

Keeping Homes Decent and Safe Policy

Summary

This policy explains how Portsmouth Homes makes sure your home is safe, decent and well maintained.

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

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

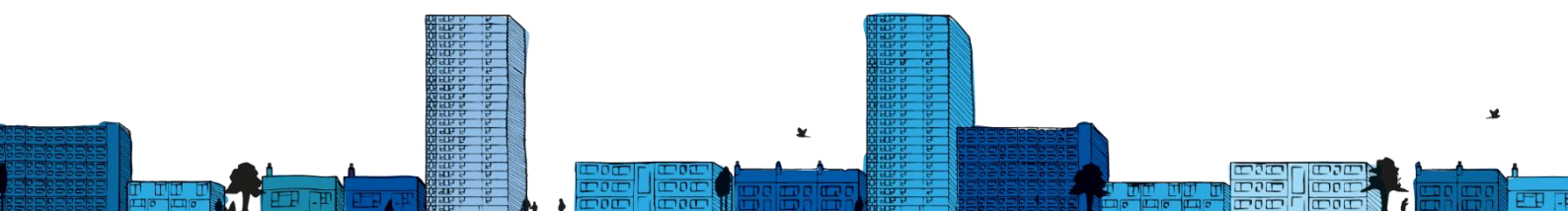
Example text

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



Keeping Homes Decent and Safe Policy

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Scope

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

- Tenant homes
- Temporary accommodation
- Landlord-owned / landlord-retained elements of leasehold and shared ownership homes (including structure, exterior, communal areas and shared building components)

For leasehold and shared ownership homes, this policy applies only to the parts of the building and services that Portsmouth Homes is responsible for under the 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 a keeping your home safe and decent and well-maintained 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 programme of stock condition surveys, with a target of surveying all homes at least once every five years.

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

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:

- Meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing
- Be in a reasonable state of repair
- Have reasonably modern facilities and services
- Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

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

How we understand the condition of our homes

We maintain an accurate, up-to-date and evidence-based understanding of the condition of our homes (stock condition) to help us meet the Decent Homes Standard and ensure our homes are safe and maintained to an appropriate standard.

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 by:

- Carrying out stock condition surveys through a rolling programme
- Using information from repairs, safety checks and inspections to identify issues early
- Keeping an individual record for each home, based on physical inspections and updated as new information is collected
- Using this information to plan repairs, maintenance and improvements effectively and in a timely way
- We take a proactive approach to maintaining homes, using data and risk assessment to identify issues early and prevent deterioration wherever possible.

This information helps us to:



- Understand whether homes meet the Decent Homes Standard
- Identify and manage health and safety risks
- Prioritise and target repairs and improvements
- Plan long-term investment in homes
- Meet legal and regulatory requirements

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 is used to assess whether homes meet the Decent Homes Standard and to build our overall understanding of the condition of our homes.

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.



Managing Health and Safety Hazards

We take a proactive approach to identifying and managing hazards that may affect the health, safety or wellbeing of residents.

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.

Examples of hazards may include:

- Damp and mould.
- Excess cold or overheating.
- Electrical hazards.
- Fire risks.
- Structural hazards.
- Falls and trip hazards.
- Water safety risks.

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

If your home does not meet a Decent homes standard

If we find that a home does not meet the Decent Homes Standard or is in poor condition, we will:

- Record the issue and assess any risks
- Decide what action is needed
- Prioritise the work based on risk and urgency
- Carry out repairs or include the work in planned improvements, ensuring these are completed within appropriate timescales

We will keep you informed about what will happen next and what to expect.

Where issues relate to health and safety risks (including damp and mould), we will act in line with legal and regulatory requirements. We will respond to issues such as damp and mould in line with current legal requirements, including Awaab's Law.

Some issues may not mean a home fails the Decent Homes Standard 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 may 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.

We ask residents to work with us to provide access when needed. 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
- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the condition of our homes (stock condition)
- Use this information to plan repairs, maintenance and investment
- 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



- Support residents to access adaptations services where needed in line with relevant policies
- Make it easy for residents to report issues and keep them informed about what is happening
- 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

How we monitor and review this service

We monitor and review:

- Whether homes meet the Decent Homes Standard
- The quality and completeness of our stock condition information
- How repairs and improvements are delivered
- How we manage health and safety risks and meet all relevant legal health and safety requirements
- Progress against our target to maintain stock condition information for all homes through a five-year survey cycle.

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](#)
- Housing Act 2004 (including the Housing Health and Safety Rating System)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Relevant regulations relating to health and safety, including Awaab's Law
- The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards (including the Safety and Quality 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.



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](#)

