

# Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

<b>Assessment details</b>	
<b>Assessment area</b>	<b>Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy</b>
<b>Date of assessment</b>	23 July 2024
<b>Directorate and Service</b>	Housing & Public Protection, Housing Services
<b>Manager</b>	Housing Maintenance Manager
<b>Officer conducting assessment</b>	Senior Housing Policy & Performance Officer
<b>Step 1: Scoping the assessment</b>	
<b>1. What are the aims and objectives of the activity or proposal?</b>	<p>The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy sets out the approach to housing repairs and maintenance provided to Dartford Borough Council tenanted and leasehold properties. It applies to works in individual properties and communal areas of housing land.</p> <p>The policy aims to ensure that tenants and leaseholders continue to receive a high standard of service focused upon the main areas of repair that the Council undertakes. The policy also identifies areas of repair that are the responsibility of tenants and leaseholders.</p> <p>A review of the policy has been undertaken to ensure it remains up to date, and this Customer Access Review has been carried out in conjunction with the review.</p>
<b>2. Who will be affected by the activity or proposal?</b>	The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy affects Dartford Borough Council tenants and leaseholders.
<b>3. How does the activity or proposal contribute to: a) any key performance indicators? b) policies, values or objectives of Dartford Borough Council?</b>	<p>a) There are a number of key performance indicators within the repairs and maintenance service that are monitored against targets to ensure a good repairs service is delivered, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (HPI-30) Percentage of repairs completed on time</li> <li>• (HPI-28) Number of properties where Decent Homes Standard components are beyond component lifecycle estimate</li> <li>• (HPI-48) Energy efficiency of housing stock</li> </ul> <p>The annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures also provide performance information on the repairs and maintenance service, including:</p> <p><u>Keeping properties in good repair:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (RP01) Proportion of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (RP02 - 1) Proportion of non-emergency repairs completed within the landlord’s target timescale</li> <li>• (RP02 – 2) Proportion of emergency repairs completed within the landlord’s target timescale</li> <li>• (TP02) Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service</li> <li>• (TP03) Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete most recent repair</li> <li>• (TP04) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that the home is well maintained</li> </ul> <p><u>Maintaining building safety:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (BS01) Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out</li> <li>• (BS02) Proportion of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out</li> <li>• (BS03) Proportion of homes for which all required asbestos management surveys or re-inspections have been carried out</li> <li>• (BS04) Proportion of homes for which all required legionella risk assessments have been carried out</li> <li>• (BS05) Proportion of homes for which all required communal passenger lift safety checks have been carried out</li> <li>• (TP05) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that the home is safe</li> </ul> <p><u>Responsible neighbourhood management:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (TP10) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.</li> </ul> <p>b) The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy contributes to the Housing ambitions in the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that our homes are well maintained and empower tenants to shape and influence their own communities.</li> <li>• Provide a high quality and responsive housing service that’s built on respect for aspiring and existing tenants. We want to be practical, honest and straightforward in all the information and advice we give.</li> <li>• Strive for full compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing’s consumer standards in delivering good quality homes and services to the tenants that live in our homes.</li> </ul>

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Step 1: Scoping the assessment	
<p><b>4. Which aspects of the activity or proposal are dictated by legislation/regulation and where do we have discretion in how they are delivered?</b></p>	<p>The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy and its delivery is intended to be compatible with the Council's obligations consequent to all relevant legislation and regulation, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landlord and Tenant Act 1985</li> <li>• Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018</li> <li>• Defective Premises Act 1972</li> <li>• Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998</li> <li>• Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005</li> <li>• Technical Guidance HSG 274 - Legionnaires Disease</li> <li>• The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 &amp; HSG 264 Asbestos: The Survey Guide</li> <li>• Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System)</li> <li>• Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994</li> <li>• The Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Compensation for Improvements) Regulations 1994</li> <li>• Environmental Protection Act 1990</li> <li>• Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002</li> <li>• Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023</li> <li>• Safety and Quality Consumer Standard 2024</li> </ul> <p>The Policy exercises discretion in some elements of service provided to tenants that are not a statutory requirement, for example; the Decoration Scheme, Handyperson Scheme, and Chaperone Scheme. The benefits of these schemes to tenants are explained under Step 3 of this assessment.</p>

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Step 2: Information collection																																					
<p><b>5. What do you know about the groups of people who will be affected?</b> (i.e. demographic information in relation to the protected characteristic groups of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership)</p>	<p><b>Tenant profile</b> – The Council owns and manages a housing stock of 4,216 properties. Information in relation to profile of Council tenants (Tenant 1 data) is captured by the Council’s Housing Service, as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="658 316 2114 868"> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Sex</td> <td>Male</td> <td>33.85%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>66.03%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td>0.12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Age</td> <td>18-24</td> <td>1.59%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-39</td> <td>20.41%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-59</td> <td>38.22%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60+</td> <td>39.78%</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="6">Race</td> <td>White</td> <td>67.72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian or Asian British</td> <td>1.45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black or Black British</td> <td>1.47%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed</td> <td>2.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chinese or other ethnic group</td> <td>0.24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown/ prefer not to say</td> <td>27.12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Disability/ vulnerability</td> <td>No disability/ vulnerability</td> <td>79.16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability/ vulnerability</td> <td>20.84%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Leaseholder profile</b> – There are currently 481 leasehold properties. The conveyancing process is managed by external bodies and legal transfers which do not collect personal data concerning the protected characteristics of new home owners. The Housing Service does not receive or hold any personal data regarding leaseholders other than name and address.</p>			Sex	Male	33.85%	Female	66.03%	Unknown	0.12%	Age	18-24	1.59%	25-39	20.41%	40-59	38.22%	60+	39.78%	Race	White	67.72%	Asian or Asian British	1.45%	Black or Black British	1.47%	Mixed	2.00%	Chinese or other ethnic group	0.24%	Unknown/ prefer not to say	27.12%	Disability/ vulnerability	No disability/ vulnerability	79.16%	Disability/ vulnerability	20.84%
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<p><b>6. What consultation has taken place with affected groups? Please describe who was consulted and the key findings</b></p>	<p><b>Internal consultation</b> – Council officers have been consulted on the review of the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy.</p> <p><b>Tenant and leaseholder consultation</b> –The Dartford’s Tenants’ and Leaseholders’ Forum works in partnership with the Council to monitor and improve the delivery of its housing services. The Forum attends monthly contract monitoring meetings to discuss performance levels and service improvements and acts as a consultative body for various aspects of the Council’s services.</p> <p>The Council has been informed of tenants views of the repairs and maintenance service through the annual Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey (TSM) carried out in 2023, as follows:</p>																																				

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Step 2: Information collection	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (TP02) Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service – 77.8%</li><li>• (TP03) Proportion of respondents who have received a repair in the last 12 months who report they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair – 81.3%</li><li>• (TP04) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that their home is well maintained – 75.1%</li><li>• (TP05) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that the home is safe – 78.0%</li><li>• (TP10) Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that communal areas are kept clean and well maintained – 52.5%</li></ul> <p>The TSM survey has found that the repairs service is a driver for both tenant satisfaction and dissatisfaction. One of the strongest links with overall satisfaction is having a well maintained home. Additionally, those who have not had a repair have slightly higher overall satisfaction levels than those who have.</p> <p>During the TSM survey, respondents were asked what the Council could do to improve how it handles repairs to homes. The key feedback received included to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure the repair is carried out properly, is better quality, the work is finished and done right first time</li><li>• Carry out repairs more quickly</li><li>• Communicate better with tenants and keep them updated with what is happening with their repairs</li><li>• Check after a repair has been done to make sure it was done properly</li></ul> <p>The TSM Survey also asked respondents what the Council could do to improve communal areas. The key feedback received included to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain the grounds better and keep on top of cutting grass, bushes and dealing with overhanging trees</li><li>• Clean the communal areas more often and to a higher standard</li><li>• Repair and maintain the communal areas better, such as painting walls and fixing lights</li><li>• Sort out overflowing communal bin areas, empty bins more often</li><li>• Improve safety and security, such as have better communal lighting outside, security gates and more CCTV</li><li>• Improve carrying out repairs and maintenance to communal areas, such as fixing faulty lights, doors, broken windows</li></ul>

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Step 2: Information collection	
<p><b>7. Are there any gaps in information? If so, what additional research and/or consultation is needed to ensure that affected groups needs and views are taken into account?</b></p>	<p>The Council is committed to ensuring the voice of its tenants and leaseholders is heard on matters that affect them. The Regulator of Social Housing places a requirement on social housing landlords to comply with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard 2024, by ensuring that residents are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the formulation of their landlord’s housing-related policies and strategies. Consultation with Council tenants and leaseholders will be undertaken, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All Council tenants and leaseholders will be invited to comment on the proposed updated Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy.</li> <li>2. The Dartford Tenants’ and Leaseholders’ Forum (DTLF) will be invited to comment on the proposed updated Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy. The DTLF aims to ensure that the services delivered by the Council are accessible to all. The Forum works as a group to ensure that the views and housing needs of residents are recognised and addressed by the Council, and that those needs and views are placed at the centre of housing services delivery.</li> <li>3. The Housing Advisory Board (HAB) will be invited to comment on the proposed updated Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy. The HAB considers reports on proposed policy, strategy and performance in relation to housing issues and makes recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate. The HAB includes representation from Council officers, elected Members and DTLF members.</li> </ol>

Step 3: Assessing the equality impact	
<p><b>8. Consider whether the activity or proposal has or will have any positive or negative equality impacts on the protected characteristic groups in relation to the following aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty:</b></p> <p><b>a) tackling unlawful discrimination</b>  <b>b) promoting equality of opportunity</b>  <b>c) promoting good relations</b></p> <p><u>NOTES:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Initial Screening will have identified which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are relevant to the activity or proposal for consideration</li> <li>• For existing activities, consider how they are working in practice for each relevant protected group</li> <li>• For new proposals, consider whether there is anything that could give rise to positive and negative equality impacts for each relevant protected group</li> <li>• If there is no identified equality impact, please tick the ‘No Impact’ box and explain why in question 9</li> <li>• If the equality impact is unclear, please tick the ‘Unknown’ box and explain why in question 9</li> </ul>

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
Age	<p>Communication, support needs and vulnerabilities (e.g. age related vulnerabilities) are recorded on the One Housing system as attributes to ensure elderly tenants are identified at the earliest stage of the repairs process so that works can be adapted accordingly in each individual case.</p> <p>The Council aims to prioritise non-emergency repairs for elderly and vulnerable tenants wherever possible (for example heating and hot water) where the nature of the repair could risk the health or wellbeing of that person or household (this helps remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by tenants due to their age/vulnerability).</p> <p>The Council runs a Handyperson service to tenants aged 65 and over. Tenants can access 12 hours of handyperson time over the course of a year for works such as gardening, decorating, picture hanging etc.</p> <p>The Council runs a Decoration scheme for tenants aged 65 and over. Tenants can have 1 room decorated free of charge once every 5 years.</p> <p>An appointment system is offered for all routine repairs which include appointment slots and Saturday and evening repairs to maximize choice for tenants, particularly tenants of working age.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
Disability	<p>Communication, support needs and vulnerabilities (e.g. disability related vulnerabilities) are recorded on the One Housing system as attributes to ensure disabled tenants are identified at the earliest stage of the repairs process so that works can be adapted accordingly in each individual case.</p> <p>The Council aims to prioritise repairs to residents with disabilities and will show discretion, allowing them access to works that would otherwise be considered the tenant's responsibility, i.e. changing lightbulbs, batteries in smoke detectors, internal decorating.</p> <p>The Council has a Disabled Adaptation Policy for Council Tenants and a process to give guidance to staff and tenants on how to access the service.</p> <p>The Council runs a Handyperson service to disabled tenants. Tenants can access 12 hours of handyperson time over the course of a year for works such as gardening, decorating, picture hanging etc.</p> <p>The Council runs a Decoration scheme to include tenants who are physically disabled and living independently. Tenants can have 1 room decorated free of charge once every 5 years.</p> <p>The Council recognises that it is important that people with specific communication needs can</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
	obtain support for this when accessing the repairs and maintenance service. In accordance with eh Council's Equality & Diversity Document Framework, the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy and information about the service can be provided in alternative formats, including: Braille, audio tape and large print versions of documents, Sign Language interpreting services can be provided upon request, Calls can also be received via Relay UK.			
<b>Sex</b>	The Chaperone Scheme enables tenants to have a female chaperone or female tradeswoman to attend and oversee repair works if requested at the time of reporting the repair.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race</b>	The Council recognises that it is important that people with specific communication needs can obtain support for this when accessing the repairs and maintenance service. In accordance with eh Council's Equality & Diversity Document Framework, the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy and information about the service can be provided in alternative formats, including: documents translated into other languages. Telephone and face-to-face interpreting can also services can also be provided upon request		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion/Belief</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Step 3: Assessing the equality impact				
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC	POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
<b>Pregnancy/Maternity</b>	Communication, support needs and vulnerabilities are recorded on the One Housing system as attributes to ensure that pregnant tenants are identified at the earliest stage of the repairs process so that works can be adapted accordingly in each individual case.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership*</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* Regarding the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership – public bodies need to comply with the first aim of the Public Sector Equality Duty and only in the context of employment.

Step 3: Assessing the equality impact	
<b>9. If 'no impact' or 'unknown' was selected, please explain</b>	There are no known circumstances where the policy will have relevance to or a disproportionate equality impact on the protected characteristic groups of gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership.
<b>10. If Dartford Borough Council works with partners to deliver the activity or proposal, please describe any circumstances that could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between different groups</b>	<p>The Council works in partnership with contractors to deliver repairs and maintenance works.</p> <p>The main repairs contractor completes a customer profile questionnaire before major work begins to identify tenants' needs during the course of the works. Specific plans of work are then tailored around the customers' needs.</p> <p>Contractors work to a Code of Conduct that helps provide a uniform approach to customer care.</p> <p>The two main contractors adhere to a Modern Slavery Act 2015 policy statement and have provided the Council with a copy of it.</p> <p>Contractors work to the Council's Concern Card Procedure. The procedure outlines how Council repairs and maintenance contractors and the Council's Housing Maintenance Team can raise any concerns that they may have about a Council tenant to the Tenancy</p>

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<p><b>Step 3: Assessing the equality impact</b></p>	<p>Services Team. Concerns may be identified during a visit to the property or when communicating with a tenant by other means, such as telephone or email. Concerns may range from safeguarding to more general concerns regarding lack of independent living skills or loneliness. Concerns may also be raised due to non-engagement by a tenant, for example, repeated missed gas safety check appointments where the tenant does not allow access to the property, which could potentially raise concerns about the wellbeing of the tenant. The procedure sets out the signs to look out for, how to record and pass on concerns, and how these concerns will be dealt with by the Tenancy Services Team.</p> <p>There are no known circumstances where these partnership working arrangements with contractors under the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy will have a disproportionate impact on the protected characteristic groups.</p>
<p><b>11. Any other comments</b></p>	<p>The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy is relevant to the Equality Act 2010 aims to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation; and, to advance equality of opportunity. The policy aims to have an overall positive impact as it provides a transparent, proportionate, fair and consistent approach to the repairs and maintenance service that reflect the Council’s commitment to equality of access for all tenants and leaseholders and takes account of the needs of vulnerable people.</p> <p>The Council aims to make accessing the repairs service as easy as possible by offering various ways to report a repair, including by phone, text message, email, online, in person and in writing. The tenant and leaseholder newsletter ‘The Link’ is used to provide practical information to tenants and leaseholders on areas such as gas safety, damp, mould and condensation, fire safety and how to access the repairs service etc.</p> <p>Any person who is not satisfied with the service they have received regarding the repairs service or who believes they have been discriminated against can make a formal complaint to the Council using the corporate complaints process.</p>

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## Step 4: Action plan

12. Based on the information in Steps 1 to 3, please list the actions that will be taken to address:

- a) any gaps in information and consultation
- b) how any negative impacts on equality will be mitigated or eradicated

a) If additional information and/or consultation is required or the impact is still unclear, what actions will you put in place to gather the information you need?

Information needs	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Views from all Council tenants on the draft Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy	Invite views on the draft policy from all Council tenants	Feedback will, at a formative stage, inform any further changes that may be required to the draft policy in advance of seeking approval for the policy	August 2024	Details of the consultation and any amendments made to the draft policy as a result of the consultation will be included in the Cabinet report	Senior Housing Policy & Performance Officer
Views from the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum on the draft Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy	Invite views on the draft policy from the Dartford Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum	Feedback will, at a formative stage, inform any further changes that may be required to the draft policy in advance of seeking approval for the Policy	August 2024	Details of the consultation and any amendments made to the draft policy as a result of the consultation will be included in the Cabinet report	Senior Housing Policy & Performance Officer
Views from the Housing Advisory Board on the draft Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy	Invite views on the draft policy from the Housing Advisory Board	Feedback will, at a formative stage, inform any further changes that may be required to the draft policy in advance of seeking approval for the policy	October 2024	Details of the consultation and any amendments made to the draft policy as a result of the consultation will be included in the Cabinet report	Senior Housing Policy & Performance Officer

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b) If any negative impacts on equality were found, what actions will you put in place to mitigate or eradicate these impacts?

Identified impacts (and who is affected)	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
None					

## Step 5: Decision making and future monitoring

13. Which decision making process does this Customer Access Review need to go through? i.e. who does this need to be approved by?

Director of Housing & Public Protection

14. Is the subject of the Customer Access Review going to committee? If yes, include your findings in the committee report and attach this assessment to the report

Yes  No

15. How will you continue to monitor the activity or proposal on protected characteristic groups?

The Council will review its Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy every three years or earlier to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.

The performance of the repairs and maintenance service will also be monitored through key performance indicators, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, transactional repairs satisfaction surveys, and complaint monitoring data.

16. When will you review this Customer Access Review?

New assessments will be undertaken every three years in conjunction with the review of the policy, or sooner, in the event of major legislative or operational changes.

## Step 6: Final steps

17. Once this Customer Access Review has been approved, send this assessment to the Policy & Projects Officer

18. Implement the actions identified from this Customer Access Review and ensure progress is monitored and recorded

Reviewed by Legal Services:

1/8/2024

Reviewed by Director of Housing & Public Protection:

31.7.2024.