will be kept informed and consulted about major works programmes and be given adequate notice of any such works that are likely to cause them significant disruption.

## 2.4 Repairs for vulnerable customers

We will use our information to deliver flexibility to our policy and elevate the priority of a repair if the customer identifies that they or a member of their household have a specific vulnerability.

Every attempt will be made to identify any individual circumstances at first point of contact to ensure reasonable adjustments can be made acknowledging that some circumstances are temporary.

The schedule set out below, highlights areas of mobility, age or health issues that impact upon priorities applied to repairs and Alliance Homes will try to adapt or flex the service to meet customer needs. It is recognised this is not an extensive list of all vulnerabilities and will vary from time to time:

- Elderly – Recognising age alone is not a vulnerability.
- Mental/physical impairment – Customers with these vulnerabilities, may at times, find it more difficult to complete their own repairs and landlord repairs may need to be arranged differently.
- Suffering domestic abuse or serious anti-social behaviour – Services will be delivered in a sensitive way to meet the needs of the customer.
- Change of circumstances, death of a relative, relationship breakdown.

## 2.5 Inspections

A pre inspection may be required before a repair appointment can be arranged. This will include circumstances where the scope of the repair is unknown. Following the inspection, the repair will be diagnosed and planned within appropriate timescales.

To ensure Alliance Homes is delivering high-quality repairs service, a sample of completed repairs may be inspected.

## 2.6 Customer Satisfaction and Feedback

Alliance Homes will collate and monitor performance information in relation to repairs key performance indicators.

We consider the views of customers in the preparation of its programmes for improvement and repair and minimise inconvenience to you when work is carried out.

Customer Satisfaction testing will be conducted following each completed repair and we will conduct other customer surveys in line with regulatory requirements

Feedback will be used to identify trends and to continuously improve service delivery. Feedback will be gained via SMS texting, emails and third party research.

## 2.7 No Access

If Alliance Homes is unable to gain access due to the customer not being home for a repair the customer will be notified that they need to contact us within 5 working days to rebook otherwise the repair request may be cancelled unless it represents a health and safety risk to the customer. We will call customer to make another appointment if this circumstance arises.

## 2.8 Damp and mould.

A separate policy has been developed to cover damp and mould.

## 2.9 Empty homes

A separate policy has been developed to cover empty homes management.

## 2.10 Adaptations

A separate policy has been developed to cover adaptations.

## 2.11 Major works and planned improvements

Alliance Homes will carry out a property inspection (stock condition survey) every five years. This allows us to collect information relating to the Decent Homes Standard and about the property in general. This is used to identify and programme future replacement programmes, to ensure that all assets are well maintained. (See appendix three)

Where a customer has reported a high number of repairs over a set period of time, an inspection may be carried out to the property to determine the cause of the repairs.

The property must meet the required standards by:

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



- Meeting the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) minimum safety standards for housing (see appendix four)
- Be in a reasonable state of repair.
- Have reasonably modern facilities and services.
- Have efficient heating and effective insulation.

Major works are carried out on a pre-programmed basis and include redecoration, replacement, improvement or refurbishment to the property or estate.

Wherever practicable Alliance Homes will provide customers with a choice when their homes are being modernised, such as new kitchens and bathrooms, giving them wider choice.

## 2.12 Right to Buy properties

Following acceptance in writing of a Right to Buy (RTB) application we will carry out emergency repairs to keep the property wind and watertight only. No other repairs or improvement work will be carried out.

Applicants will be advised of this situation as part of the Information Pack, which is sent out together with the Application Form, and the letter confirming acceptance of the RTB application.

## 2.13 Customer Led Alterations/Consents

Alliance Homes supports the opportunity for customers to carry out repairs or improvement works to the homes they live in.

Alliance Homes will approve improvements or alterations that occupiers wish to make, provided that the proposed alterations:

- a) are safe, legal and receive any necessary external consents.
- b) do not adversely affect the value of Alliances interest in the property.
- c) will not adversely affect Alliances' ability to fulfil its repairing or other responsibilities.
- d) do not have a negative impact on neighbouring properties.

Customers who wish to carry out improvement work themselves must obtain consent before starting the work.

The customer must also confirm that they are able to carry out the work safely and to current building standards and regulations.

Alliance Homes reserves the right to challenge or refuse consent for any proposed work. Repairs must be carried out to the same standard and quality that the Alliance Homes in-house workforce carries out repairs. This will include using materials and components that have the same expected service life as those used by Alliance Homes.

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



Customers must inform Alliance Homes when a repair has been completed. And the repair may then be inspected by Alliance Homes to ensure that it is safe, meets our expected standards and any relevant national building standards.

If any work carried out is deemed to not meet these standards, Alliance Homes would ask customers to rectify the work, and we may charge the cost to the rectify the issue if not completed by the customer.

## 2.14 Environmental impact

Alliance Homes will also consider the impact of its housing on the environment by:

- Embracing the principle of sustainability.
- Monitoring the energy efficiency of the homes.
- Improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock through cost effective use of the repair and improvement programme to improve comfort for customers, lower energy costs and reduce CO2 emissions.
- Choosing, whenever practical, low maintenance and energy efficient materials.
- Assessing the visual or other environmental impact of its programmes.
- Considering the needs of older customers and those with a disability or additional needs.

## 2.15 Value for money

All work will be carried out in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and the Procurement Policy.

Supply chain and contractors are procured through a competitive tender process to ensure services delivered are of a high-quality standard at the right price whilst maximising value through innovation and collaboration.

## 2.16 Monitoring, consultation, and review

- The Board and customers will receive regular reports on the performance against agreed targets and indicators.
- Key targets and Performance Indicators will be published to the Operational Leadership Team.
- Quarterly customer satisfaction surveys will be carried out and results and actions will be published for customers annually online and customers newsletter.
- After each repair, customers will receive a text survey which will provide Alliance Homes with transactional feedback information to help us improve service delivery.
- All complaints will be investigated in accordance with the complaint's procedure.
- The Service Area Director – HRS is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.
- This policy will be reviewed within two years of its approval date or earlier if required by regulatory, statutory, or other requirements.



- Customers, colleagues, and service users may be involved in giving feedback on this policy, leading to amendments where appropriate.

### 3. Equality and diversity

When making decisions under this policy we will always show due regard for an individual's medical condition, support needs or individual circumstances. Any restrictions placed on the customer's contact will always recognise their needs and be tailored to their individual circumstances.

This policy is subject to a periodic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

The purpose of such an assessment is to consider the effect of the policy regarding the recognised protected characteristics of equality and ensure that it does not unfairly impact any individual or group. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity Strategy and Equality and Diversity Policy. Remedial action will be undertaken if a detrimental effect is identified.

The EIA also requires the policy author to consider whether the policy is likely to negatively impact on a person's Human Rights.

This policy and any other related Alliance Homes publications can be provided in other formats for those with visual, literacy or language difficulties.

### 4. Associated documents

#### **For customers:**

- Asset Strategy
- Compensation Policy
- Empty Homes Management Policy
- Chargeable Costs Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Customer's Handbook and Repairs Manual.
- Damp and Mould Policy
- Leasehold Policy
- Consents/alterations policy

#### **For colleagues:**

- Adaptations Policy
- Gas and Heating Policy
- Fire Safety Policy

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



- Electrical Safety Policy
- Asbestos Policy
- Fire Risk Assessment Policy
- Water Hygiene Policy
- Lift Policy
- Damp and Mould Policy
- Contractor Code of Conduct

## 5. Version control and approval dates

Approval stage	Date completed
Equality Impact Assessment completed	6 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
EIA reviewed by Equality & Diversity Manager	6 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
SLT review / approval	12 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
Next review date	12 <sup>th</sup> June 2026

## 6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Repairs Response Standards

Appendix 2 – Schedule of Right to Repairs Guidance

Appendix 3 – Programmed Maintenance

Appendix 4 – HHSRS Minimum Safety Standards for Housing

Appendix 5 – Equality Impact Assessment

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



## Appendix 1 – Repairs Response Standards

1. Alliance Homes repair priorities are currently as follows:

Priority	Completion Time
P1E	2 hours
P1	24 hours
P2	7 days
P3	30 days
P4	90 days
P5	150 days

More information on emergency and urgent repairs is available on the Alliance Homes website: <https://www.alliancehomes.org.uk/repairs-and-maintenance/emergency-and-urgent-repairs/>

2. When customers report repairs, they will be offered an appointment dependent upon the nature of the repair.
3. Certain repairs may need to be inspected before an order can be placed to determine the nature of the work and its priority. The inspections will be carried out within 10 working days.

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



## Appendix 2 – Schedule of Right to Repairs Guidance

<i>Defect</i>	<i>Prescribed period (in working days)</i>
Total loss of electric power	1
Partial loss of electric power	3
Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting	1
Total loss of water supply	1
Partial loss of water supply	3
Total or partial loss of gas supply	1
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 31st October and 1st May	1
Total or partial loss of space or water heating between 30th April and 1st November	3
Blocked or leaking foul drain, soil stack, or (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house) toilet pan	1
Toilet not flushing (where there is no other working toilet in the dwelling-house)	1
Blocked sink, bath, or basin	3
Tap which cannot be turned	3
Leaking from water or heating pipe, tank, or cistern	1
Leaking roof	7
Insecure external window, door, or lock	1
Loose or detached banister or handrail	3
Rotten timber flooring or stair tread	3
Door entry phone not working	7
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Regulations)*

These Regulations give secure customers of local housing authorities rights relating to repairs to their homes which their landlords are obliged, under repairing covenants, to carry out. Such a customer is given the right, if the first contractor does not complete qualifying repairs within specified time limits, to require the landlord to appoint a second contractor to carry out the repairs. The customer is also given a right to compensation from their landlord if the repairs are not carried out within specified time limits after he has asked for a second contractor to be appointed.

Regulation 2 contains definitions and provides that landlords themselves are included in references to contractors in the Regulations.

Regulation 3 describes the circumstances in which the rights apply. A repair must be within a description of repair prescribed by regulation 4.

Regulation 5 sets out the procedure the landlord should follow if a customer asks for a repair to be carried out. If the repair is a qualifying repair and is not carried out within specified time limits, regulation 6 entitles the customer to require the landlord to appoint a different contractor to do the repair. If the repair still is not completed within specified time limits, the customer may be entitled to compensation from the landlord under regulation 7.

Regulation 8 suspends, in exceptional circumstances, the specified time limits and regulation 11 extends the limits in the transitional cases described.

Regulation 9 provides that notices may be served by post and regulation 10 provides that disputes may be determined by the county court.

(1) [1985 c. 68](#); section 96 was substituted by section 121 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act [1993 \(c. 28\)](#).

(2) See section 96(6) of the Housing Act 1985 and regulation 4 of these Regulations.

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY



## Appendix 3 – Programmed Maintenance

### Cyclical maintenance

- electric boiler systems annually
- gas carcass and Alliance Homes gas appliances annually
- oil fired boilers and systems annually.
- solid fuel room heaters annually
- electrical safety checks every 5 years.
- external decorations and associated 'pre-paint repairs' every 5-8 years.
- internal common parts decorations every 5-8 years.

### Service contracts

- lifts and stair lifts
- fire alarm installations, fire detection, hard wired smoke detectors and firefighting equipment
- door entry and warden call equipment
- communal aerial installations.
- Guttering clearance to blocks and finlock gutters.

## Appendix 4 – HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) Minimum Safety Standards for Housing

### HHSRS minimum safety standards for housing

- It meets the statutory minimum standard for housing
- It is in a reasonable state of repair
- It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
- Good quality, modern kitchens and bathrooms
- Good quality, modern, efficient central heating improved estate security measures.

Further information can be obtained via gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-guidance-for-landlords-and-property-related-professionals>

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY

## Appendix 5 - Equality Impact Assessment

**An Equalities Impact Assessment must be conducted alongside the review of an existing policy or the creation of a new one.**

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IS AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

### 1. Name the Strategy, Policy, Procedure or Function (SPPF) being assessed and name of author.

Repairs, Maintenance & Improvement Policy - Alan Rogers :Service Area Director

### 2. Aims of the SPPF being addresses.

- Whose need is it designed to meet?
- Are there any measurable elements such as time limits or age limits?

To provide clarity for Alliance Homes and its customers in our obligations and commitments in delivering best in class repairs and maintenance services.

### 3. Who has been consulted in developing the SPPF?

- Make reference or links to consultation/evidence documents.

Alliance Homes colleagues and Customers through HIVE

### 4. Does the SPPF promote equality of opportunity?

The policy promotes equality of opportunity across the protected characteristics as follows:  
Age, disability, gender identity and reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race (ethnicity, nationality, national origin, skin colour), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.  
It makes specific reference to vulnerable customers in relation to the elderly, disabled and customers living with Domestic Abuse.

### 5. Identify potential impact on each of the diversity "groups" by considering the following questions:

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Information source/s*	Comments/Evidence
Race	✓				
Disability			✓		Flexible service for vulnerable customers
Gender	✓				
Transgender	✓				
Sexual Orientation	✓				
Religion or Belief			✓		Information available in different languages and the



# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Information source/s*	Comments/Evidence
					use of interpreters if necessary.
Age			✓		Flexible service for vulnerable customers
Marriage and Civil Partnership	✓				
Pregnancy and Maternity	✓				
Rural Issues	✓				
Social Mobility			✓		Flexible service for vulnerable customers

Was there a negative impact identified in question 5? If yes go to question 6. If not go to question 7.

6. If “negative impact” identified in table (4) above, is it?

Legal	YES	NO
What is the level of impact?	HIGH	LOW

If it is not legal and/or high impact (i.e. If you have highlighted NO to legal and HIGH to impact) **then the document should be referred to Head of HR**

7. If positive impact has been identified in table (4) above, how can it be improved upon or maximised, either in this SPPF or others?

Ensure scripting and diagnosis of repairs considers the priority of repairs and have the ability to flex the service to meet vulnerability and mobility challenges.

8. Full EIA (or if you decide full EIA is not necessary but some changes should be considered)

- Are there changes you could introduce which would make this SPPF work better for this groups of people?
- Is further research or consultation required?

YES	NO
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9. Does this proposal have any human rights implications?

If yes, please describe (If necessary, please refer to the Alliance Homes Human Rights Policy)

No

# REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS POLICY

## 7. Glossary

Term	Definition
Decent Homes Standard	The Decent Homes Standard has played a key role in setting the minimum standards that social homes are required to meet.
Empty Homes	A home that is left vacant from an outgoing customer, Works are undertaken to provide a minimal lettable standard for a new incoming customer.
Modern 'Decent' standard	As part of the Decent Homes Standard, the government will be introducing changes to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), a tool used to assess hazards in residential premises
Stock condition	Stock condition survey collects information about the condition of individual properties/ Buildings for a defined purpose, to understanding repair needs, health and safety issues, and if the property is fit for purpose.
Sustainability	Sustainability is the ability to exist, develop and maintain without depleting natural resources for the future.