

Keeping Homes Safe and Decent Policy

Summary

This policy explains how Portsmouth Homes makes sure your home is safe and decent, how we identify and address housing hazards and how we meet our legal and regulatory responsibilities as a social landlord.

A “decent home” is the national minimum quality standard for social housing. We make sure the homes we manage meet this standard.

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) is a method for identifying hazards in your home and lays out how we should manage this.

We maintain an up-to-date understanding of the condition of our homes through stock condition surveys, repairs data and safety checks. This allows us to identify issues early, prioritise work fairly and plan repairs, improvements and investment across our homes and buildings.

We also make it easy for you to report repairs and concerns, and we will keep you updated about what will happen next and when.

Effective date

23rd September 2026

Review

We will review this Policy every 3 years or when there has been an update to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational changes.

Version

Version 1.0



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Scope

This policy applies to homes owned or managed by Portsmouth Homes, including:

- Tenant homes
- Temporary accommodation
- The parts of leasehold and shared ownership buildings that Portsmouth Homes is responsible for, such as the structure, exterior and communal areas.

If you are a leaseholder or shared owner, this policy only applies to the parts of the building and services that Portsmouth Homes is responsible for under your lease or shared ownership agreement.

This policy does not apply to items that are the responsibility of leaseholders or shared owners, unless there is a risk to health and safety or to the wider building.

Any reference in this policy to “we”, “our” or “us” refers to Portsmouth Homes.

Any reference to “resident”, “customer” or “you” refers to a Portsmouth Homes tenant, leaseholder or shared owner.

When we refer to “our homes”, we mean homes owned or managed by Portsmouth Homes, including tenant homes, temporary accommodation, and landlord-owned parts of leasehold and shared ownership properties.

Why We Have This Policy

The purpose of this policy is to explain how we manage the condition of our homes and provide safe, well-maintained homes for residents.

This includes our commitment to maintaining up to date information about the condition of every home we manage. We do this through a rolling stock condition survey programme, to physically survey every home at least once every five years. We may inspect a home sooner where information suggests that its condition has changed or that a repair, improvement or safety concern may need attention.

The information we collect helps us identify repairs and improvements, plan future investment and make informed decisions about our homes. This supports the delivery of our Asset Management Strategy, which sets out our long-term approach to maintaining and improving our housing stock.

The policy sets out how we:

- Understand and monitor the condition of our homes through inspections, surveys and data (stock condition)
- Keep residents safe and reduce health and safety risks



- Meet the Decent Homes Standard and other legal requirements.
- Plan and prioritise repairs, maintenance and improvements.
- Communicate clearly about what you can expect and how to report concerns
- Keep residents informed and make it easy to report repairs, hazards and concerns
- Use learning from complaints, resident feedback, audits and performance information to improve services

What is the Decent Homes Standard?

The Decent Homes Standard is the Government's minimum quality standard for social housing, set out in "A Decent Home: definition and guidance for implementation".

As your landlord, we aim to ensure the homes we own and manage meet or exceed the Decent Homes Standard and meet all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

What makes a home “decent”?

A home is considered “decent” if it meets the following requirements:

- Is free from the most dangerous hazards that could affect health or safety.
- Is in a reasonable state of repair.
- Provides the facilities and services needed for everyday living.
- Is warm enough to live in comfortably.
- Is free from damp and mould*

We will keep our approach under review to reflect any changes in Government guidance or legal requirements.

*Free from damp and mould is classed as having no damp and mould present that falls within Housing Health and Safety Rating System Assessment A to H.

Understanding the condition of our homes

We maintain an accurate, up-to-date understanding of the condition of our homes to help ensure they remain safe, meet the Decent Homes Standard and identify repairs or improvements that may be needed.

We assess homes using recognised standards and legal requirements, including the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and relevant legislation relating to damp and mould, including Awaab's Law, to identify and manage potential hazards. We do this through stock condition surveys, repairs information, safety checks and inspections.



Stock condition surveys

We keep up-to-date information about the condition of all our homes by regularly checking them.

This includes routine inspections, extra checks where there may be a risk, and updates from repairs and safety checks.

A stock condition survey is an inspection of your home carried out by trained staff or contractors.

The survey helps us to:

- Understand the overall condition of your home
- Identify whether homes meet required standards
- Identify any health and safety concerns
- Understand when parts of your home may need repair or replacement

The information collected helps us build an overall understanding of the condition of our homes and identify any repairs, improvements or safety concerns that may need attention.

Any repairs identified will be managed in line with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Stock condition information also helps us make best use of available resources by planning future investment programmes and component replacements before issues become more serious.

What we inspect

During an inspection, we may check a range of features, including:

- Key features inside your home (such as kitchens, bathrooms, doors and windows)
- The condition of the building (such as roofs, walls and drainage)
- Heating and hot water systems (where safe to do so) and signs of damp, mould or leaks
- Communal areas and shared parts of the building

We will explain what we are checking and why. We will only carry out intrusive checks if they are necessary.

To help us identify and assess housing hazards, we use the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This system underpins the Decent Homes Standard, Awaab's Law requirements and other housing safety legislation.



What is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)?

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System considers a range of potential hazards that may affect a person's health or safety. These include damp and mould, excess cold or heat, fire, electrical hazards, falls, structural problems, asbestos, carbon monoxide, hygiene and sanitation concerns, and risks from unsafe facilities.

We will assess hazards in line with the HHSRS requirements and current government guidance.

Category 1 hazards

The most serious hazards are Category 1 hazards. Where a Category 1 hazard is identified, we will take prompt action to remove or reduce the risk as required by law. A home cannot be decent if it has a Category 1 hazard.

Category 2 hazards

Category 2 hazards are less serious but may still need action depending on the level of risk and how the issue affects those living in the home.

Types of hazards

The system considers 21 potential hazards, grouped into four broad categories:

Category	Examples
Conditions that can affect physical health	Damp and mould, excess cold, excess heat, asbestos, carbon monoxide, indoor pollutants
Conditions that can affect wellbeing	Noise, crowding and space, entry by intruders, lighting
Risks linked to hygiene and infection	Domestic hygiene, food safety, personal hygiene, sanitation and water supply
Accident and safety risks	Falls, fire, electrical hazards, explosions, structural collapse and falling elements

Managing Health and Safety Hazards

We aim to prevent hazards before they become serious problems by maintaining our homes, carrying out inspections and safety checks, planning improvements and responding to repairs.



Hazards may also be identified when residents report concerns, during home visits, inspections or surveys, or when issues are noticed by our staff or contractors. Staff and contractors visiting residents' homes are expected to report concerns that may present a health or safety risk, even if the visit was arranged for another purpose.

How we assess risks

When assessing homes, we use recognised methods and guidance, including the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), to help identify potential hazards and determine whether action is required.

Where hazards are identified, we will assess the level of risk and decide what action is required, taking account of legal and regulatory requirements.

We will take account of the circumstances of the household, including any health conditions, disabilities, support needs or other factors that may increase the impact of the hazard.

How we put things right

Where a hazard is identified, or if your home does not meet the Decent Homes Standard, we will take appropriate action.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include temporary safety measures, repairs, specialist inspections, improvements to the property or other actions to make the home safer.

We will prioritise the most serious cases and keep residents informed throughout the process.

What happens when you report a hazard

When you report a hazard, we will assess the issue and decide what action is needed.

If there is an immediate risk to health or safety, we will treat it as an emergency repair and respond in line with our Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Depending on the circumstances, we may need to visit your home, review photographs or videos, carry out inspections or seek advice from specialists to better understand the issue and identify the most appropriate solution.

We will keep you informed about what we are doing, what happens next and any actions that may be required.

Awaab's Law

We will comply with Awaab's Law and the legal timescales that apply when we become aware of a potential emergency or significant hazard in your home.

We will keep you informed throughout the process and maintain records of actions taken.



The hazards covered by Awaab's Law are being introduced in phases. We will update our procedures and services when additional legal requirements come into force.

Further information about how we respond is set out in our Damp and Mould Policy, Repairs and Maintenance Policy and relevant operational procedures.

Supporting residents affected by hazards

Some residents may be more affected by housing hazards because of their age, disability, health condition or personal circumstances. Where relevant, we will take these factors into account when assessing risks, communicating with residents and deciding what action is required. We will consider reasonable adjustments and work with support services, carers, social workers, health professionals or other relevant agencies where appropriate.

Keeping residents safe during repairs

If a property cannot be made safe immediately, we will consider temporary measures to reduce risk.

Where necessary, we may provide or arrange suitable alternative accommodation while works are carried out.

Each case will be assessed individually, taking account of the nature of the hazard, the needs of the household and how any repair or improvement works may affect residents living in the property.

Where appropriate, we will work with you to identify suitable arrangements while works are completed.

We will communicate clearly with you about any temporary safety arrangements and expected timescales.

Other repair issues

Some issues may not mean a home fails the Decent Homes Standard, and may not have any HHSRS hazards, but may still require repair or replacement based on condition, safety or lifecycle. These will be addressed through our repairs and planned maintenance programmes.

We plan and manage work using information from inspections, repairs and safety checks.

When deciding what work to do and when, we consider:

- The risk to residents' health and safety
- The condition of the home
- Whether the issue could get worse
- How we can carry out work efficiently and provide value for money



This helps us make fair and consistent decisions across all homes.

Access to your home

We will need access to your home to inspect its condition, investigate concerns, carry out repairs, or complete maintenance and improvement works. Providing access helps us keep homes safe, well maintained and in good condition.

When access is required, we will:

- Give reasonable notice wherever possible.
- Explain why access is needed.
- Consider any reasonable adjustments required to meet your needs.

As per your tenancy agreement, residents must allow reasonable access for inspections, safety checks, investigations and repairs. If access cannot be agreed or is repeatedly refused, we will manage this in line with our Working Together - Portsmouth Homes Access Policy.

In emergencies, or where there is a serious risk to health, safety or property, we may need to enter a home without notice where this is permitted by law and the terms of the tenancy or lease agreement.

Where possible, we will explain what we plan to do, why the work is needed, and what you can expect next.

Our Responsibilities

We will:

- Ensure all homes meet statutory safety requirements, including asbestos, gas, electrical, fire, water hygiene and lift safety, and maintain clear records of compliance.
- Ensure homes meet the Decent Homes Standard
- Provide an effective and timely repairs and maintenance service
- We will complete repairs and safety works within published timescales set out in our Repairs and Maintenance Policy, based on urgency and risk.
- Identify and act on health and safety risks
- Maintain systems for identifying and managing housing hazards
- Support residents to access adaptations services where needed in line with relevant policies
- Communicate clearly about the service you can expect

This means you can expect:



- A safe home that meets legal standards
- Clear communication about repairs and improvements
- Action on safety issues without delay
- Opportunities to influence how services are delivered

Your Responsibilities

We ask that you:

- Allow reasonable access for inspections, repairs and improvements
- Report issues (such as leaks, damp or mould) as soon as possible
- Tell us if you need any support or reasonable adjustments to help you access our services
- Tell us if there are any changes that may affect access to your home

Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

We regularly monitor the condition of our homes, how repairs and improvements are delivered, and how we manage health and safety risks. We use performance information, inspections, resident feedback and complaints to identify opportunities for improvement and ensure we continue to meet our legal and regulatory responsibilities.

Your voice

We provide residents a wide range of meaningful opportunities to engage, influence and scrutinise the Landlord Strategies, policies and services, to include participation in regular resident meetings and give feedback on services and policies.

If you would like to be included in future resident engagement focus groups and would like to know how to get involved, please contact us for more information:

You can contact our team by:

- Email: housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
- Phone: 02392 834835
- Website: visit the [Resident engagement and community resources on our website](#)



What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

We completed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#). This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.

Regulation and legislation

We recognise the variety of legislation, and we will continue to monitor relevant legal guidance. The list below reflects some of the existing legal framework and relevant publications:

- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#)
- [The Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(England\) Regulations 2005](#)
- [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#)
- [Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018](#)
- [Building Safety Act 2022](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards \(including the Safety and Quality Standard\)](#)
- [Defective Premises Act 1972](#)
- [Decent Homes Standard](#)

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Portsmouth Homes policies, strategies and reports](#)
- Tenancy Agreement / Leasehold Agreement
- Awaab's Law and associated regulations

How to feedback

If you have any questions around the policy or would like to know more about its application, please contact the relevant service in the first instance.

You can get this policy in large print, braille, audio or in another language by contacting your

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Housing Office. More information is available [translation, interpreting and audio information](#).

Compliments

To help us provide the best service we can. We would like to hear customer views on the services that they use. If the customer is pleased with a member of staff or service, please let us know.

- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Complaints

If a customer is unhappy, they can refer to our Landlord Complaints Policy.

- Online complaint form at [Make a housing complaint](#)
- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Housing Ombudsman Service

If a customer is unhappy, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice and guidance at any time.

- Online complaint form on [the Housing Ombudsman Service website](#)
- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- For more information, visit [Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code](#)

