

Working Together - Portsmouth Homes Access Policy

Summary

This Working Together - Portsmouth Homes Access Policy outlines Portsmouth Homes' approach to gaining access to residents' properties for inspections, repairs, and safety checks, ensuring compliance with legal obligations while respecting residents' rights and needs.

Effective date

1 October 2025

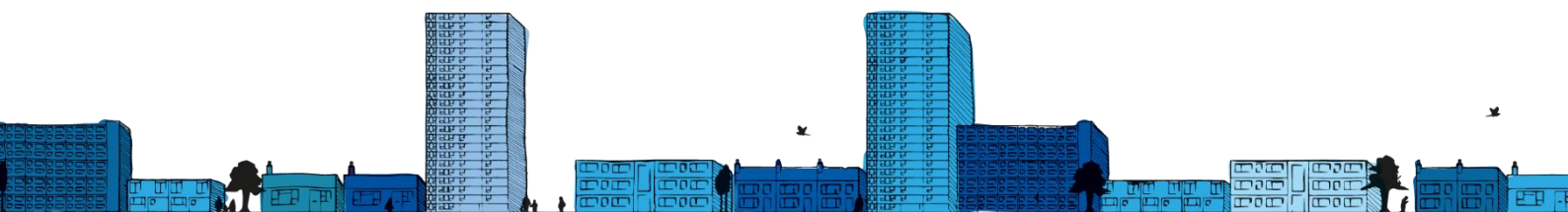
Review

Latest Review Date: 1 April 2026

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 1.1



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Scope

This policy outlines our approach when we are unable to gain access to residents' homes in line with the Tenancy or Lease agreement. It ensures we meet our legal and regulatory obligations whilst respecting privacy and individual circumstances. It ensures that we can continue to keep resident's homes well maintained and safe and that our records are updated and maintained appropriately.

This policy does not apply if possession has been obtained through the courts or if the property is believed to be abandoned.

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.



Purpose

As the landlord, we have an obligation to maintain resident safety and ensure contractor compliance. To assist us in this, residents are expected to allow us access by appointment with them, following reasonable notice.

This policy explains when we need access to your home, your responsibilities, and explains our approach for arranging visits and what we will do when a resident does not allow access.

Most residents allow access to their homes when required and we recognise there may be valid reasons for missed appointments and will make reasonable adjustments to help you to understand the process and reasons for the visits.

We are required to have accurate, current information of the homes that we manage through physical inspections or assessments to ensure they remain safe and well maintained for residents and will enable us to identify any investment needed.

To ensure our services are tailored to meet your needs and those of your household, we conduct regular updates, including Tenancy Update Visits. These visits help us adapt our services accordingly and keep you informed about the support available to you.

Our responsibilities

We may require access to your homes for a variety of reasons during the tenancy or lease, not all the examples will apply to your home, as they may depend on your property type, they could be but not limited to the following:

Example	Frequency
When your home is affected by an emergency in a neighbouring home or property or if we have immediate concerns about safeguarding or your welfare.	When we consider that there may be a risk to the safety of any residents or our property.
Electrical Safety Checks	At least once every 5 years. However, we may start the process earlier to ensure a new check is completed before the old certificate expires. We will also undertake a check before any change of tenancy.
Gas Safety Checks	Annually (once a year) However, we may start the process earlier to ensure a new check is completed before the old certificate expires. We will also undertake a check before any change of tenancy.
Asset Management Surveys	At least once every 5 years
Tenancy Update Visits	At least once every 2 years



Example	Frequency
Building Safety Inspections ie. Fire Safety, sprinklers, fire alarms etc.	It depends on the item and the task.
Door Surveys	Flat Entrance Fire Doors in high rise blocks: Annually (once a year)
Any surveys required to identify condition of the property ie. Damp and Mould, Asbestos, inspect resident improvement and alterations to the property	As and when identified or reported
To carry out an investigation concerning a possible tenancy breach.	As required
Servicing and Maintenance of any mechanical and electrical installations such as stairlifts, extractor fans and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) etc	As and when required but would normally be Annually (once a year)

If we need access to your home, we are committed to:

- Providing clear notice and explanation for access requests.
- Offering flexible appointment times where possible. (It may not be possible for emergencies or legislative requirements).
- Ensuring all visits are conducted professionally and respectfully. We will ensure confidentiality and respect residents' personal space and belongings during any access visit.
- Follow our policy and procedure and keep you informed throughout each stage of the process.
- We will contact the resident in their preferred way, in line with our Communication and Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

Where the above process is unsuccessful, we will continue to attempt contact with you, including contacting your family or next of kin (if known) and other people known to be providing services/support to residents and their households.

However, there may be emergency situations where we are unable to let you know in advance when we consider that there may be a risk to life/lives.

Your responsibilities

Allow staff or contractors access to your home for prearranged appointments, scheduled by either us or the resident or the contractor, for reasons such as maintenance, repairs, or inspections with at least 48 hours' notice. In emergency situations, prior notice may not be possible. Personal Identification will be presented by staff or contractors upon each visit.

It is important that you make us aware:



- If you are unable to attend an appointment and work with us to reschedule an appointment as soon as possible.
- If any contact details change, i.e. telephone numbers, e-mail addresses or any changes in contact details for next of kin.
- If you or your household have support or communication needs.
- The contact details for another person, aged 18 or older, who can grant us access if you are unavailable when we need to enter the home.

Process for Arranging Access

We may need to visit your home for safety checks or repairs and if we are unable to, the following steps will be taken.

If access is required to your home, we will contact you to arrange a suitable time for the appointments and check if there are any other outstanding or overdue inspections / appointments required and arrange for these to be scheduled at the same time, where possible.

We will contact you on 3 separate occasions before any statutory certificates expire, if we are still unsuccessful, we will visit your home to try and understand any barriers or difficulties in arranging the appropriate appointments.

If required, we may also reach out to the next of kin or other household members listed on the tenancy file, if permission to share information has been provided.

Every reasonable alternative will be explored to gain access before any action to force entry is considered. Forced entry will only be taken as a last resort and where there is a lawful and justifiable reason to do so. A record of all communication and access attempts will be kept and must be available for all relevant authorised staff to view before agreeing a forced entry.

When access is unavailable

Most residents allow access to their homes when required, however in a small number of cases, we are unable to gain access to your home to undertake these checks, either because the resident has not responded to our contact or is physically refusing access to the property. In these cases, we may take enforcement action to gain entry to the property if necessary.

If your inspection or statutory certificate is overdue and you have repeatedly denied access after reasonable requests or miss scheduled appointments, we will take the following actions (including but not limited to):

- Charge you for the missed appointment and call out fee.
- If your annual gas safety check or boiler service (where applicable) is overdue and you have not provided access, and you have an external gas meter, we may limit or cap off your gas supply; we will follow our policies and procedures for this action.



- We will ask the court for an injunction to allow access into your home and ask the court to require you to pay our legal fees and contractor recharge costs.
- In extreme cases we may also consider taking possession action for repeated refusals. A failure to allow access is a breach of your tenancy conditions.
- If you already have an injunction in place but do not comply with this then you will be in contempt of court and may be at risk of a fine and/or imprisonment.

Emergency access

If we cannot reach you and no one else can grant access, we may need to enter your home without permission in exceptional situations. We do not hold keys and will only enter without consent when essential, such as in emergencies, where we consider that there may be a risk to life/lives:

- There is an immediate safeguarding or welfare concern of someone in your home.
- We have identified a serious health and safety risk to the you and others.
- There is likely to be serious, permanent or significant damage to the building / home, if immediate action is not taken.

In these incidents we will take the appropriate action to lawfully gain access to your property which could involve contacting the police or applying to court for an emergency injunction. Any costs incurred are recharged.

We will only enter your home without your permission as a last resort.

If forced entry (which means we will use reasonable force to gain entry) is required, we will leave your home secure. We may need to return later to complete any further works needed.

We may charge you for any damage and work arising from the forced entry, depending on the circumstances. For example, if a resident caused a flood due to deliberately leaving a tap running, this would result in a charge to the resident.

Your voice

We provide residents a wide range of meaningful opportunities to 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:

- [The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper](#)
- [Proposed Consumer Standards Code of Practice](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Fire Safety Act 2021](#)
- [The Gas Safety \(Installation and Use\) Regulations 1998](#)
- [The Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Housing Act 2004](#)
- [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#)
- [Homes \(Fitness for Human habitation\) 2018](#)
- [Social Housing \(Prescribed Requirements\) \(England\) Regulations 2025 \(also known as Awaab's Law\)](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector \(England\) \(Amendment\) \(Extension to the Social Rented Sector\) Regulations 2025](#)
- [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#)
- [The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#)
- [Building Safety Act 2022](#)
- [Decent Homes Standard](#)



Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

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

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](#)

