The Property Ombudsman (TPO) Code of Practice

Checklist for Repairs & Maintenance

Fixflo

The Property Ombudsman

Introduction

The Property Ombudsman Code of Practice was updated on 1 June, 2019. There are quite a few changes that specify how agents and landlords handle repairs and maintenance for rental properties. If you're a member of ARLA or you're signed up to the Property Ombudsman redress scheme and have chosen to follow the Code, then you'll need to be sure you're complying with these changes.

As there is quite a bit to digest, we've assembled a handy checklist to help you stay compliant.
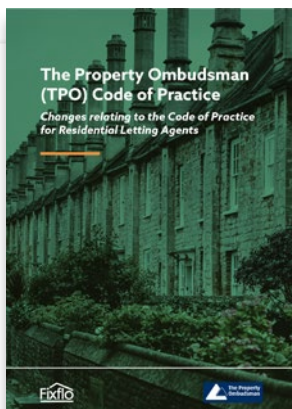
If you'd like to read a more in-depth guide on the changes to the Code of Practice and how they affect your approach to repairs and maintenance, you can download our free eBook below:

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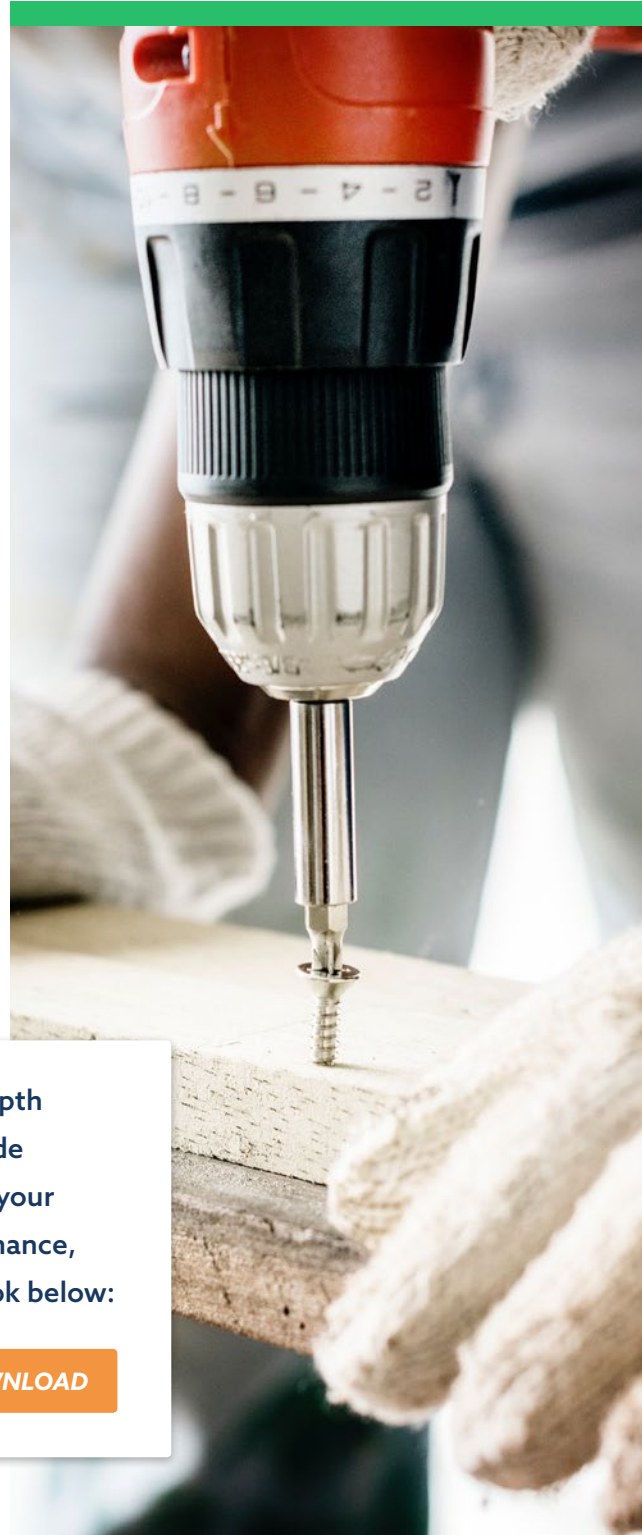
Repair reporting

A major responsibility for property managers and landlords is to make reporting repairs issues easy and accessible. The Property Ombudsman Code of Practice requires prompt and appropriate handling of repairs and maintenance.

Do you provide a 24-hour repair reporting and maintenance service?

Do you provide out-of-hours services for emergency repairs?

Do you enable tenants to report repairs in languages other than English?

Do you enable tenants to upload videos, images or other supporting documentation to assist with the repair report?

Do you keep your tenants informed about contractors, even out of hours?

Are tenants given the option to be present for a repairs call out?

Are you aware of those tenants which might be disadvantaged so you can ensure special care is taken?

Do tenants receive at least 24 hours notice about visits by contractors or landlords (save in cases of genuine emergency)?

Do you make it clear to tenants if you are unable to accompany any third party accessing their property?

Is there a facility to keep a record of these communications in relation to access?

Is there a facility to keep suitable records of repairs and maintenance issues?

Are your instructions around repairs and maintenance sufficiently clear so that contractors understand the scope, scale and urgency of the works required?

Is there a defined procedure about how your company handles repairs and maintenance?

Is it easily accessible to your tenants via your website or in print format?

Do you take into consideration the age and condition of a building with regard to required repairs and maintenance?

Have you agreed with the landlord how often you will make routine visits to the property to check for any issues?

Do you have a way of communicating promptly to the landlord and tenant any important issues that you become aware of as a result of these routine visits?

Contractors and processes

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Having access to qualified contractors is one of the essential components with regards to responsive repairs and maintenance. However, there are factors you'll need to bear in mind, including ensuring your contractors are correctly insured.

Does your company use a team of trusted contractors?

Do you have a team of contractors who can be called on during emergencies, 24 hours a day?

Is there a process in place for checking your contractors have valid insurance (both professional indemnity and public liability)?

Is there a regular process in place for checking the certifications and/or professional or trade membership of your contractors?

Are you informed if any certifications, membership or insurance policies are expiring or have expired?

Do you have processes in place to:

Update gas safety certificates on an annual basis?

Check smoke and carbon monoxide alarms?

Check electrical safety of your property?

Check hazards as identified under the HHSRS?

Issue an EPC certificate?

If repair or maintenance work is required, do you have a process to provide a detailed breakdown of the work required, the time scale and potential costs?

If you have agreed a maintenance or repairs contract, do you have processes to inform the landlord about the details?
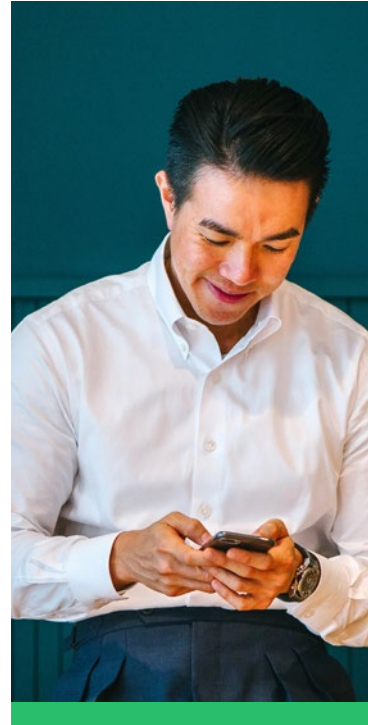
Conduct and communication

The Code of Practice also takes a look at some of the recent changes in legislation and how your agency conducts its business. This includes how you manage communication with tenants, transparency around fees and how you manage data.

Do you have processes in place to stay up to date and review changes to legislation?

Do you follow any processes to keep your staff up to date and informed with regards to changes to legislation?

Do you advise your landlords of their responsibilities and the need to comply with legislation such as the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 and other risks such as Legionella?

Do you draw the attention of your landlords to any obvious repairs and maintenance issues in preparation for any future lettings?

Do you draw the attention of your landlords to the necessity and benefits of an inventory and schedule of condition?

Is your data stored securely in accordance with GDPR?

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*Checklist for Repairs
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Do you have a process for handling data in accordance with GDPR?

If your business takes fees or commission on services, do you make this clear on your website or documentation?

In the event of deductions from a rental deposit, do you have processes to provide a clear breakdown of costs incurred or to be incurred as evidence to substantiate the deduction?

Can you provide quotations and invoices to evidence costs of remedial work or damages?

Are additional services provided as optional extras?

Do you provide guidance on tenants' responsibilities as part of their tenancy agreement, particularly those relating to maintenance responsibilities?

Do you make clear your responsibilities as an agent to the landlord and the tenant, with regards to the collection of rent and management of the property?

Is there a channel for tenants to communicate with you in case of any questions around their rights or their tenancy?

Do you provide access to information for tenants to manage simple repairs and maintenance themselves?

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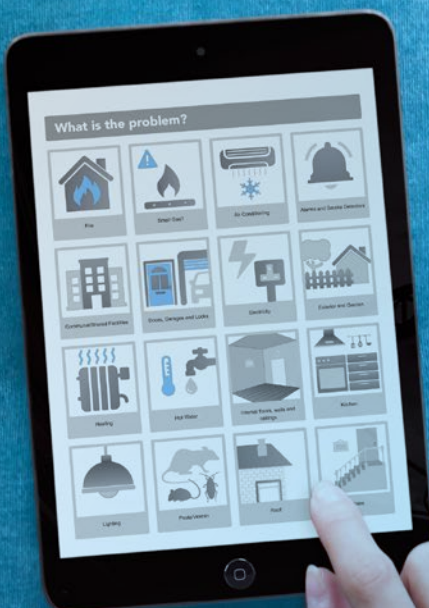
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Do you keep records of your relationship with landlords and tenants, including any regular, scheduled maintenance work, for at least six years?

Do you have processes to communicate with landlords and tenants quickly in the event of repair breaches?

Do you have processes to ensure keys to properties are coded and secure?

Do you keep records of when you issue keys and to whom, when they are returned and to whom?


There is a lot to remember and action when it comes to complying with the TPO Code of Practice. The Fixflo product development team updates the product suite every two weeks based on legislative updates and changes in customer demand. Using Fixflo as a repair and maintenance software solution can help ease the strain and make it much easier to comply with this checklist.
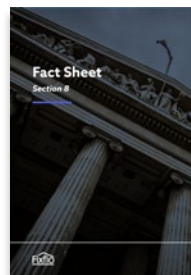
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Fixflo offers a whole library of free guides and content for letting agents and property managers. You can browse and download all of our ebooks on our site, or take a look at our suggestions below:
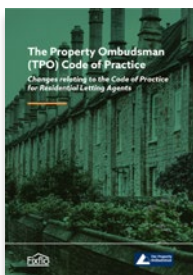
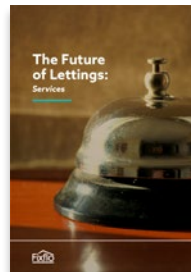**TPO Code of Practice - Changes for Residential Lettings Agents**
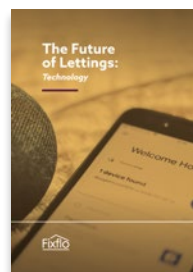
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Section 8 Fact Sheet

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The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Fact Sheet

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The Future of Lettings: Services

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FHHH Bundle

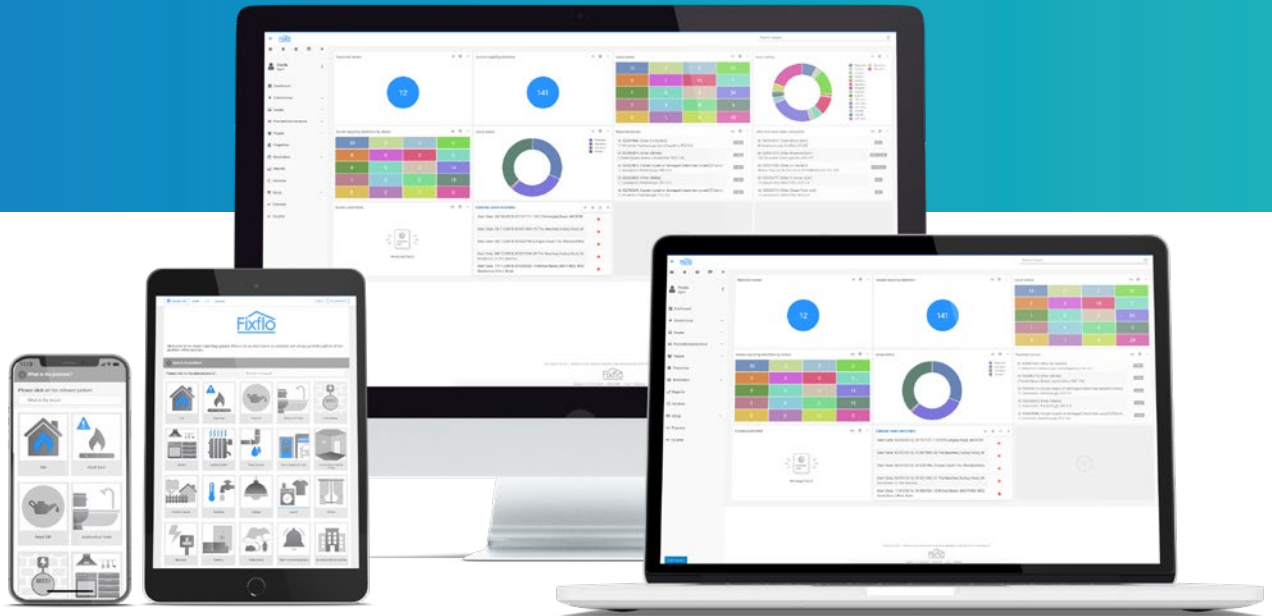⬇ **DOWNLOAD**

Fixflo Lettings

The best way to manage repairs and maintenance

Reactive Repair Reporting

Works Order Management

Contractor Management

Planned Maintenance and Tasks

Fixflo makes repairs and maintenance management easy for agents, tenants and contractors.

Tenants can report repairs 24/7 online in 40+ languages. Agents receive detailed reports translated into English without confusing phone calls or emails. Fixflo Lettings emails the right information to tenants, landlords and contractors with a few easy clicks. The user-friendly backend shows you everything you need to know, from new open issues to invoices submitted to expired contractor certificates.

When it comes to planned maintenance, agents can simply 'set and forget'. You can set up proactive maintenance tasks and forget about them. Fixflo Lettings will remind you to carry out each and every task on all properties. From health and safety inspections to fire risks assessments to boiler maintenance, you can see how many, when and where they need to take place.

The Fixflo Report in 2018 found that property managers who use repair and maintenance management software can manage 35% more properties than those who don't.

Find out how you can do that with our experts today.

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