

Resident Wellbeing and Support Policy

Summary

This policy explains how Portsmouth Homes will recognise, respond to and record residents' wellbeing, support and communication needs.

We understand that residents' circumstances may change and that some people may need additional support to access our services, manage their home or sustain their tenancy or lease.

We will listen to residents, consider their individual circumstances and work with them to identify appropriate support. This may include adapting how we provide a service, making a reasonable adjustment, involving a representative, signposting or referring someone to another organisation.

This is an overarching policy. It should be read alongside our specialist policies, including our Communication and Reasonable Adjustments Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Domestic Abuse Policy and other relevant housing policies.

Effective date

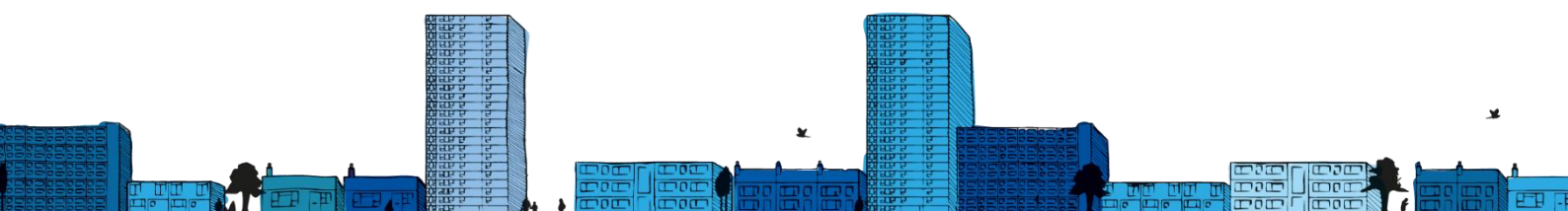
Example text

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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Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all Portsmouth Homes residents, including tenants, leaseholders and shared owners. We will also consider the needs of household members where these are relevant to the housing or landlord service being provided, the safety of the household or a resident's ability to manage their tenancy or lease.

The policy also applies to Portsmouth Homes staff, contractors, agency staff and organisations delivering housing services on our behalf.

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

Any reference in this policy to 'tenant', 'customer' or 'resident' refers to a Portsmouth Homes tenant, leaseholder or shared owner.

Why we have this policy

Residents may need different types of support at different times. A need may be temporary, recurring or long term and may not always be immediately visible.

A resident's circumstances may affect how they communicate with us, access our services, manage their home or tenancy, respond to information or remain safe and well.

This policy provides a consistent framework for how we will:

- Recognise when a resident may need additional support
- Respond in a person-centred and proportionate way
- Record relevant information accurately and securely
- Use the information we hold to provide an appropriate service
- Support residents to sustain their tenancy or lease
- Work with other organisations where specialist support is needed

The policy does not make Portsmouth Homes a health, care or specialist support provider. We remain responsible for delivering our landlord services and will work with specialist organisations where appropriate.

This policy does not replace the detailed arrangements contained within Portsmouth Homes service-specific policies. Where a resident's circumstances affect a particular service, the requirements of both this policy and the relevant service policy will be considered.

Our approach

We will take a person-centred approach. This means that we will focus on the residents needs, and the barriers they are experiencing in accessing services or sustaining their tenancy rather than applying a label.

We will:



- Listen to residents and take their concerns seriously
- Avoid assumptions about what someone can or cannot do
- Consider each resident's individual circumstances
- Communicate clearly, respectfully and without judgement
- Take action that is appropriate and proportionate
- Involve residents in decisions that affect them wherever possible
- Explain our decisions and the reasons for them

We recognise that two people in similar circumstances may need different responses. We will discuss what may help with the resident wherever possible.

What we mean by wellbeing and support

A resident may have a wellbeing, support or communication need where their health, personal circumstances, characteristics, experiences or living situation affect their ability to:

- Access or understand our services
- Communicate or engage with us
- Manage their home, tenancy or lease
- Meet their tenancy or lease responsibilities
- Respond to information or appointments
- Remain safe and well in their home

Needs may be visible or non-visible, temporary, recurring or long term. They may also change over time.

Circumstances that may result in someone needing additional support include:

- Disability, health condition, sensory impairment, neurodiversity or mental health need
- Difficulty reading, understanding or responding to written information
- Language or communication needs
- Caring responsibilities and support needs, including support from a carer, advocate, or representative
- Financial difficulty, risk of tenancy breakdown, difficulty managing rent, or service charges
- Domestic abuse, hate crime, harassment, exploitation, hoarding, self-neglect or other safety concerns
- Social isolation, bereavement, hospital discharge or similar environment, or a significant change in personal circumstances
- Temporary needs, such as illness, injury, pregnancy, recovery from surgery or short-term care responsibilities



This list is not exhaustive. We will consider each situation individually and avoid making assumptions. A resident does not need to have a formal diagnosis before we consider what reasonable support may be appropriate.

Recognise, respond and record

Our approach is based on three principles:

Principle	What this means
Recognise	We will listen to residents, consider relevant information already available to us and be alert to circumstances that may affect how someone accesses our services or manages their home.
Respond	We will discuss the resident's circumstances with them wherever possible and consider appropriate support, adjustments, referrals or changes to how we deliver the service.
Record	We will record relevant information accurately, securely and proportionately so that agreed support can be provided consistently and residents do not have to repeat information unnecessarily.

We will apply these principles across Portsmouth Homes services, including housing management, income collection, repairs, complaints, building and fire safety, antisocial behaviour and resident engagement.

How we tailor our services

We will use relevant information about a resident's circumstances to help us provide a fair, accessible and appropriate service.

Where we are aware that a resident has wellbeing, support or communication needs, we will consider how these may affect the service being provided. We will work with the resident, where possible, to understand any barriers they may be experiencing and identify appropriate support.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- Changing how or when we contact the resident
- Allowing additional time where possible
- Providing information in an accessible format



- Arranging appointments in a way that supports the resident
- Involving an agreed representative, advocate or support worker
- Co-ordinating contact between Portsmouth Homes services
- Considering whether additional support may be helpful
- Signposting or referring the resident to another service
- Considering whether individual circumstances should be taken into account when making housing management decisions

Support will be considered on a case-by-case basis. We will balance individual circumstances with our responsibility to provide safe homes, maintain buildings, manage tenancies and deliver fair services to all residents.

Where we cannot agree to a request or provide the support requested, we will explain why and consider whether there is another reasonable way to help.

The support provided will depend on the resident's circumstances, the service being delivered, any identified risks, our legal responsibilities and what is reasonable and practical in the circumstances.

Reasonable adjustments and accessible communication

We will consider reasonable adjustments where a resident may experience a disadvantage when accessing our services.

Adjustments may include changing how we communicate, providing information in another format, allowing additional time or involving an agreed representative.

Our **Communication and Reasonable Adjustments Policy** explains:

- How residents can request an adjustment
- How we decide what is reasonable
- Examples of adjustments
- How agreed adjustments are recorded and reviewed
- What happens if a request cannot be agreed

Residents do not need a formal diagnosis to ask for an adjustment.

Representatives, advocates and carers

Residents may ask us to communicate with a representative, advocate, family member, carer or support worker.



We will normally need the resident's permission before discussing their personal information with someone else. We will record what the resident has given the person permission to do and how long that permission will remain in place.

Permission to discuss an issue does not automatically give the representative authority to make decisions on the resident's behalf.

Where someone has formal legal authority to act for a resident, we will require a copy of the document granting this authority, such as a registered Power of Attorney or court-appointed deputyship.

We will not assume that a resident lacks capacity because of a disability, health condition, communication difficulty or a decision with which others disagree. Where there is a genuine concern about a resident's capacity to make a particular decision, we will follow the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and seek appropriate advice.

Working with other services

We may work with other organisations where this may help a resident access specialist support, sustain their tenancy or remain safe in their home.

These organisations may include Adult Social Care, Children's Services, NHS services, the police, fire and rescue services, domestic abuse services, advocacy organisations, advice agencies and community support services.

We remain responsible for the landlord services we provide and cannot replace specialist support services. However, we will work with partner organisations where appropriate and lawful to help residents access support relevant to their needs.

Keeping information safe and sharing it

We will only collect and record information that is relevant, necessary and proportionate to the service we provide.

We will:

- Explain why we need the information where appropriate
- Record agreed support and communication arrangements clearly
- Keep information secure
- Restrict access to staff who need it for their role
- Only share the information needed for a particular purpose
- Update or remove information that is no longer accurate or necessary

We will normally ask for consent before sharing personal information with another organisation. However, information may sometimes be shared without consent where the law allows or requires this, including where there is a safeguarding concern or a serious risk to someone's safety.



Further information about how we collect, use and protect personal information can be found in our Data Management Policy and relevant privacy notices.

Reviewing recorded needs and support

We recognise that residents' circumstances can change.

We will review recorded information when:

- The resident tells us that something has changed
- A temporary arrangement reaches its review date
- Information appears to be inaccurate or out of date
- There is a significant change in circumstances
- A review is needed to provide a particular service

Residents can ask us to update or correct their information at any time.

Wherever possible, temporary support arrangements will include a review date. Information that is no longer relevant or necessary will be updated or removed in line with our data retention requirements.

Safeguarding and immediate concerns

A wellbeing or support need is not automatically a safeguarding concern.

Where there is a concern that a child, young person or adult may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm, staff and contractors must follow the Portsmouth Homes Safeguarding Policy and relevant local safeguarding procedures.

Where there is an immediate risk to life or safety, the emergency services should be contacted by calling 999.

We will involve the person affected in decisions wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. Information may be shared without consent where this is necessary and lawful to protect the person or someone else from harm.

Housing Management Decisions

We will consider known wellbeing, support and communication needs when making housing management decisions.

This may include decisions relating to rent, repairs, access, anti-social behaviour, complaints or formal tenancy or lease action.

Before taking formal action, where relevant we will consider

- Whether a resident's circumstances are connected to the issue



- Whether agreed communication arrangements or reasonable adjustments have been followed
- Whether additional support may help resolve the matter
- The possible impact on the resident, their household, and other residents, neighbours or the wider community
- Whether the proposed action is lawful, reasonable and proportionate

Having an additional support need does not remove the responsibilities contained in a tenancy or lease. However, we will consider whether an adjustment, additional support or a different approach may help the resident meet those responsibilities.

Detailed requirements relating to individual services are contained in the relevant Portsmouth Homes policy.

Our Responsibilities

We will:

- Treat residents with fairness, dignity and respect
- Listen to residents and avoid making assumptions
- Make it easy for residents to tell us about their support or communication needs
- Recognise, respond to and record relevant needs
- Keep relevant information accurately and securely
- Follow agreed communication arrangements and reasonable adjustments
- Consider individual circumstances when delivering services and making decisions
- Allow residents to be supported by a representative or advocate where appropriate
- Work with partner agencies and support services where this is appropriate and lawful
- Follow safeguarding procedures where someone may be at risk
- Ensure staff and relevant contractors understand their responsibilities and provide them with appropriate training and guidance
- Use feedback, complaints and service information to improve our approach.

Your Responsibilities

Where you are able to, you can help us by:

- Telling us about a well-being, support or communication need that may affect how you access our services
- Letting us know if your needs, contact details or preferred contact method or circumstances change
- Telling us if you would like someone to support or represent you



- Working with us to identify what may help
- Keeping and attending appointments where possible, or telling us if you need to rearrange
- Telling us if you are worried about your safety, home or tenancy
- Contacting emergency services if you or someone else is in immediate danger

We understand that residents may not always feel able to ask for help, explain their circumstances or engage with us. We will do our best to make conversations supportive, respectful and easy to understand.

We will not refuse to consider support simply because a resident has not told us about their needs previously or has found it difficult to remain in contact.

Staff and contractor training and guidance

Staff will receive training and guidance appropriate to their role. This will include:

- Recognising when someone may need additional support
- Having sensitive and respectful conversations
- Reasonable adjustments and accessible communication
- Recording and sharing information appropriately
- Safeguarding and immediate safety concerns
- Obtaining consent and working with representatives
- Knowing when and how to seek further advice

Contractors and organisations delivering services on our behalf will be given the information they need to deliver the service safely and appropriately. They must keep this information confidential and follow Portsmouth Homes' data protection, equality and safeguarding requirements.

Monitoring and learning

We will monitor how this policy is working and use the findings to improve our services.

This may include reviewing:

- Reasonable adjustment requests and outcomes
- Complaints relating to communication, accessibility or unmet support needs
- Feedback from residents, staff and partner organisations
- Safeguarding and tenancy sustainment learning
- Whether recorded needs and adjustments are being followed
- Differences in service outcomes between groups of residents
- Staff training and awareness



We will use anonymised or combined information wherever possible. Learning and performance information will be reported through the appropriate Portsmouth Homes management and governance arrangements.

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](#)
- [Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards and Code of Practice](#)
- [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [UK General Data Protection Regulation](#)



- [Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code](#)
- Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Safety and Quality Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code
- Housing Ombudsman Relationship of Equals Spotlight report.

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Portsmouth Homes policies, strategies and reports](#)
- Tenancy Agreement / Leasehold Agreement
- Portsmouth City Council Privacy Notices

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 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](#)

