

Housing Management Policy

Summary Table

Policy Status (circle as appropriate)	APPROVED
Responsible Officers	Andrew Mackie, Dave Thomson, Hannah McSherry, Allan Jones - Housing Managers, Neil Watts – Business Planning & Improvement Manager
Policy Sponsor	Alexander MacLeod, Head of Housing
Authorised by	Communities Committee
Approval Date	December 2023
Review Date	December 2028

1. Policy Statement

The aim of the Housing Management Policy is to support the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy 2018 – 2023, Local Housing Strategy 2024 – 2029 and to provide a framework for the management of the Housing and Building Standards service.

The Policy contributes to all 11 of the Scottish Government's national outcomes as well as to the 4 national housing outcomes.

At a local level the policy contributes to the delivery of the following priorities as set out in Aberdeenshire Council's Council Plan 2022 – 2027:-

- Enable and deliver the provision of good quality, energy efficient and accessible housing
- Develop and implement a Place Strategy that considers the current and future needs of communities
- Improve the life chances of people at risk of falling into poverty, or already living in poverty
- Reach a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030 and Net Zero by 2045, with the Council showing leadership through the Carbon Budget and carbon reduction toolkit

2. Scope

The policy covers anyone who uses any of the services provided by Housing and Building Standards, these include:-

- Aberdeenshire Council Housing Tenants
- Those people wishing access to Aberdeenshire Council's housing list and assessment process;

- Any person requiring housing options advice relating to homelessness, homeless prevention or housing support;
- Those people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or are at risk of homelessness;
- Care experienced young people
- Those people eligible for the Low Cost Shared Equity Scheme;
- Older people and those with a disability who require access to appropriate affordable housing and support in order to live as independently as possible;
- Homeowners and private sector tenants seeking support to repair, maintain, adapt and improve their homes through the scheme of assistance;
- Those people with a disability seeking access to aids and adaptations to live independently through the care and repair service;
- Landlords in the private rented sector;
- Homeowners and private tenants seeking private water supply grants;
- Households in the private sector seeking advice and support to access grants on energy efficiency measures;
- Building warrant applicants and agents;
- Minority ethnic communities including those resettled via resettlement schemes and Gypsy/Travellers;
- Owners in mixed tenure estates;
- Victims and perpetrators of antisocial behaviour including owners and tenants in the private rented sector;
- Victims of gender-based abuse and sexual exploitation
- Victims of domestic abuse.

3. Principles

The following principles set out the main responsibilities for Housing and Buildings Standards:-

- 3.1 The service will seek to combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities for all tenants and service users in all aspects of its policies and procedures. This means the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race (including Gypsy Travellers), religion or belief, sex (gender), or sexual orientation.
- 3.2 Detailed procedures and guidance have been developed for all Housing functions in support of this policy. All Housing & Building Standards staff will be supported to undergo appropriate training to ensure they are equipped to carry out the roles expected of them, including trauma informed practice.
- 3.3 The service will ensure high quality; customer focused services are delivered to all users of the service equally across Aberdeenshire irrespective of their geographical location and to improve their mental and social wellbeing. This includes achieving the Scottish Social Housing Charter, Care Inspectorate and Building Standards Customer Service Charter requirements.

- 3.4 Tenant Participation will be embedded in everything the service does. Tenants and all service users will be consulted about policy and procedural decisions, and they will be given the opportunity to contribute, monitor and scrutinise the service provided. The service is committed to the development of participatory budgeting opportunities.
- 3.5 Tenant satisfaction will be monitored and in conjunction with tenant groups regular performance management reviews will be undertaken to ensure continuous improvement of the service. Monitoring and evaluation of customer satisfaction will be carried out within the framework of the annual report to tenants produced as part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- 3.6 All feedback from applicants, tenants and service users is welcomed and the service will use this feedback to improve service delivery. Any complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction with the services provided will be investigated in accordance with council policy with a view to resolving the matter as quickly as possible. If this is not possible and the matter is taken to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) the service will cooperate fully with any investigation to ensure the matter is effectively resolved.
- 3.7 It is recognised the important role the Scottish Housing Regulator plays in protecting the interests of tenants, homeless people and others who use the service. Where concerns arise from any significant performance failures, the service will work with the Regulator to address the affects or the potential affects to service users.
- 3.8 Free information, advice, guidance and support will be provided to any person presenting with a housing options or tenancy management issue, this may include information relating to homelessness, homeless prevention, housing support, housing repairs and neighbourhood disputes.
- 3.9 The service recognises its responsibilities under health and safety and will take all practical steps to ensure that any activities carried out on its behalf by its employees, contractors and subcontractors comply with all statutory, legislative and regulatory requirements and do not adversely affect its tenants, service users, the general public and its staff.
- 3.10 Aberdeenshire Council has a zero-tolerance stance to Damp, Condensation and Mould (DCM) issues affecting our tenants' homes. We understand that to be effective at dealing with DCM issues requires cooperation and working in partnership with tenants, occupiers, and others and not to simply apportion blame on the lifestyle of the occupier of the home. This is why we will promote a culture of trust, education and understanding of DCM issues. We will focus on the fabric of the building first and be proactive, prompt, and effective at preventing, finding, and resolving any underlying causes. An initial inspection will be carried out within 5 working days of a report of DCM issues. We will follow up and evaluate all measures carried out in the home.

- 3.11 A user focussed, effective, efficient and economic reactive repairs service will operate which meets the needs of tenants which can also, in appropriate situations, process the recharging of repair costs to tenants.
- 3.12 Through a sustained 30-year programme of planned investment informed by a comprehensive and robust stock condition database the housing stock will be modernised and adapted to meet the changing needs of tenants and those targets in relation to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing Two (EESHS2), Net Zero and any other standards to minimise the impact of climate change. Appropriate information and support will be offered to tenants to encourage them to take upgrades.
- 3.13 The service will work with owners to maintain mixed tenure estates and carry out common repairs to properties in an open and transparent way.
- 3.14 Access to Aberdeenshire Council's housing list and assessment process will be fair and open and the service will work with all partners to identify barriers and remove them.
- 3.15 Housing need will be assessed using the agreed allocation policy and appropriate housing will be let to those in the greatest need, making best use of available stock, maximising choices and creating sustainable communities.
- 3.16 Tenancy changes will be managed in such a way as to minimise void periods so reducing void rental loss.
- 3.17 A comprehensive homeless service will be given to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The service will work with partners to identify those at risk of homelessness during transitions and to support early intervention. Those people who require additional support will be offered housing support. All necessary action will be taken to sustain tenancies, support tenants and prevent homelessness.
- 3.18 In line with guidance and legislation, all applicants for temporary accommodation will be treated fairly and appropriately in terms of tenancy provision, quality and location depending on availability of stock and taking account of national temporary accommodation standards.
- 3.19 The service will meet its legislative responsibilities to tenants as stipulated within the tenancy agreement and will work with tenants to ensure that they comply with tenancy obligations.
- 3.20 Appropriate and proportionate action will be taken to deal with any breaches of tenancy conditions including making all reasonable attempts to intervene at an early stage. Regular contact will be made throughout the process and the service will ensure all legislative requirements are complied with and that legal action is only taken as a last resort.
- 3.21 The rent collection service will be managed to maximise income and ensure that all tenants pay the rent owed. Payments will be regularly monitored, and

appropriate action will be taken to support tenants falling into arrears to ensure that their debt is cleared. Legal action to recover debt and the possibility of eviction will only be considered as a last resort, in full consideration of wider economic pressures that tenants and service users may endure.

- 3.22 As part of the rent setting process, and in compliance with legislation, Tenants will be consulted on rent, service charges and other charges. The aim will be to ensure that charges set provide value for money, are fair, affordable and reflect the cost of providing the service.
- 3.23 The service will ensure compliance with legislative and Scottish Government Guidance on the operation of [Scottish Local Authority Housing Revenue Accounts](#).
- 3.24 The service will ensure that the Council meets its legislative responsibilities under the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 by taking appropriate and proportionate action to deal with any issues and/or complaints including making all reasonable attempts to intervene at an early stage. Regular contact will be made throughout the process, adopting mediation and other techniques to resolve. Legal action will only be taken as a last resort, maintaining a focus on sustaining tenancies.
- 3.25 As required, the service will liaise with external agencies and other services within the council including making appropriate referrals for information to assist, support and prevent incidences of antisocial behaviour across Aberdeenshire. The service will work alongside external partners and other council services to monitor and maintain a register of all Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBO) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC).
- 3.26 Practical support to victims of antisocial behaviour will be delivered and the service will carry out antisocial behaviour investigation work on behalf of, and act on complaints received against, owner occupiers and tenants in the private rented sector.
- 3.27 The service will work with multi agency partners to meet Equally Safe requirements for Violence against Women Partnerships (VAWP) and play a role in tackling and embedding locally Scotland's National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation. In addition, the Service will work with partners including Police and the Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership to provide a response to Serious Organised Crime, Drug Trafficking and associated targeting of vulnerable individuals.
- 3.28 Through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) the service will seek to increase the supply of affordable housing to meet housing need.
- 3.29 First time buyers and those who can demonstrate a significant change in their household circumstances that affects their housing need will be assisted to purchase a property to suit their needs by administering and nominating eligible purchasers for the Low-Cost Shared Equity Scheme. The scheme provides access to affordable housing for those unable to purchase a property on the

open market without assistance. The property should be the main and principal home of the owner; however, consideration may be given, in exceptional circumstances for the property to be rented. In these cases, rent must not exceed that of the Local Housing Allowance to ensure it remains within the affordable housing supply.

- 3.30 People with an identified particular need, such as older people or those with a disability, will be supported to live as independently as possible through improving access to appropriate affordable housing.
- 3.31 Support will be provided through the scheme of assistance to homeowners and private sector tenants to repair, maintain, adapt and improve their homes. Financial assistance will be prioritised for homeowners with the highest levels of need and where they have no alternative means of funding to carry out aids, adaptations and essential repairs.
- 3.32 The service will work with Environmental Health and homeowners to identify and improve houses that are already below the tolerable standard and to help owners prevent their properties from falling below the tolerable standard.
- 3.33 Aberdeenshire Council has a zero-tolerance stance to Damp, Condensation and Mould (DCM) issues affecting private sector tenants' homes. We understand that to be effective at dealing with DCM issues requires cooperation and working in partnership with private landlords, private tenants, and others and not to simply apportion blame on the lifestyle of the occupier of the home. This is why we will promote a culture of trust, education and understating of DCM issues. We will respond to any report of DCM issues within 5 working days. We will ensure that private tenants are provided with appropriate advice and assistance and private landlords will be asked, when required, to investigate concerns of DCM and undertake any remedial repairs. We will make a third-party referral to The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) if a landlord fails to resolve any issues within a reasonable timeframe'.
- 3.34 Support will be provided through the care and repair service to people with a disability to access aids and adaptations to help them live independently.
- 3.35 The service will work to improve management standards through engagement with landlords in the private rented sector.
- 3.36 Assistance will be provided to Homeowners and private tenants in the form of private water supply grants to address the adequacy and wholesomeness of private water supplies.
- 3.37 To help improve the energy efficiency of homes in the private sector, the service will ensure that all households have access to services to identify possible energy efficiency improvements within their homes and will provide assistance to source any grants or schemes available to help with these measures. The Council will not be liable for any installation works. Homeowners should seek

independent advice on impacts improvements may have when selling or remortgaging their homes.

- 3.38 Housing will continue to support the wider council, Scottish and UK government with refugee schemes including Asylum Seekers and provide support and information where it is appropriate to do so especially to prevent future homelessness.
- 3.39 Appropriate accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers will be identified through the Gypsy/Traveller site provision strategy. Local authority run sites will be well managed and compliant with relevant Scottish Government standards for tenancy rights and physical conditions. Assistance will be provided to Gypsy/Travellers who would like to develop private sites.
- 3.40 Unauthorised encampments will be managed in a fair, balanced, and coordinated way. The service will ensure that the Council fulfils its statutory duties in respect of both the settled community and Gypsy/Travellers.
- 3.41 The housing service are fully committed to ensuring veterans are treated with dignity and respect in line with the armed forces covenant.
- 3.42 The Building Standards team will ensure a healthy and safe environment throughout Aberdeenshire by ensuring that building works comply with Building Regulations through the issue of building warrants and the inspection of completed works on site. The service will implement the national regulations legislation for the Health, Safety and Welfare of people in and about buildings, the conservation of fuel and power, the provision of access and facilities for disabled people and for furthering the achievement of sustainable development.
- 3.43 Building Standards customers can expect to be treated in line with the Building Standards customer service charter. Any enforcement action will be taken in line with the Building Standards enforcement charter.
- 3.44 The Housing & Building Standards service will maintain a strong focus on continuous improvement through use of a comprehensive performance management framework and the ongoing development of data led service delivery. The service will ensure that performance is tracked through benchmarking with a focus on industry good practice.

4. Related Links

[Local Housing Strategy](#)

Tenant Participation Strategy

[Strategic Housing Investment Plan](#)

[Gypsy Traveller Site Provision Strategy 2021-26 \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Unauthorised Encampments Policy](#)

[Scheme of Assistance](#)

[ALLOCATION POLICY FEBRUARY 2023 \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Rent Arrears

[Below Tolerable Standard Policy \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[Housing Renewal Area Policy](#)

[Equally Safe](#)

[Scotland's National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation.](#)

Building Safer Communities

[GIRFEC](#)

Scottish Government guidance on management of HRA

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)

Housing First Annual Report

[Building Standards Customer Charter](#)

[Building Standards Enforcement Charter](#)

5. Index of Documents

a) Policy

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes
15 th June 2018	New Policy	
December 2023	Review Policy	<p>Updated Officer information.</p> <p><u>Policy Statement</u> Policy statement to update 2022 – 2027 priorities.</p> <p><u>Scope</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusion of Care experienced young people.• Updated wording to remove age as a qualifying factor for Care and Repair service.• Inclusion of those resettled via resettlement schemes. <p><u>Principles</u></p>

		<p>3.4 Inclusion of participatory budgeting opportunities</p> <p>3.6 Inclusion of applicant's feedback</p> <p>New 3.10 - Inclusion of damp, mould and condensation.</p> <p>3.12 - Inclusion of Net Zero and updated to EESSH2</p> <p>New 3.22 - Inclusion of reference to HRA guidance</p> <p>3.23 – Commitment to sustaining tenancies and mediation added</p> <p>3.26 – Inclusion of partnership working with Serious Organised Crime</p> <p>3.28 - Inclusion of criteria for low cost home ownership and also potential to allow rental in special circumstances</p> <p>New 3.33 – Inclusion of damp, mould and condensation for Private Rented Sector.</p> <p>New 3.38 - Inclusion of who housing will support refugee schemes.</p> <p>New 3.41 – Inclusion of Armed Forces Covenant.</p> <p>New 3.42 - Inclusion of Building Standards</p> <p>New 3.43 - Inclusion of Building Standards</p> <p>New 3.44 - Inclusion of Performance Frameworks and continuous improvement</p>
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b) Distribution

Name	Title
Alexander MacLeod	Head of Housing
Andrew Mackie	Housing Manager Tenancy Services
Allan Jones	Housing Manager Options and Homelessness
Dave Thomson	Housing Manager Asset Manager and Repairs
Hannah McSherry	Housing Manager Strategy & Building Standards
Neil Watts	Business Planning & Improvement Manager