

Repairs and Maintenance Handbook

Our guide to your repairs service



Maintaining your home is important to us so please keep this handbook as it gives you useful information on:

- how to report a repair
- what we are responsible for
- what you are responsible for
- how we prioritise a repair request
- the repair process
- other types of work that may be carried out
- service standards
- code of conduct
- complaints, comments and compliments

Remember, if you are unsure, please speak to our staff who will be able to offer advice, help and support on all housing matters.



How to report a repair

The repairs service is available 24/7 (24 hours every day of the year). We offer repair appointments in either the morning or afternoon. **Please have your name, address and daytime telephone number ready to help us deal with your request quickly.**

Phone (freephone from a landline)

- **0800 188 4000**
or **0113 376 0410** (alternative from a mobile)

Available between 8am and 6pm for all repair requests.

Outside these hours emergency only.

Visit us:

- local housing offices or one-stop centres
(check www.leeds.gov.uk for your nearest office)

Online:

- www.leeds.gov.uk/repairsadvice
(non-emergency repairs only)

Reporting a repair in a PFI area:

- Swarcliffe PFI repairs: 0845 602 42 38
Email: enquiries@yorkshirehousing.co.uk
Visit: www.swarcliffeppi.co.uk
- If you live in the Little London or Beeston Hill and Holbeck regeneration area you will have received your Repairs and Maintenance Information handbook.



What we are responsible for

As your landlord we must, by law, keep the main structure and outside of your home in good repair. We must also carry out certain essential repairs that could affect your health and security: for example:- heating breaking down, faulty electrics, blocked drains, burst pipes and doors and windows that cannot be secured properly.

We are responsible for most repairs to the main fixtures and fittings that we have provided inside your home and are required to carry out repairs in communal areas.

Please see table below:

✓ tick indicates a responsive repair which is the landlord's responsibility

✗ cross indicates a repair which is the tenant/leaseholders' responsibility

Repairs	Tenants	Leaseholders
structure and outside of buildings, including the roof, external walls and chimney stack	✓	✓
water, gas, electricity, sanitation and the equipment that has been installed for delivering these services	✓	✓
heating and hot water installations	✓	✓
decoration of external walls and internal communal areas of buildings	✓	✓
corridors, stairways, entrances and lighting in communal areas of buildings	✓	✓
shared facilities such as entry phones, rubbish chutes and lifts	✓	✓
paths and steps to buildings	✓	✓
fences, paving and paths outside the building	✓	✓
balconies	✓	✓
window sills and frames	✓	✓
window and door glazing	✓	✗
plastering work	✓	✗
basins, sinks, baths and toilets (council fittings)	✓	✗
kitchen fixtures and fittings (council fittings)	✓	✗

What you are responsible for

We will carry out most repairs to your home but we do expect you to repair some items yourself. If something gets broken, you may have to pay for it to be repaired yourself. You will also have to pay for new locks if you lose the keys to your home.

As a tenant or leaseholder you are responsible for the following:

damage caused by you, members of your family or your visitors (including accidental damage)	blockages that you have caused to any kitchen or bathroom waste system
plugs and chains to bath, basin and sink	general decoration inside the home
clothes post / washing lines	individual TV aerial or satellite dish
damage caused by the police justifiably forcing entry to your home	clearing blocked gullies of rubbish/leaves etc.
door adjustment to fit carpets	doorbells
door nameplates / numbers	gardens and trees
batteries to smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and testing them	replacing locks/ lost keys - We will replace locks for you but you will be recharged.
plastering or filling small holes or cracks less than 5mm wide in walls or ceilings	repairs to your own white goods such as washing machine, fridge/ freezer etc.
re-fixing or replacing toilet seats	resetting fuse or trip switch
fixtures and fittings such as coat hooks, curtain rails and curtain battens	light bulbs, fluorescent tubes and replacing starters
telephone extension points and cables	shower curtains
plumbing in and connecting your own appliances	any repairs to your own DIY / improvement works
glazing (if damaged by you, your family or visitors). We will make safe and glaze for you but you will be recharged.	clearing your own items and possessions to allow repairs and maintenance to take place – including lifting and replacing carpets, flooring etc.

You are responsible for the decoration within your home. If, as a result of a repair issue such as a leak, your decoration is damaged, the council will not be responsible for it. If our contractor carries out the work to your home that damages your decoration then you may be entitled to an allowance to put this right. You will be told about this before the work takes place.

Remember:

You should always take out adequate home contents insurance to cover your own belongings and accidental damage to internal decoration.

Low cost home insurance is available for our tenants. You can find out more about this scheme at: www.leeds.gov.uk/contentsinsurance.

Responsive repairs

A responsive repair is the repair or replacement to parts of your home generally due to wear and tear; to ensure your health and safety or to protect the building where there is an immediate risk of damage. Responsive repair work can usually be completed in one visit.

How quickly we carry out a repair depends on all of the following:

- what the fault is
- the amount of inconvenience it is causing you and others in your home
- your general health and safety
- the risk of further damage to the property being caused.

Sometimes, we may change the priority of a repair depending on personal circumstance, for example, if there is a risk to your health or safety, or if you will be affected by not having the repair done sooner.

Examples of responsive repairs by priority and response time

Responsive repair priority type	Examples	Response time
Emergency Urgent action is required to prevent a serious risk to health and safety, major damage to the structure of the property or results in the property being insecure. When reported, you will be asked detailed questions to ensure the repair is a genuine emergency. Wherever, possible, the completion of out-of-hours repairs will be deferred to the next working day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ total electrical failure■ uncontrollable leaks■ boarding up a broken window■ total or partial loss of heating or hot water (<i>between 1 November to 30 April</i>)■ communal door entry	We will attend within three hours, and complete an emergency repair within 24 hours.

Responsive repair priority type	Examples	Response time
Priority Repairs which seriously affect your comfort or cause damage to the property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> plumbing and drainage faults partial loss of electric power total or partial loss of heating or hot water (<i>between 1 May to 31 October</i>) 	We will carry out the repair within three working days.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extractor fan not working in kitchen or bathroom roof leaks door entry handsets not working 	We will carry out the repair within seven working days.
General Other repairs that need to be done to your home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> small external repairs re-hanging or easing a door fixing cupboards or units general heating repairs 	We will carry out the repair within 20 working days.

Our repairs service will not repair or replace parts in the following circumstances:

- Just because they are old: as long as parts are working properly, they will not be repaired or replaced.
- For cosmetic reasons: for example, we will not repair any cracks to internal walls or brickwork pointing if they are less than 5mm wide.
- We will not repair any paved areas to remove a trip hazard if the difference in levels is less than 25mm (unless the user is affected by a mobility issue).
- If you have removed a part from the property without giving us the opportunity to repair it: for example, if you report a door that needs replacing but have disposed of it.
- If we have to replace a part to your kitchen or bathroom, we will try to make sure it matches with what you already have. However, if we can't find an exact match, we will provide the nearest possible match. We will not replace all of your kitchen units or bathroom suite just because a match can't be found.

We will always carry out repairs where it is cost effective to do so. We will only replace parts if they cannot be repaired. We carry out improvement work to your home on a planned basis and have programmes agreed at the start of each year to deliver these. The day to day repairs service is there to provide essential repairs only and not to carry out improvement work.

Right-to-Repair legislation – qualifying repairs

The Right to Repair Scheme covers certain repairs which may affect your health, safety or security. By law we must carry out these repairs within a certain time.

If we don't, you can request a second contractor. Should the second contractor fail to complete the work on time, you may be entitled to compensation of £10.00 plus £2 per day for every day the job remains outstanding to a maximum of £50. We will tell you if the repair you report qualifies for the Right to Repair Scheme.

The government publication provides further information on the scheme. 'A better deal for tenants: Your Right to Repair'. This is available as a download on the repairs section of our website: www.leeds.gov.uk/repairsadvice.

Batched repairs

These are non-urgent repairs and items of replacement that may require a pre-inspection; need time to order and/ or manufacture materials.

Examples include:

- repairing and unblocking guttering
- minor repairs to soffits and fascias
- minor non-urgent repairs to paths
- minor repairs to external walls and chimneys
- repairs to path or steps
- replacing kitchen units and worktops
- minor repairs to fences and gates
- small to large areas of loose plaster
- major repairs to timber and concrete floors
- damp-proofing work

Batched repairs are completed within 60 days.

Improvements

Improvements are delivered through planned programmes of work set out in the council's annual investment plan. We will inform you if your home is included in one of these programmes.

For example:

- kitchen replacement
- bathroom replacement
- window replacement
- external and internal door replacement
- roof covering, soffit and fascia and guttering replacement
- fencing and gate renewal
- heating and boiler replacement / installation
- wall and loft insulation
- electrical rewiring
- resurfacing and relaying of paths and paved areas
- brick work pointing and major repair to walls
- rebuilding chimneys
- repairing and replacing canopies above doors
- damp eradication
- major areas of re-plastering (full rooms or more)
- security upgrades
- creation and upgrade of car parking
- garden walls and installation of paths.



Repairs to empty (void) properties

When a property becomes empty, repairs are carried out to Leeds City Council's Letting Standard which is available on the council's website. All new tenants receive a copy of the Letting Standard booklet.

Rechargeable repairs

You are responsible for your home, therefore, all repairs due to damage or neglect, may be rechargeable.

We have a rechargeable repairs policy to deter misuse and damage to council property. It is also to make sure that we do not pass on costs to responsible tenants or leaseholders from irresponsible tenants or leaseholders who do not look after their homes.

Examples of rechargeable repairs are when:

- we have to carry out work because of neglect or damage to your home.
- you ask us to do certain repairs which are your responsibility.
- you end your tenancy and have left your home in an unacceptable condition.
- you deliberately overstate the severity of your repair in order to secure a quicker response.
- there is insufficient credit on your gas or electricity pre-payment meter and we attend your property to reconnect services.

We will inform you if a repair is rechargeable at either the time you report it or when an operative does your repair. We will advise you of the cost of the repair and where possible ask you to pay in advance.

The repairs process – what happens next?

To provide the best possible service to our customers, it is important that our repairs service is clearly defined and understood. Our aim is to get as many repairs as possible right first time and this means keeping you informed.

Before the repair we will:

- tell you how quickly we will complete the repair, give you a target completion date and arrange an appointment where possible.
- post you a confirmation repair slip if it is a qualifying repair under the Government's Right to Repair scheme. This will confirm your agreed appointment.

During the repair we will:

- phone or text you to let you know that we are on our way. (This is why we will always ask you to confirm your phone number).
- introduce ourselves and always show identity cards. (If an ID card isn't shown to you, please ask to see it, we won't be offended).
- explain the purpose of the visit.
- undertake a risk assessment before we start work so we know all the potential health and safety risks to you, your visitors and the public.
- tell you how long the job will take and how this will affect you.
- keep you informed of work progress especially if the job cannot be completed in one visit.
- provide you with our contact details so that if any issues arise you can follow these up easily.
- clean up and remove any rubbish following a repair.
- tell you when the work is finished and explain what has been done.

After the repair we will:

- carry out a "Phone After" survey to some customers on completion of the repair to check we are offering a good service.
- check the quality of the work by checking some completed repairs.
- act on any feedback so we can keep improving the service.

Other types of work that may be carried out

Surveyor pre-inspections

Sometimes it may be necessary for a surveyor to carry out an inspection prior to beginning repair or maintenance work.

Surveyor's pre-inspections are only carried out for complex repair issues (for example, structural repairs, reports of damp or where there is an on-going problem). For all other faults a repair order will be raised with the relevant contractor to attend.

Carrying out your own improvements

If you are a secure tenant, and have a clear rent account, you have the right to make improvements to your home such as installing central heating, fitting a bathroom suite or shower, laying a driveway or any alteration to fixtures and fittings. However, you must get permission from us in writing first.

Before commencing work, contact us giving as much detail as possible. If we need to visit you to consider what you are planning, we will:

- visit within 10 working days
- check that the proposed works are safe
- tell you how to get planning permission and building control approval if required
- inform you within 20 working days whether we agree to the work going ahead and any conditions you must follow.

After the work is completed, we may visit within 10 working days to check everything has been completed satisfactorily. If it isn't we will ask you to put the work right or to re-instate the property to how it was before.

For some tenant improvements, such as central heating installation, if it is installed correctly and to an acceptable standard, the council may agree to take responsibility for future maintenance. For most tenants' own improvements, however, the responsibility for future repairs and maintenance will be theirs.

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Planned and maintenance, testing and servicing

These are programmes of work which are repeated at regular intervals to protect health and safety and to maintain buildings, equipment and installations in a good condition.

For example:

- external redecoration and internal redecoration of communal areas and sheltered housing complexes
- gas appliance servicing
- servicing and maintaining communal boilers and systems
- lift servicing
- communal fire detection equipment servicing
- testing electrical installations
- checking specialised lifting equipment such as stair lifts and hoists
- testing and servicing mechanical and electrical equipment such as ventilation systems, automatic doors and electrical warm air heating appliances
- maintaining drainage stacks
- checking window safety devices.

If your home is included in a planned maintenance programme, we will:

- send you a letter in advance of the work
- provide you with contact details in case you have an enquiry about the work or you want to arrange a more convenient appointment
- tell you what work we will be doing
- tell you the length of time we require access to your home
- send you a reminder by text or by phone prior to your appointment.

If your home is included in planned maintenance, you need to:

- contact us if you have any queries or if the appointment is not suitable
- provide us with access to your home at the agreed appointment time to ensure that you remain in the programme of work.

Gas servicing

As a landlord, we are legally responsible for the safety of our tenants in relation to gas safety. If you have a gas installation in your home it will be checked every year. It is intended to protect you, your family and your neighbours from any potential hazards: for example, carbon monoxide gas, which doesn't smell and can't be seen but can be fatal.

By law we must:

- repair and maintain gas pipework, flues and appliances in a safe condition. We do not maintain your own appliances such as cookers but we do make sure they are safe to use. If they are not, we will turn them off and disconnect them.
- ensure an annual gas service and safety check is carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer on each appliance, pipework and flue.
- keep a record of each gas service and safety check and issue you with a copy of the certificate.

When your gas service and safety check is due, we will contact you with an appointment.

If we do not gain access to your home to carry out the gas service and safety check, we may resort to legal action.

It is important that you:

- reply promptly when you receive your annual gas service and safety check appointment if it is not a suitable time for you.
- allow us access to your home at the agreed appointment time to carry out repairs and the annual gas service and safety check.
- tell us of any faults or damage to any gas appliance immediately.
- make sure any air vents are not blocked up if you have a gas appliance.
- let us know if a room that contains a gas fire changes and becomes a bedroom.

Where we have fitted a gas fire or gas hot water system, we will arrange to inspect and service it every year and provide you with a copy of the Gas Safety Certificate. It is very important for your health and safety that this is carried out.



Gas leaks

Make sure you know where the main gas tap is (usually beside the meter). In the case of an emergency, turning off the gas tap will stop the gas supply to your home.

If you think there is a gas leak, you need to:

- put out cigarettes and all naked flames
- check if a gas tap has been left on accidentally, or if a pilot light has gone out
- turn off the gas supply at the meter
- open all windows and doors until the leak has been dealt with
- phone National Grid on 0800 111 999
- please note the National Grid reference number as this will be needed when reporting the fault.

You must not:

- touch electrical switches, lights and doorbells (this may cause a spark)
- use matches or other naked flames
- carry out any work to gas appliances or installations in your home.

0800 111 999



Our service standards

Leeds City Council recognises the importance of providing an efficient, effective and customer focused repairs and maintenance service.

We work in partnership with our service providers to ensure tenants and leaseholders receive the highest possible level of service.

We will:

- keep the appointments we make with you
- aim to complete repairs right first time
- complete all repairs within target date timescales
- ensure you are satisfied with the service you receive
- ensure the quality of the repairs we carry out are to a high standard
- all health and safety checks are completed

Code of Conduct

We aim to provide a high quality service to all customers. All our service providers will work to meet the following standards:

Customer Care, we will:

- keep noise and disruption to a minimum
- park vehicles appropriately and not run over grass verges
- check for any special requirements you may have before starting work
- protect your home by using clean dustsheets to cover furniture and floor coverings where appropriate and wear protective shoe coverings
- keep safe all materials and equipment used to avoid danger
- always use materials of a good quality and, where possible, sourced locally from sustainable sources
- make sure that all services are reconnected at the end of the day, or when the repair is completed, e.g. water, gas, electricity
- clear away all rubbish created from the work
- remove scaffolding within one week of the completion of the work.

Presentation and behaviour, we will:

- be tidy and appropriately dressed
- introduce ourselves, show our identification (ID) card and explain why we are visiting
- always inform you when we are leaving your home

- be polite, courteous and professional at all times
- not shout or use language or behaviour that discriminates or offends
- not smoke or play audio equipment in or around your home
- avoid involvement in any confrontational situations and report any incidents to your customer liaison advisor.

Communication, we will:

- make arrangements for alternative methods of communication that you request e.g. translations
- inform you if we are going to be late for an appointment
- explain and demonstrate the use of any newly fitted appliance or product.

Care of your home, we will:

- not use your facilities without permission
- take care of your home and belongings
- ensure your home is secure while we are working in it and when we leave.

Our expectations

To promote good customer relations, we request that you are polite and courteous to all staff members and repair operatives visiting or carrying out work in your home. Leeds City Council takes a “zero tolerance” approach to violence and aggression towards its staff. This is to protect everyone who works for our organisation from possible harm.

We define violence and aggression as:

- verbal abuse (which includes shouting, swearing and gestures)
- threats against our staff which occur in the workplace
- actual or threatened physical assaults on staff.

The workplace is defined as any of our offices and all other premises where work is undertaken as part of the person’s official duties. This includes your home.

We kindly ask that you refrain from smoking whilst our staff and repair operatives are visiting your home or carrying out repairs inside your property.

Complaints, comments and compliments






We welcome feedback from all our customers. This is your opportunity to say what was good and what could be improved about the service you received. You should always use your rent reference number when you contact us.

The complaints, comments and compliments we receive help us to:

- develop and improve our services
- put things right when they have gone wrong.

We are committed to providing high quality services and, although we do our best to make sure that these are delivered to a high standard, occasionally things can go wrong.

Complaints, comments and compliments can be made in the following ways:

Online at www.leeds.gov.uk/compliments Complete our 'Let us Know' form which you will find in the Top Tasks section to the right of the page.	
Visit us at your local One Stop Centre or housing office Our staff will be happy to log your complaint or you can fill in one of our feedback forms.	
Phone: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 0800 188 4000 (free from a landline) or 0113 376 0410 (alternative from a mobile)■ Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation: 0800 389 5503 (0113 378 2188)	
Textphone for deaf and hard of hearing people: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 0113 222 4410	
Write to us at our freepost address (no stamp needed) Leeds City Council Housing Services Freepost RRLU-UYBZ-UHKN Navigation House 8 George Mann Road Leeds LS10 1DJ	

Our customer complaints procedure

Upon receipt of a complaint, we will look at whether there is the need for a full investigation or if we could resolve the issue for you quickly. If we think we can do so, we may contact you to discuss this with the hope of resolving your complaint.

If this is not possible, we will:

- allocate your complaint for formal investigation
- acknowledge receipt of your complaint, usually in writing, within 3 working days.

As a minimum, the acknowledgement will tell you:

- who will be investigating the complaint and their contact details
- when you can expect an answer
- and provide you with a full answer and explanation of your original complaint with any next steps.

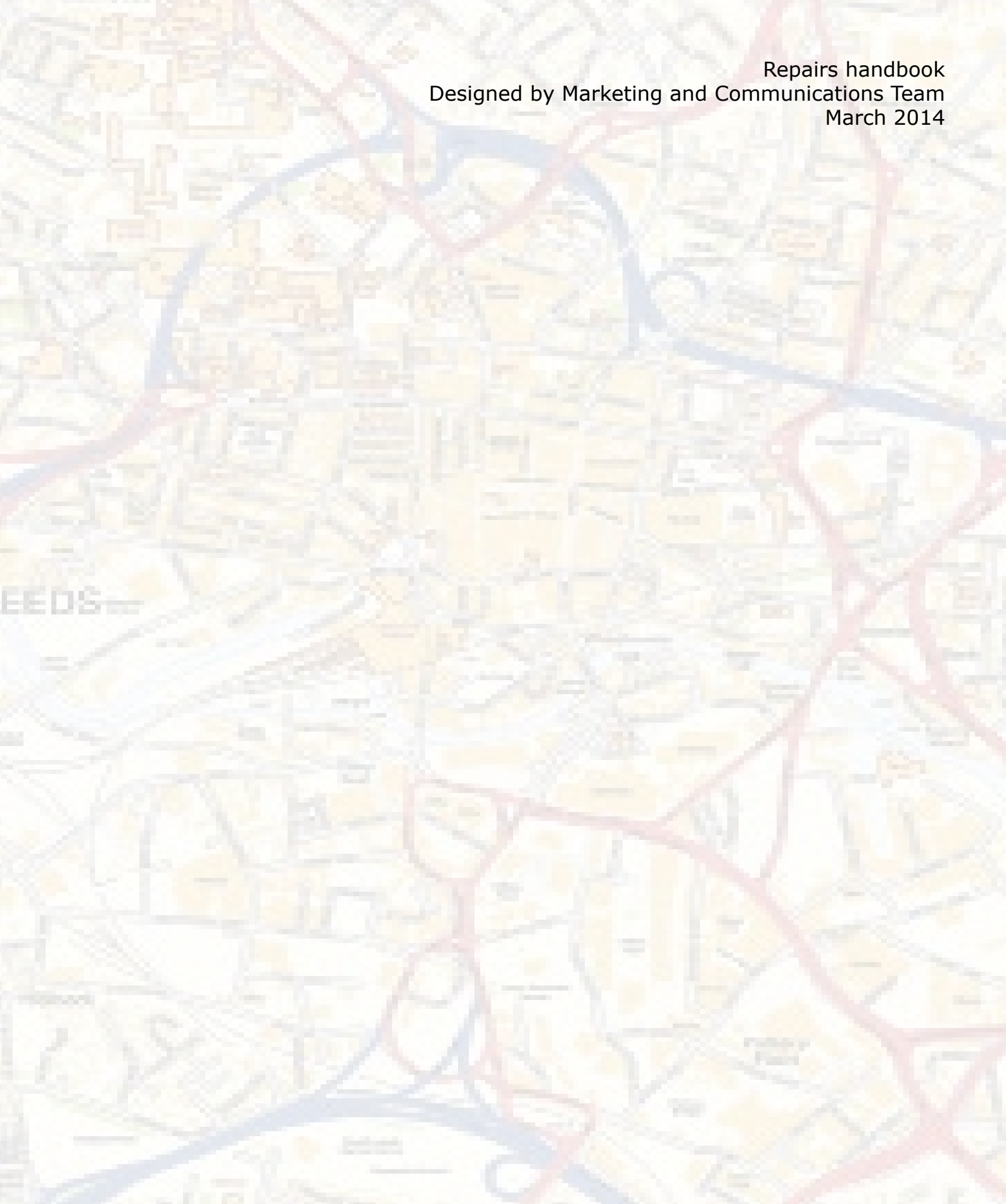
If you wish to request a further review of the outcome of your complaint, you will normally have 28 days from the date of our initial response to do this, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We would ask you to provide more information about why you are requesting this. However, consideration will normally only be given to new facts and evidence, or to comments on the facts and evidence on which we have relied as part of the investigation. Any unrelated issues raised will be dealt with separately.

Next steps

There is no further right of appeal to Leeds City Council following completion of a review of your complaint. Within our final response, we will inform you of your right to take your complaint further if you remain dissatisfied. Our response will contain the contact details for the appropriate Ombudsman's office.

Further information can be found at: www.leeds.gov.uk/compliments.



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