

To: AUDIT, RISK AND SCRUTINY BOARD

On: 19 MARCH 2018

Report by: LEAD OFFICER

Heading: REVIEW OF HOUSING REPAIRS BY COUNCIL AND OUTSIDE CONTRACTORS

1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper updates progress on the review of Housing repairs by both Building Services and outside contractors as agreed as part of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board's annual programme of activity for 2017/18.
- 1.2 As previously agreed by the Board, the scope of the review was to identify the current processes in place to monitor and ensure high quality of works are applied to repairs with the key purpose being to ensure that repairs to Council housing stock are completed timeously and within set targets; properties are not left in a dangerous condition; that satisfactory monitoring and evaluation of repairs is undertaken and that there are measures in place to address unsatisfactory works by both external contractors and Building Services.
- 1.3 In order to benchmark, the Lead Officer made contact with East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and Dundee City Councils. These Councils have similar overall housing stock numbers to that of Renfrewshire and provide a repairs service to residents.
- 1.4 Information was gathered on how repairs are monitored for quality and customer satisfaction levels, which provides an indication of how the customer perceives the service. This information has been compared, as far as is possible, with that from Renfrewshire Council.
- 1.5 In comparison to North Ayrshire and Dundee City Councils Renfrewshire Council's repairs service is performing reasonably well and is similar in terms

of performance and service delivery. However, the model of delivery in East Ayrshire Council has been redesigned and is providing enhanced levels of customer satisfaction. It is recommended that the Board may benefit from understanding this model in more depth.

- 1.6 Information on the repairs service from North Ayrshire and Dundee City Councils has been provided and is included within Appendix 2 of this report.
- 1.7 The Housing Asset Services Manager for East Ayrshire Council has confirmed attendance at the next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board where he will provide an overview of the Repairs Service and be available to answer any questions from members of the Board.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board is asked to:
- Note the content of this report and agree the initial findings as set out in Section 3 of this report;
 - Agree the next steps for the review process as set out in Section 4 of this report;
 - Agree the attendance of Senior Officers from Development & Housing Services and Environment & Communities to the Board meeting on 29 May 2018.

3. Key Points

- 3.1 The key points to date in the review of housing repairs by Council and External Contractors are:
- Renfrewshire Council's repairs service is operating reasonably well and is based on similar delivery processes to that of North Ayrshire and Dundee City Councils. Renfrewshire's customer satisfaction level was 91.7% for 2016/17.
 - There are a number of properties within Renfrewshire which appear to be resource intensive with high numbers of repairs being necessary during the last financial year.
 - East Ayrshire Council operates a redesigned delivery model which appears to have, for that area, delivered significant improvements to the repairs service, customer journey and satisfaction levels (98.7%).

- Customer satisfaction levels for the three benchmarked Councils and Renfrewshire Council have been calculated in accordance with Scottish Housing Regulator requirements.
-

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Work is currently underway between Officers within Development & Housing Services and Environment & Communities to change how repairs are delivered, which will improve how the service is delivered to tenants within Renfrewshire, with the aim of improving the customer journey and experience whilst also realising efficiencies within the service.
- 4.2 It is proposed that specific areas of interest identified within the Council's repairs process be further scrutinised and reported to the next meeting of this Board, including:
- The overall customer journey from first contact with the Council to a repair being satisfactorily completed;
 - Identifying root causes of requirement for high number of repeat visits to property;
 - Consideration of Improvements to ICT systems which will reduce duplication of works in the repairs process.
- 4.3 Senior Officers from Development & Housing Services and Environment & Communities will also attend the next meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board to discuss in detail within the points at Section 4. Presentations will be provided in advance, allowing elected members the opportunity to consider any questions they may wish to explore further.
-

5. Background

- 5.1 The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board agreed that the Review of Housing Repairs by both internal Building Services and outside contractors is progressed and approved the Lead Officer making contact with Tenant and Residents Associations and other Councils to evidence the quality of repairs which are routinely undertaken on behalf of tenants.
- 5.2 Feedback from Tenant and Residents Associations was presented to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board meeting on 24 January 2018, where there was general consensus that repairs were of a good quality, with little negative feedback from those Tenant and Residents. Confirmation has been obtained that Williamsburgh Tenant and Residents Association have been invited to

attend the Council Wide Tenant Forum meetings. Williamsburgh Tenant and Residents Association will also be attending future meetings of the Council's Repairs Development Group.

- 5.3 The Council areas of Dundee City, East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire were selected on the basis that they have similar overall numbers of housing stock to that within Renfrewshire. Responses to questions have been received from each of these authorities and statistical information regarding their repairs service and customer satisfaction is included within Appendix 1, with the other information from responses being included within Appendix 2. The Lead Officer has also visited East Ayrshire Council to discuss the repairs process in greater detail and the main points from this information gathering process are outlined in sections 5.7 and 5.8 of this report.
- 5.4 It is evident from the information obtained that the current repairs process within Dundee City Council and North Ayrshire Council are undertaken in a similar delivery model to that which exists at this time within Renfrewshire. However, East Ayrshire Council has, some time ago, adopted a redesigned business model and subsequently noted a significant improvement in their customer journey with evidence of improvement in customer satisfaction with measurable reductions in repeat visits; also delivering efficiencies within the service.
- 5.5 Consideration of repairs processes with the benchmark Councils has shown that Renfrewshire Council is performing relatively well and for the majority of repairs, there does not appear to be issues or concerns. However, when there are a number of properties requiring multiple visits over a twelve month period, it is possible that there could be issues under some circumstances and this requires to be further explored.
- 5.6 From review of the number of repeat visits required, it is evident that there are a small number of properties within Renfrewshire placing very high demand on the service i.e. these required in excess of 15 visits for repairs during the 2016/17 financial year. Whilst this appears also to be the case with Dundee City Council, it does not appear to be so for East Ayrshire Council. Renfrewshire had 231 such properties compared with 58 in East Ayrshire Council.
- 5.7 **Renfrewshire Council Repairs Process**
- 5.7.1 Renfrewshire Council has 12,220 properties within its current stock and approximately 70% of these are tenement or flatted property, The Council's repairs service is delivered by both Building Services, within Environment & Communities and external contractors, for Development and Housing Services.

- 5.7.2 Requests for repairs are made through the Council's Customer Contact Centre with a small number also being received through the RenRepairs App. The majority of repairs (approximately 80%) are carried out through an appointments system to maximise the opportunity for tradespersons to access the property at the first visit. Some repairs, not requiring access to the property such as roof/gutter repairs are not appointed but will be undertaken within the target timescales which are detailed within the Repairs Policy.
- 5.7.3 Building Services undertake various forms of monitoring of the quality of repairs to ensure they are of a satisfactory standard with on site and post-repair inspections undertaken on a random sample basis by Building Services Clerk of Works. The Customer Contact Centre carry out telephone surveys with 10% of tenants to monitor their satisfaction. The Council also participates in robust benchmarking with other social landlords through independent organisations including the Best Value Housing Network, Housemark and APSE. A high customer satisfaction survey rate of 91.7% would appear to reflect that repairs are being carried out to a high overall standard.
- 5.7.4 Building Services currently track all repairs undertaken by individual tradespersons and where complaints have been made or poor quality workmanship identified through post-inspection, the individuals concerned can be identified and quality issues addressed to prevent a recurrence of the situation.
- 5.7.5 External contractors are bound to contractual terms and conditions when undertaking repairs on behalf of the Council and these include relevant penalty clauses in relation to both performance of the contractor and quality of repairs carried out, with all contracts being awarded through the Council's procurement process.
- 5.7.6 Where repairs extend beyond one working day, Building Services and external contractors are expected to ensure that property is safe for occupancy overnight to ensure that tenants are not put at risk of harm. Discussion with Senior Officers have confirmed that there is no evidence to suggest that properties are being left in an unsafe condition and furthermore, a 24 hour out of hours emergency response service is in place should there be a need to implement these.
- 5.7.7 During the 2016/17 financial year, Renfrewshire Council recorded that there were 1936 properties which didn't require any repairs; 7285 requiring one to five repairs; 2114 requiring six to ten repairs; 568 properties requiring 11 to 15 repairs and 231 properties where greater than 15 repairs were required over the year. It appears that as a result of Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) investment works, Renfrewshire Council has seen a downturn in the number of reactive repairs being undertaken over recent years, with 65,701 being carried out in 2014/15 compared with 54,276 in 2016/17.

5.8 East Ayrshire Council

- 5.8.1 Until 2010, East Ayrshire Council's Building Services operated as a Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) to their Housing Service, providing the repairs service for their Housing Department. At this time the DLO Service was producing a £2million profit per annum for the Council, however it was considered that the service was no longer fit for purpose, and a decision was taken to create a single business unit, Housing Asset Services.
- 5.8.2 A significant amount of work was undertaken, principally around cultural changes within the tradespersons and inspectors working within the new service to drive improvements and efficiencies. The former housing Inspectors and Repairs and Maintenance Officers were re-profiled into Housing and Maintenance Officer Roles who were given ownership of repairs from allocation to completion. This removed duplication in both former roles inspecting works in advance of repairs being carried out and lines being issued and re-issued. Customers are provided with a named contact for all aspects of their repair and there is a sense of personal responsibility with the Housing and Maintenance Officers for ensuring that the repairs are carried out right first time, as far as is possible. Tradespersons have also been allowed autonomy to undertake any similar repairs which either they identify at the time of their visit, or at the request of tenants. This removes the need for the tenant to report another repair, reducing the need for further visits; increasing efficiencies, reducing return visits to the same property for similar works and ultimately improves the customer journey.
- 5.8.3 A greater emphasis on having fixed specifications for fixtures and fittings within Council housing stock has improved efficiencies within the Service as there is a reduced range of replacement parts/fittings which require to be stocked both in stores and on trades' vehicle; there being less likelihood of a tradesperson attending a visit without the correct part, removing the requirement for multiple visits; all of which improves the customer experience and service delivery for the tenant.
- 5.8.4 A combination of improvements to how repairs are notified, managed and undertaken along with the improvements in routine stock maintenance would appear to be the reasons for this year on year reductions in reactive repairs. A high customer satisfaction survey rate of 98.7% would appear to reflect that repairs are being carried out to a high overall standard.
- 5.8.5 From the information submitted by East Ayrshire Council, the greatest number of properties requiring repairs during the financial year 2016/17 had between one and five repairs but there were 58 properties where greater than 15 repairs were required over the year.

5.9 **North Ayrshire Council**

- 5.9.1 North Ayrshire's Housing Repairs are undertaken by both external contractors and their Building Services team to deliver the repairs service for their Housing Department. The Building Services team carry out all reactive repairs, void works, planned maintenance, aids and adaptations works.
- 5.9.2 North Ayrshire Council utilise a calls diagnostic tool to identify the type of repair required and prioritises this in line with their repairs policy e.g. emergency repair requiring immediate attention through to planned repair works. Once the repair has been diagnosed by the call centre, this is passed to Building Services who have a dedicated Response Unit which is responsible for all reactive repairs. Non-emergency repairs are inspected prior to the works being undertaken to ensure that plant, access equipment, materials and time allocated are accurate before the job is appointed to a tradesman. All other repairs are appointed by a job planner, utilising a mobile scheduling system to plan and manage repairs through electronic real time diaries.
- 5.9.3 All reactive repairs are completed directly by the operatives using stock carried in their vehicle. Once the job is categorised, it is allocated to the nearest and most suitable operative; scheduled through their mobile scheduling system. Field operatives use Personal Digital devices with Touch software installed to receive all works, complete risk assessments, complete time sheets, complete follow up forms and carry out van checks. All information passed out to and from the mobile scheduling system is managed via a housing management system which is updated with start, finish times, schedule of rates, materials to ensure that all job information is captured.
- 5.9.4 Building Services carry out quality checks on both internal trades and sub contracted works. Internal work is selected randomly and inspected by contract supervisors at the rate of three per week. Last year 4,421 checks were carried out to ensure that repairs had been completed to a satisfactory level, with the inspections being undertaken by sub-contractor supervisors, Building Services Inspection Team and trades' supervisors. Sub-Contracted works are inspected based on a value/cost basis, with 25% inspected below the value of £200, 40% between £200 - £300, 60% between £300 -£500 and a 100% check above £500. Where a sub-contractor does not meet quality standards or has underperformed, payment is delayed or a credit note is requested and all works are required to be made good at no additional costs to the client. As a result of this, North Ayrshire do not record data on failures as quality checks are not finalised until all remedial work has been undertaken.
- 5.9.5 North Ayrshire Council undertake customer satisfaction surveys with satisfaction cards being sent to tenants who have had a reactive repair completed within each quarter. In addition, customer satisfaction calls are

carried out on a 10% ratio of completed repairs. Figures obtained from North Ayrshire Council indicate that 11,000 tenants were surveyed and 730 responses were received from tenants who had a reactive repair carried out within their property (the 11,000 tenants surveyed will include all works undertaken within property e.g. planned repairs, right to repairs aid and adaptation works) . A high customer satisfaction rate of 93% would indicate that the service is performing well and that there does not appear to be significant issues with their repairs service.

5.10 Dundee City Council

- 5.10.1 Dundee City Council's Housing repairs service is provided along similar lines to that within Renfrewshire whereby their Construction Service undertakes the majority of repairs for their Housing Service with some specialist repairs being contracted out to private companies e.g. controlled entry repairs and lift maintenance works.
- 5.10.2 Dundee City Council has what they consider to be an older stock profile with a high percentage of tenement and other flatted dwellings, accounting for approximately 74% of their total stock, with 11 multi –story buildings. This is thought to be, in part, responsible for the relatively high number of repairs being undertaken annually. Within these figures there are a significant number of void properties (approximately 20%) being brought up to standard for re-letting where there is minimal works required which, as a consequence of their system being unable to differentiate these, has inflated the overall volume of repairs.
- 5.10.3 Dundee monitors the effectiveness of their repairs service through their repairs partnership board and the Council's Best Value Review Group. Tenant satisfaction surveys are undertaken by phone call with random samples post repair works having been carried out. There are also post repair inspections undertaken by trades' supervisors on a random sample basis to measure the quality of work along with any repair which has resulted in a complaint or report that the works are unsatisfactory. At this time there are no penalties applied to works which are considered to be unsatisfactory however the partnership arrangement is currently being reviewed. Customer satisfaction levels with the repairs service is at 95.3% for 2016/17 and the percentage of repairs completed Right First Time is 73.7%.
- 5.10.4 From the information submitted by Dundee City Council, the greatest number of properties had between one and five repairs during the 2016/17 year but there were over 200 properties where greater than 15 repairs were required over the year.
- 5.10.5 For the current 2017/18 financial year, Dundee have re-categorised repair types to reflect a better balance between emergency and non-emergency

works whereby remedial works undertaken as a result of an emergency repair had until this time been included within the emergency repair category.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - none
 2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
 3. **Community Planning** - none
 4. **Legal** - none
 5. **Property/Assets** - none
 6. **Information Technology** - none
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
 8. **Health & Safety** - none
 9. **Procurement** - none
 10. **Risk** - none
 11. **Privacy Impact** - none
 12. **Cosla Policy Position** - none
-

List of Background Papers - none

Author: Colin Hunter
Environmental Improvements Manager, Environment & Communities

Tel: 0141 618 7598
Email: colin.hunter@renfrewshire.gov.uk

**Appendix 1- Customer Satisfaction Comparison with Selected Councils (2016/17
Scottish Housing Regulator Returns)**

	Renfrewshire	East Ayrshire	North Ayrshire	Dundee
Housing Stock Numbers	12,220	12,529	12,986	12,582
% of Flats in Housing Stock	71%	44%	37%	74%
No. Reactive Repairs completed 2016/17	54,276	38,498	32,085	54,247
Repairs by Trade				
Electrics	8,728	5698	8866	10,221
Gas	15,149	10,748	9245	11,251
Glazier	907	1147	440	636
Joiner	8,447	6943	7568	12,194
Painter	537	81	1	1179
Plumber	13,140	9273	1626	12,245
Sub Contract	948	175	310	0
Scaffolding	12	0	N/A	581
Ext Building	2641	3057	3047	2396
Plaster Works	1,232	1096	620	932
Other	2435	280	362	2612
Total	54,176	38498	32,085	54,247
Average Cost of Repairs (excluding Programmed Repairs)	£80.10	£61- for emergency repairs	£80.19 Emergency £81.92 non-emergency	£101.82 for all repair types
Average Cost of Repairs (including Programmed Repairs)	£216.29	£94.60	N/A	N/A
Number of Tenants Surveyed	4898 (telephone Survey)	N/A	11,000	428 (telephone survey)
Number of Tenant Responses	4898	2641	730	428
% Repairs Completed Right First Time	94.8%	84.6%	98.4%	73.7%
% Satisfaction with Repairs	91.4%	98.7%	93%	95.3%

Appendix 2- Council Responses to Information Requests for the Review

East Ayrshire Council

Information within this report was obtained through discussion with Derek Spence, Housing Asset Services Manager for the Council.

North Ayrshire Council

Question No	Question	Response	Queries/Issues
1	Would you be able to provide a copy of your housing repairs policy?	Yes, copy provided.	
2	Do you use in-house staff to undertake repairs within council stock or is this contracted out? It would be useful if you could provide some details on how your repairs service is delivered?	<p>Building Services is North Ayrshire Council's in house building and maintenance service provider. Building Services carry out all reactive repairs, void works, planned maintenance, aids and adaptations and programmed works (kitchens, bathrooms, windows). There are certain types of work that will be contracted out, this would be mainly specialised types of works. To help deliver the repairs service, all calls are centralised through the corporate call centre. From this call a diagnostic system is used to identify a repair and prioritise it in line with the Housing Repair Policy. The repairs policy has defined the following categories of repairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency – 4 hours • Right To Repair – 1/3/7 days 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Emergency – 7 working days average • Planned – 60 working days <p>Once the repair has been diagnosed and prioritised by the call centre, this is passed to Building Services. We have a dedicated Response Unit which is responsible for all reactive repairs. All repairs with a target of 7 days or more are scoped by our in house inspection team to ensure that plant, access equipment, materials and time allocated are accurate before the job is appointed to a tradesman.</p> <p>All other repairs are appointed by our Planners who use a mobile scheduling system (Opti Time) to plan and manage repairs through electronic “real time” diaries. All reactive repairs are completed directly by the operatives using the imprest stock carried in their vehicle. Once the job arrives in Opti Time, the planners allocate it to the nearest and most suitable operative; this is scheduled through Opti Time. The repair is then allocated to the operative through Opti Time and picked up through the mobile solution provider 1st Touch. The operatives in the field use PDA devices with the 1st Touch software installed to receive all works, complete</p>	
--	--	---	--

		<p>risk assessments, complete time sheets, complete follow up forms and carry out van checks etc. All information passed out to and from Opti Time and 1st Touch is managed via the housing management system ROCC URM. URM is updated with start, finish times, schedule of rates, materials to ensure that all job information is captured.</p>	
3	<p>How is the performance and quality of repairs undertaken both by internal tradespersons and external contractors monitored?</p>	<p>Quality Checks</p> <p>During 2016/17 Inspectors carried out Client based quality checks, undertaking 1979 inspections. 98.93% were passed first time.</p> <p>Building Services carry out quality checks on both internal trades and sub contracted works. Internal work is selected randomly and inspected by contract supervisors at the rate of three per week. Last year we carried out 4,421 checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-contractors – 570 – 12.9% • Inspection Team – 1,979 – 44.8% • Supervisors – 1,872 – 42.3% <p>Sub-Contracted works are inspected at value/cost, with 25% inspected below the value of £200, 40% between £200 - £300, 60% between £300 -£500 and a 100% check above £500.</p> <p>4,421 quality checks were undertaken by Building Services in 2016/17. Where a sub contractor</p>	

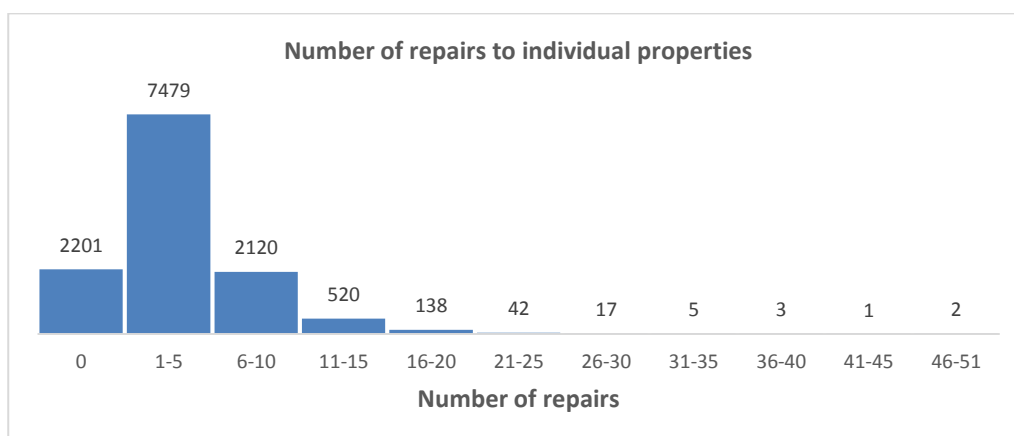
		<p>has underperformed payment is delayed or a credit note is requested. As a result no data is recorded on failures as quality checks are not finalised until all remedial work has been undertaken. Internal trade works which fail and require another visit are raised on a non-charge ticket. In 2016/17 41 tickets were raised, giving a failure rate of 0.93%</p>	
4	<p>Do you apply penalties where performance/quality is not satisfactory and what criteria do you set for this? If, so are there particular examples which you could share?</p>	<p>As the Councils in-house contractor penalties do not apply. All performance indicators are consistently met with no issues. Where there are quality issues regarding material/labour, all works are made good directly at no additional cost to the client.</p>	
5	<p>Can you provide details regarding how you engage with tenants on satisfaction with repairs and are there any targets around this subject?</p>	<p>Every three years Housing conduct an independent survey of tenants on housing matters, which include satisfaction rates on repairs, and review this against previous data. Tenant participation groups are regularly updated on performance.</p>	
6	<p>From your annual return to the Scottish Housing Regulator, you had a tenant response of 730 to your repairs satisfaction survey. Can you advise how many tenants were consulted?</p>	<p>11,000 tenants were consulted. This was PI 16 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and relates to responsive repairs only. Percentage of tenants who have had repairs or</p>	

		maintenance carried out in last 12 months satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.	
7	Can you provide numbers of repeat calls to the same property (either for the same or different reason) from 2016/17?	Information provided in table	More information was requested and direction given: This would relate to reactive works only (both emergency and non-emergency) but would exclude all planned/kitchen/void works
8	Can you provide details on the numbers and categories of repairs undertaken during 2016/17?	Information provided in table	
9	Your local authority undertook substantially lower numbers of reactive repairs during 2016/17 to Renfrewshire and I would be interested to receive any thoughts on why you think this could be	Information provided in table	<p>Scottish Housing Regulator set out what should be included in Contextual Indicator 13 'average number of reactive repairs completed per occupied property' in their technical guidance document for Landlords.</p> <p>We would be happy for the Renfrewshire Team to visit our Physical Environment Team to share good practice</p>

10	Are there any other comments you would wish to offer regarding the Repairs Service offered by your local authority?		
-----------	---	--	--

Dundee City Council

1. Repairs policy – Attached
2. The reactive maintenance service is primarily provided in partnership with the City Councils construction division. Some specialist repairs such as controlled entry, lift maintenance , warden call etc are sub contracted.
3. Performance is monitored through the repairs partnership board and the Councils Best Value Review Group. Repairs post inspections are completed by trades supervisors on a sample basis to measure the quality of work along with any repair resulting in a complaint or a report of unsatisfactory work.
4. We do not apply specific performance penalties under our partnership arrangement, the partnership agreement is being reviewed.
5. Our satisfaction levels are determined by a sample post repair completion telephone survey.
6. 428, this is a rolling telephone survey.
- 7.



CATEGORY	NUMBER OF REPAIRS
EMERGENCY	29725
NON EMERGENCY	24522

8. Difficult to be specific, perhaps related to stock type – Dundee has older housing stock and a high percentage of tenemental and other flatted dwellings, we have 11 multi storeys. There are some practical issues like not always logging multi trade so if 3 trades required 3 jobs logged. Type of components / equipment in the property. Some void properties where “minimal” work is required have work carried out through day to day repairs. This is the case for approximately 20% of our voids but our system does not currently allow us to differentiate these, it will however inflate the number of repairs.
9. From 1st April we have re categorised out repairs types which has seen a better balance between emergency and non-emergency repairs. Our emergency repairs categories previously included remedial work (following on from the emergency element) and some non-emergency categories.