

# PLANNED AND RESPONSIVE MAINTENANCE POLICY

## 1. PURPOSE

This Policy explains how Evolve Housing (Evolve) will provide repairs and maintenance services to its Tenants.

Evolve believes that providing a good standard of maintenance improves the wellbeing of our Tenants and ensures that the amenity and value of the properties is retained.

This Policy cannot be read in isolation. Instead, it forms part of a suite of asset related policies which are all focused on improving the Tenant's experience and the quality of the homes Evolve manages and owns.

Through this Policy, Evolve will ensure that we:

- Meet our obligations under the NSW *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*;
- Provide a high quality, consistent maintenance service to our Tenants;
- Keep all social and affordable housing properties at a benchmarked standard for safety, function and amenity;
- Retain and improve the quality of the homes we manage and own; and
- Provide an efficient and effective maintenance service.

## 2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all properties in Evolve's portfolio, except for the Community Housing Leasehold Program (CHLP) and our Fee for Service portfolio. Evolve undertakes maintenance for its Fee for Service portfolio in accordance with the respective agreements with Property owners. This means the delivery of asset maintenance services can vary in some instances.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENT

Evolve recognises the importance of protecting and preserving the condition of the properties it manages so that they continue to meet the needs of its current and future Tenants. To this end we adopt a strategic planning approach to our maintenance programs. This approach is underpinned by the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) Asset Management Framework 2018.

Evolves' approach to maintenance aims to:

- Minimise the volume and cost of unplanned, responsive repairs;
- Meet all legislative requirements including building, health and safety standards;
- Meet our contractual obligations;
- Protect Evolve's long term financial sustainability;
- Maximise the life of the homes we manage;
- Protect the assets of our partners where Evolve has responsibility for the long-term maintenance of their properties; and
- Continue to meet and improve the Resident experience in relation to the maintenance of their home.

### 3.1 Tenant Responsibilities

Evolve Tenants have a responsibility to promptly report repairs and maintenance required to their Property, and to allow access for completing the required work. Tenants are also responsible for ensuring they notify Evolve of any damage to their Property and for meeting the cost of repairing any damage caused by the neglect, misuse, wilful or accidental damage by a Resident or visitor to the home.

Tenants are responsible for undertaking minor repairs in their dwelling including:

- replacement of light bulbs in the Property;
- replacement of smoke alarm batteries;

- replacement of lost keys or resultant change of locks to doors and windows where keys are lost; and
- repairs to any items that have been erected/ installed by the Tenant themselves (eg hooks and air conditioning).

Tenants are also responsible for general property upkeep and care of their dwellings and any private open space attached to their dwelling

### 3.2 Evolve’s Responsibilities

Evolve is responsible for ensuring that maintenance is undertaken on the Properties and common areas of the Properties we manage or own, to ensure that they are safe and all amenities are maintained in a proper working order. In doing so, we undertake maintenance in three broad categories: **Responsive Maintenance, Planned Maintenance, and Cyclical Maintenance.**

Evolve defines **Responsive Maintenance** as time critical repairs necessary to reinstate a building or component to a safe or functional level of service. This also includes routine repairs that cause inconvenience or could become a risk to health and safety if left unattended.

Evolve defines **Planned Maintenance** as the scheduled replacement, upgrade or renovation of major items in a Property. This includes Vacant Maintenance.

Evolve defines **Cyclical Maintenance** as a series of regular checks and inspections to ensure that Properties comply with health and safety, legislative and duty of care obligations.

### 3.3 Responsive Maintenance

Evolve will provide a responsive repairs and maintenance service, appropriate to both Tenant and portfolio needs. Our responsive approach has four categories, which comply with obligations under the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*. These categories will be subject to regular review to ensure they are up to date with legislative requirements and meet customer expectations.

Repair Category	Response Time
<b>Urgent</b>	
Repairs that cause a serious health or safety risk to the Tenant and/or Property, including gas leaks, broken sewer pipes or serious flooding.	Within 4 hours of being notified
<b>Priority 1</b>	
Repairs that pose a serious health and safety risk or inconvenience to the Tenant such as failure or breakdown of electrical or hot water supplies to the Property.	No later than 5pm on the next business day after being notified
<b>Priority 3 &amp; 5</b>	
Repairs that may pose a risk to health and safety if left unattended within a reasonable period. These include limited malfunctions in electrical and water supplies such as a dripping tap or a plug socket not working.	Within 3-5 business days of being notified
<b>Responsive</b>	
Repairs that do not cause a health or safety risk such as tiling repairs and minor fencing repairs. Evolve will aim to complete non-urgent repairs and maintenance as promptly as possible, subject to the inconvenience to the Tenant and the potential for the repair to become a risk to health and safety if left unattended.	Within 28 calendar days of being notified, taking into account the age and remaining life of the Property.

For urgent repairs, a contractor will aim to attend and wherever possible, complete all necessary work within four hours. In circumstances where this is not possible, the contractor will make sure that the fault is temporarily fixed and arrange for the permanent maintenance to be undertaken within the appropriate timeframe. The Tenant will be informed why the issue could not be fixed immediately and when the work is likely to be completed.

Where a number of routine responsive maintenance requests are received in a short timeframe for a common area or block, Evolve reserves the right to 'batch' these so that they are all completed together. This will be more cost effective and cause less disruption to our Residents.

### 3.4 Planned Maintenance

Evolve believes that a planned approach to maintenance, rather than a responsive approach, is more cost effective, delivers better maintenance solutions and causes less disruption to Residents.

Planned works are scheduled based on the following considerations:

- Any legislative requirements that must be met;
- Life cycle upgrade timeframes as identified through our 3 yearly technical scoping inspections;
- Risk assessment for each Property undertaken through our technical scoping inspections; and
- Overall budget allocation in line with our 10-year forecast model.

Wherever possible, Evolve will involve Tenants in decisions about work proposed for their homes. For example, Tenants may have a choice in the use of colours and materials used in our planned maintenance upgrades to their home. Throughout the process Tenants will be kept informed about what work is required and when it will be done.

Scheduled maintenance is sometimes brought forward or deferred to suit Tenant needs and other priorities. Properties that require upgrades for safety and security issues will be prioritised.

Where a Property becomes vacant, Evolve will consider the feasibility of bringing forward the work to minimise the impact on future Tenants. As a minimum Evolve will ensure that the Property is clean, safe and habitable for the next Tenants. This includes:

- carrying out compliance assessments for smoke alarms, electrical safety and window restrictors;
- ensuring that the Property is appropriately secured and changing locks if required; and

- ensuring all appliances are functional.

### 3.5 Cyclical Maintenance

Our cyclical maintenance program is divided into three categories as follows:

#### 3.5.1 Lawns and Grounds Cleaning Program

Regular maintenance is carried out on common areas, grounds and/or gardens of apartments and townhouse complexes. Works include general upkeep and cleaning of internal common areas, lawns and gardens.

#### 3.5.2 Compliance/Safety Program

This includes maintenance programs to ensure that Evolve meets legislative and regulatory requirements to maintain the safety and security of Residents. These include electrical safety, preparation of Annual Fire Safety Statements, smoke alarm inspections and lift safety.

#### 3.5.3 Preventative Maintenance

Evolve defines preventive maintenance as regularly scheduled work that is undertaken to avoid breakdown and deterioration of the Property. By undertaking preventative maintenance effectively, Evolve will reduce the amount of responsive, planned and structural work that may be required. Works include roof and gutter inspections, tree pruning and termite inspections.

### 3.6 Requesting Repairs and Maintenance

It is important that Residents report any maintenance issues as quickly as possible. Timely reporting ensures our Residents can continue to enjoy their home fully and can reduce the likelihood of repairs issues escalating.

Evolve operates a 24 hour, all year round telephone service for all our Residents through our internal call centre and an external provider for out of hour's requests. This enables our Residents to speak with a real person regardless of the time of day. Residents may be asked to call back during office hours for non-urgent repairs requests.

Residents can simply and easily report repairs by:

1. Lodging a request online via our Report a Repair Service
2. Calling our maintenance call line 24/7 on 1800 MY EVOLVE (1800 693 865).
3. Face to face by visiting our office.

Evolve also provides a free interpreter service for Residents who are having difficulty communicating their repair or maintenance request.

Each repair request is assessed by Evolve staff or their representative to determine the nature and priority of the work to be undertaken.

Evolve then assigns responsibility for completing the work to one of its contractors or contacts the landlord or agent to inform them of the repair request for leasehold properties.

Evolve will ensure that there is clear communication with the Resident, contractor or landlord/agent throughout the repairs process to ensure that the work is completed in a timely and professional manner.

Please note that if you are uncontactable after advising of a repair for any reason, contractors have been advised to attend your property and door knock.

### **3.7 Repairs and Maintenance Requests for Leasehold and Fee for Service Properties**

Evolve will expect landlords and agents that it rents properties from to meet their responsibilities under the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*. Evolve will advise the appropriate landlord or agent with details of any repair or maintenance request. The landlord or agent is then expected to contact the Tenant to advise what action it will be taking and when.

Evolve will always encourage landlords to complete repairs within the timeframes stated above.

Where a landlord or agent persistently fails to complete work in accordance with their obligations under the *NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010*, Evolve will use a range of actions to resolve issues. This includes:

1. Making a formal urgent request to the landlord or agent, advising them of a breach of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* and proposing a timeframe for completing the work;
2. Completing the work and claiming reimbursement from the landlord or agent; and/or
3. Applying to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for an order to remedy.

Evolve will ensure that the Tenant is kept informed throughout the process.

### **3.8 Ensuring Quality Services**

All staff and Evolve contractors must comply with the Evolve Housing Code of Conduct. The Code outlines our expectations of behaviours to ensure all Residents are treated with respect and courtesy and they receive the best possible service with minimum disruption to their household.

In addition, Evolve undertakes a number of actions to ensure that our maintenance services meet the standards that we expect:

- Inspections by our technical officers – each month we inspect a sample of all responsive maintenance works completed;
- Contractors are required to maintain photo evidence of all works completed;
- Tenant feedback through our Annual Tenant Satisfaction Surveys, post work phone surveys, or Tenant representation on our Resident Advisory Group;
- Internal audits to ensure we are providing an optimal service.

### **3.9 Appealing decisions**

If a Tenant does not agree with a decision Evolve Housing has made, they can request a formal review. To do this, the Tenant needs to complete an Appeals Form stating why they disagree with the decision. Evolve Housing's Appeals Policy, Appeals Fact Sheet and the Appeals Form are all available from Evolve Housing's office and can also be downloaded from our website [www.evolvehousing.com.au](http://www.evolvehousing.com.au)

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

- Appeal – a disagreement by a Resident or Applicant for social housing, with a decision made by Evolve Housing that affects their tenancy or their application for housing, and which the Resident or Applicant has requested be reviewed.
- Common area (of property) – space shared by all tenants and residents on a property i.e. a common room or foyer.
- Days – means calendar days (unless otherwise stated)
- FACS – NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- Landlord – the person who grants the right to occupy residential premises under the Residential Tenancy Agreement
- NCAT – NSW Civil & Administrative Tribunal is an independent NSW statutory body which resolves a wide range of disputes including tenancy and other residential property issues. NCAT decisions must be followed and are enforceable.
- Property – the Property or Residential premises as described in the Residential Tenancy Agreement between the Landlord and the Tenant.
- Resident – a person who resides on a permanent basis in a Property which is owned or managed by Evolve Housing under a Residential Tenancy Agreement (includes a Tenant).
- Residential Tenancy Agreement (or Tenancy Agreement) – a written agreement between a Landlord and a Tenant, which governs the terms on which that Tenant occupies the property described in the Agreement.
- Tenant – a person who signs the Residential Tenancy Agreement with the Landlord and who has certain rights and obligations under that Agreement.

#### 5. RELATED RESOURCES

- Evolve Housing Appeals Policy
- Evolve Housing Privacy Policy
- Evolve Housing Transfer Policy
- Evolve Housing Modifications to Home Resident Request Form
- *Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW)*
- *Housing Act 2001 (NSW)*
- Evolve Housing Zero Tolerance to Violence Policy
- Evolve Housing Complaints Management Policy
- [www.facs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au)
- Evolve Housing Privacy Policy

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*This Policy is subject to change from time to time at the discretion of Evolve Housing. Any approvals required under this Policy will be granted in accordance with the Evolve Housing Limited Delegations of Authority Policy. Further information on this Policy and other topics, is available on the Evolve Housing website [www.evolvehousing.com.au](http://www.evolvehousing.com.au). If you have any specific questions regarding this Policy, please contact Evolve Housing on 1800 693 865 or email your enquiry to [myevolve@evolvehousing.com.au](mailto:myevolve@evolvehousing.com.au).*