

Alternative Accommodation (Decant) Policy for Secure Tenants

Summary

This policy explains how Portsmouth Homes will support residents who need to move from their home temporarily or permanently so essential works, safety issues, or redevelopment can be managed safely.

Effective date

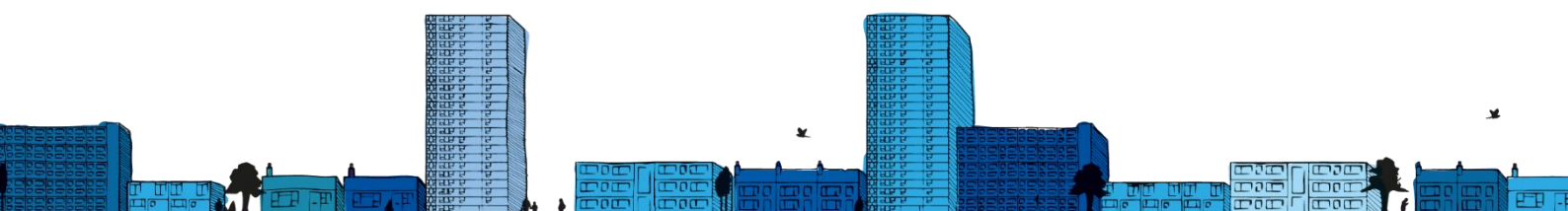
10 March 2026

Review

The Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or when there has been an update to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational changes.

Version

Version 1.0



Alternative Accommodation (Decant) policy for secure tenants contents

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Scope

This policy applies to all residents with a secure tenancy, who need to move from their home, either temporarily or permanently following a habitability assessment.

A move may be required because of major repairs, redevelopment, health and safety concerns, or any situation where it is not safe or practical for you or any member of your household to remain in the property. It covers both planned and emergency situations.

The policy also ensures we meet our legal and regulatory responsibilities, provide fair support and compensation, and clearly set out the rights of both tenants and leaseholders.

Any reference in this policy to a "decant" is when a resident is required to move from their current home to another property or accommodation, either temporarily or permanently.

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 secure tenant, leaseholder or shared owner.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that we treat you fairly, with dignity and respect, and support you throughout any move that becomes necessary. We aim to reduce disruption and ensure you are not financially disadvantaged or lose your security of tenure because of a request to move.

We recognise that moving home can be stressful, especially if you or members of your household have disabilities, health conditions, or additional needs. Where required, we will offer suitable alternative accommodation for all members of your household.

We will involve you as early as possible, before decisions are finalised, so you can help shape plans, and we can understand your individual needs.

Our aims are to:

- Prioritise your health, wellbeing and safety.



- Provide clear, timely communication and meaningful consultation from the earliest stage and throughout the process.
- We will make all reasonable efforts to avoid repeat or prolonged temporary moves and ensure works are scheduled and managed to minimise disruption caused by any required move.
- Take a resident focused, flexible approach that considers each household's needs and circumstances but will need to manage timescales necessary in terms of the works needed, their urgency and against their potential associated risks.
- Provide clear financial and practical support, ensuring you are not worse off because a move is required.
- Enable essential works, building safety improvements, and redevelopment or refurbishment to proceed safely and on time.
- Make best use of our homes, working in line with our Lettings Policy and your relevant Local Authorities Allocations Policy.
- We will always assess whether the works can be completed safely with you remaining in your home before deciding that a move is required.
- Decisions will always balance resident rights and needs, with the need to complete essential works safely and promptly.
- We have established defined roles and decision-making routes to ensure consistency, transparency and fairness.

We will not be responsible to provide alternative accommodation for unauthorised occupants, subtenants, lodgers, licensees or other nonsecure occupants.

Our Responsibilities

We are committed to treating you fairly, with dignity and respect. We do not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

We aim to provide homes and services that meet the diverse needs of our residents and ensure equal access to housing, support and care.

Our priority is to support you throughout the process with clear information, practical help and respect for your rights and needs.

What you can expect from Us:

Fairness, Respect and Equality (including Data and Privacy)

- We will manage all personal data lawfully, securely and only where necessary.
- Decisions will follow transparent, consistent processes, with clear governance and well maintained records to support them.



- We will undertake a habitability assessment when we become aware of issues affecting your home and act quickly where a move is required.
- We will carry out a personal needs assessment, taking account of disabilities, health conditions, caring responsibilities and other additional needs, and will make reasonable adjustments as required to support you or members of your household whilst you are in alternative accommodation.

Financial Support and Costs

- We aim to ensure you are not financially disadvantaged by having to move to alternative accommodation, and we will meet all statutory and reasonable costs in line with legislation.
- We will explain which costs remain your responsibility (such as rent and utilities) and which costs we will cover.
- Money and budgeting advice will be available to you.
- We will explain your responsibilities for your personal possessions and belongings and obligations for contents insurance both in your permanent home and in your alternative accommodation.

Information, Communication and Updates

- We will provide clear, timely and accessible information about why the move is needed, how long it may last and what will happen next. This will include what reasonable costs have been agreed, based on individual circumstances, this will be confirmed in writing.
- You will have a named point of contact for advice, updates and urgent issues.
- We will keep you updated throughout and notify you promptly of any delays. You will receive a written update within 48 hours of any known delay to the move, returning home or to the works starting.
- We will use resident feedback and lessons learned to improve future alternative accommodation processes.

Assessing the Housing Needs

- We will carry out necessary assessments, taking account of your needs and those in your household.
- We will make reasonable adjustments as required to support you or members of your household whilst you are in alternative accommodation.
- Where appropriate, we will provide information about relevant wellbeing or support services.



Alternative Accommodation

- Your alternative accommodation will be reassessed whenever delays occur to ensure it remains suitable.
- If your preference is to stay with friends or family instead of in alternative accommodation, we will keep in contact with you regularly to ensure the arrangement is working, provide progress updates, and offer additional support if alternative accommodation is needed.
- We will arrange contractor access to your permanent home so that the necessary works can be completed appropriately.

Tenancy Rights and Returning Home

- For temporary moves, you will keep your original tenancy and maintain your right to return when works are completed.
- Before your return, we will inspect your home with you, carry out all safety checks and resolve any snagging issues promptly.
- In agreement with you we may have to complete some minor works when you are back in your permanent home.

Your Responsibilities

We ask that you:

- Allow us access to your home so long as we provide reasonable notice, unless in the case of emergency issues in line with your tenancy or lease agreement. Which states the following:

You must allow us (or our contractors) access into your home to inspect or carry out repairs upon being given 48 hours written notice, this includes for example the annual inspection and service of gas supplies and any gas appliances installed. If a repair must be carried out immediately because of a risk of personal injury or damage to the property, we reserve the right to enter without giving you notice.

- Agree to meet with us, so long as we provide reasonable notice and engage with risk assessments and providing relevant information to help us support you in the moving process.
- Tell us about any needs or personal circumstances that may affect your move, so we can support you appropriately.
- During a temporary move into alternative accommodation, you remain responsible for rent and service charges for your permanent home, as set out in your tenancy agreement.
- Report any issues with your alternative temporary accommodation as soon as possible so we can help put things right.



- Let us know about any concerns you have during the move or while living in your alternative temporary accommodation, so that we can act promptly to help resolve these.
- Prepare to return to your permanent home with a reasonable period of notice as soon as it is confirmed that it is safe and ready.

Assessing Habitability and the need to move requirements

Identification and Planning

We will endeavour to first assess whether the works can be carried out safely whilst you remain in your home. We will assess this with you and taking into consideration you and your households personal circumstances.

If it is not safe for you to stay, following a habitability assessment we will decide whether a temporary or permanent move is needed, which parts of the home are affected, and how long the move may last. This will help us create your Moving Plan. The decision will be based on the Habitability Assessment.

Habitability Assessment

A Habitability Assessment helps us understand whether it is safe and practical for you and your household to remain in your home while necessary works are carried out, or whether you need to move out of all or part of the property.

When we will carry out a Habitability Assessment

We will arrange an assessment when:

- You tell us that your home feels unsafe, unfit, or unsuitable for you or any member of your household to remain in while works take place.
- We identify a serious issue that may affect your ability to stay safely or comfortably in your home.
- We believe the works required are likely to make the property unsafe, uninhabitable, or impractical to live in while they are completed.
- Either you or we feel that an assessment is needed to understand whether remaining in the home is safe.



What the assessment involves

We will visit your home to assess its condition and the impact of any repairs or hazards on your ability to remain in occupation.

After the assessment, we will:

- Explain the findings clearly, including the reasons for any recommendation.
- Confirm the outcome in writing.
- Outline the next steps, including any decision regarding the need for you to move either temporarily or permanently.
- Tell you about your right to request a review of the decision.

If your home is unsafe or uninhabitable

If the assessment shows that your home is unsafe, unfit, or not habitable, we will talk with you about suitable temporary or permanent alternative accommodation. We will work with you to understand your needs and preferences and will keep you updated throughout.

When Awaab's Law applies

- Where the concern relates to a hazard covered by Awaab's Law, we will meet all statutory requirements, including:
- acknowledging the issue within 24 hours,
- completing an investigation within 14 days, and
- providing suitable temporary accommodation if the home is assessed as unsafe.

Assessment of Needs

When a move is required, we will carry out an assessment of your household's needs to help us identify the most suitable temporary or permanent accommodation.

Temporary Moves

A temporary move is when you need to relocate for a short period because essential works cannot be completed safely or practically while you stay in your home. Our priority is to keep you safe, minimise disruption, and make sure you are fully supported throughout the process.

Why a temporary move may be needed

A temporary move may be required when:

- Major repairs or refurbishment cannot be completed safely in an occupied home (e.g., rewiring, structural repairs, roof replacements).
- Significant adaptations need your home to be empty during installation.



- Regeneration or redevelopment involves phased moves.
- Planned improvement programmes (such as, windows, heating, insulation) cause unavoidable disruption or loss of essential services.
- Layout changes or conversions are required (e.g., bedsits into self-contained homes).
- Long-term damp, mould or disrepair issues require extensive treatment.
- Fire safety upgrades (e.g., sprinklers, compartmentation) need full access to your home.

When a temporary move is needed, we will give you as much notice as possible, normally at least 28 days and explain why the move is needed, how long it is expected to last, and what your accommodations options are.

How we will support you

We will:

- Assess your needs and circumstances to understand what type of temporary accommodation is suitable for you and your household.
- Explain the process clearly, including timescales and what support is available.
- Aim to give you as much notice as possible, normally at least 28 days before you need to move.
- Organise the move in a way that reduces disruption for you.
- Keep you updated throughout and review your temporary accommodation at least every 4 weeks or sooner if delays occur, to make sure it remains suitable.

Your temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation may be provided directly by Portsmouth Homes. If this is not possible, we may refer you and your household to your Local Authority so your needs can be assessed.

If we offer you Portsmouth Homes accommodation as your temporary home:

- You will be given a Licence Agreement for the temporary property.
- You will keep your secure tenancy at your permanent home.
- You will retain the right to return as soon as works are completed.
- If you are moved to a smaller temporary home, this will not affect the rent on your permanent home.

Where possible, we will aim to provide accommodation that best meets your current needs and is in an acceptable location.

If you are under occupying your home, you may also be offered a smaller, more suitable property where appropriate.-occupying your home, you may also be offered a smaller, more suitable property where appropriate.



Returning home

When the works are completed, we will:

- Support you with the move back to your permanent home.
- Explain any outstanding work that may still need to be completed after your return (only with your agreement).
- Make sure all safety checks are carried out and that your home is ready for you to move back into.

Permanent Moves

A permanent move is when your home will no longer be suitable or available for you to return to. In these situations, we will work closely with you to find a new permanent home that meets your needs and provides security and stability for you and your household.

Our aim is to support you throughout the process, explain your options clearly, and make sure that any move is handled fairly and sensitively.

Why a permanent move may be needed

Permanent moves may be required when:

- A building or estate is being demolished as part of regeneration or redevelopment.
- Serious structural issues (such as subsidence or major structural failure) make the home unsafe or impossible to repair.
- A building is being converted for a different use and will no longer provide general needs housing.
- Properties are being reconfigured (for example, combining smaller homes into larger family homes) and your current home will not remain in its current form.
- Long-term environmental or disrepair issues (such as persistent damp, mould or contamination) cannot be resolved through further work.
- A sheltered or supported housing scheme is being redeveloped or modernised, and residents need to move to new or alternative accommodation.

When a permanent move is necessary, we will explain the reasons clearly and make sure you understand all the support available to you.

How we will support you

If your home cannot be retained, we will:

- Offer you a suitable permanent home with a new tenancy that provides no less security than your current one
- Work with you to understand your preferences, including location, property type and any health or accessibility requirements.
- Keep you informed throughout the process and give you as much notice as possible.

You may also be eligible for a statutory Home Loss Payment and a Disturbance Payment.



For permanent moves, you will be registered with your relevant Local Authority responsible for your household. This will be managed in accordance with that authority's allocations policy.

Leaseholders and Shared Owners

We recognise the specific complexities that arise when essential works require access to a leasehold property. Unlike secure tenancies, most long leases do not contain provisions for leaseholders to provide vacant possession for works to be completed, and leaseholders have contractual rights to exclusive possession.

At the same time, we (as freeholder and Landlord) must comply with its obligations under the lease, the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the Building Safety Act 2022, and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which may require works to be completed within defined timescales.

Because of this, we must balance our statutory duties and building safety obligations with the rights and protections afforded to leaseholders under long leases.

Where investigations identify that temporary moves will be required, we will:

- Engage with leaseholders at the earliest possible stage
- Share information on the nature of the works, expected timescales, and any access requirements
- Consider any individual leaseholder circumstances, letting arrangements.
- This approach ensures transparency and gives leaseholders the maximum opportunity to influence proposals.

Leaseholders are not statutorily entitled to Home Loss or Disturbance Payments; however, where a leaseholder is required to vacate their home temporarily or experiences significant disruption, we will ensure extra expense is met and any costs covered, so you are not financially disadvantaged.

Where a property is sub-let:

- The leaseholder remains responsible for their tenant



Definitions

Secure Tenancy	A long-term social housing tenancy that gives you strong rights and stability. You can stay in your home indefinitely as long as you follow your tenancy agreement. The landlord can only end the tenancy for specific legal reasons and must go to court. This is governed by the legal conditions in the Housing Act 1985.
Suitability	Suitability will consider your needs as well as what accommodation is reasonably available at that time. This means that either temporary or permanent housing should match the household's assessed requirements, including household size, mobility and medical needs, caregiving arrangements, access to schools and work, and closeness to essential support networks.
Decant	A decant is the temporary or permanent relocation of a household from their home when essential works cannot be safely carried out while the property is occupied. A property may require a decant, but it is the residents who are decanted.
Partial decant	Individual homes move for a short period.
Phased decant	Groups of homes move in stages to allow works to progress.
Full decant	All homes in a block move for the duration of the works.
Habitability Assessment	A check by trained staff to decide whether your home is safe and suitable to live in, considering serious leaks, fire/flood damage, structural problems, essential services, and health and safety risks (including damp and mould)
Emergency Decant	An unplanned move due to an immediate safety risk or because the property cannot be made safe or secure overnight.
Temporary Decant:	A planned move for a defined period so essential works can be completed; you would normally return home once works finish.
Permanent Decant:	A move where you will not return to the original home, and you are offered a new permanent tenancy elsewhere. Statutory compensation may apply (Home Loss, Disturbance) as eligible.
Move Agreement	A written plan for each household (reason, duration, accommodation, key contacts, support and costs).
Disturbance Payment	A payment or reimbursement to cover reasonable expenses incurred as a result of moving, such as removals, reconnection of utilities, and other associated costs.
Home Loss Payment	A statutory payment made to eligible residents who are permanently moved from their home.



Alternative Accommodation Review Panel

An alternative accommodation Review Panel will oversee key decisions including:

- Permanent rehousing offers
- Disputes about suitability
- Requests to remain in temporary accommodation permanently

The panel will include representatives from Portsmouth Homes, relevant Local Authority Housing Needs & Advice staff, and specialist services as required.

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:

- [Homelessness Act 2002](#)
- [Housing Act 1985](#)
- [Housing Act 1996](#)
- [Housing Act 2004](#)



- [Housing and Regeneration Act 2008](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Land Compensation Act 1973](#)
- [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#)
- [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)
- [The Home Loss Payments \(Prescribed Amounts\) \(England\) Regulations 2022 \(revoked\)](#)
- [Building Safety Act 2022](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#)
- [Planning and Compensation Act 1991](#)
- [Acquisition of Land Act 1981](#)
- [Awaab's Law: Guidance for social landlords](#)
- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#)

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Portsmouth Homes policies, strategies and reports](#)
- Tenancy Agreement / Leasehold Agreement
- Housing Allocations Policy
- Resident Engagement Strategy
- [Major works and consultation under Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. - A brief guide to your rights - The Leasehold Advisory Service](#)

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](#)

