

**Portfolio holder decision – Portfolio holder for Housing and Homelessness - 2 October 2025.**

**Safety Compliance Policies for Housing (Landlord Services)**

Purpose	For Decision
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	This report introduces a suite of updated policies for Housing (Landlord Services) following periodic review, which detail the undertaking and arrangements pertaining to core statutory safety and compliance servicing and maintenance functions of the Council’s social housing stock under Housing Revenue Account activities. The revised Policies are attached at Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<p><b>1. To adopt the revised policies which have been presented to the Tenant Involvement Group (TIG) and Executive Management Team (EMT) on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2025.</b></p> <p><i>The policies presented reflect minor amendments to existing policies for approval by the Portfolio Holder publishing formally within the Council but as public documents updated on the Councils webpages.</i></p>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	Compliance with statutory safety standards is a critical priority for the Council. The Housing Service is committed to providing an effective and compliant maintenance service in response to its statutory responsibilities, ensuring our homes are safe, warm, and decent, protect the value of our housing stock and provide high levels of tenant satisfaction.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Steve Davies – Housing and Homelessness

Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Housing and Communities
Officer Contact	<p>Sophie Tuffin  Service Manager – Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing  <a href="mailto:sophie.tuffin@nfdc.gov.uk">sophie.tuffin@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Ritchie Thomson  Service Manager – Housing Major Projects  <a href="mailto:ritchie.thomson@nfdc.gov.uk">ritchie.thomson@nfdc.gov.uk</a></p>

## Introduction

1. The Council owns over 5,000 council properties and is under legal duty to inspect, service, maintain and repair building fabric elements and fitted equipment and appliances.
  
2. This report deals with core statutory safety and compliance inspection, servicing and maintenance functions of the Council's housing stock and introduces a suite of updated Policies for Housing (Landlord Services), namely:-
  - HLSPOL02 Gas Safety
  - HLSPOL03 Water Hygiene and Legionella
  - HLSPOL04 Lifts and Lifting Equipment
  - HLSPOL05 Maintenance and Repairs
  - HLSPOL06 Playgrounds and Play Equipment
  - HLSPOL07 Electrical Safety
  
3. The report introduces minor revisions to six of its housing policies to better reflects the current legislation and expected standards following a comprehensive review in order to make sure each policy is realistic, transparent and aligned with the current service offer and resources.

4. The Council is committed to providing an effective maintenance service to comply with its statutory responsibilities, including but not limited to the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (as amended) and the Housing Act 2004.
5. The Housing Maintenance Teams, operate under a suite of policies covering the core statutory compliance areas as set out below:-
  - HLSPOL01 Fire Safety
  - HLSPOL02 Gas Safety
    - HLSPOL03 Legionella
  - HLSPOL04 Lifts and Lifting Equipment
  - HLSPOL05 Maintenance and Repairs
  - HLSPOL06 Playground and Play Equipment
  - HLSPOL07 Electrical Safety
  - HLSPOL08 Void and Mutual Exchange
  - HLSPOL11 Mobility Scooters
  - HLSPOL18 Condensation, Damp, and Mould
6. The Housing Service, introduced a suite of Microsoft 365 digital performance dashboards in April 2023, providing key performance and analytical data across a range of activities which is used to monitor and improve performance.
7. The council's Housing Statutory Compliance Board, which regularly monitors operational compliance and is made up of senior housing officers and is chaired by the Strategic Director – Housing & Communities and last met on 2 April 2025.
8. Compliance reports are also submitted to the Portfolio Holder on a monthly basis, twice yearly to EMT and the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and annually to the Council's Cabinet.

### **Social Housing Regulation Act (2023)**

9. The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 introduces several key measures to ensure compliance and improve the standards of social housing. Here are some of the main principles:-

1. Safety and Health Standards;
2. Performance Transparency;
3. Complaint Handling;
4. Professional Standards.

10. These measures aim to rebalance the relationship between landlords and tenants, ensuring that tenants feel safe, listened to, informed, and supported in their homes. Compliance with these regulations is crucial for maintaining high standards in social housing.

### **The Tenant Satisfaction Measures**

11. In 2025 the Council submitted its second set of results to the Social Housing Regulator under the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023. The new Consumer Standards, place greater emphasis on tenant safety, and improved tenant services. All registered providers report annually to the Regulator of Social Housing on a wide range of matters, including performance with statutory compliance measures

### **Periodic review**

12. A periodic review of 6 of the core safety and compliance policies has been undertaken to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose, sufficiently address the 'Landlord' duties and responsibilities and are structured to ensure the Council complies with the requirements of respective legislation covering Gas, Water Hygiene, Lifts and Lifting Equipment, Playgrounds and Play Equipment and Electrical Safety and the Maintenance and Repair of Tenants' homes and empty properties.

13. Each policy has been updated to reflect:

- Changes to job titles and responsibilities.
- Updates to regulations and building standards.
- Additions to incorporate relevant definitions.
- Processes checked by Officers, to confirm adherence to current working practices and procedures.

14. The Policies' salient points cover:-

- i. Legislative and regulatory context;

- ii. Definitions;
- iii. Role and responsibilities;
- iv. Tenant responsibilities;
- v. Transparency, influence and accountability;
- vi. Arrangements; and
- vii. Procedures.

### **Corporate plan priorities**

15. The Council is committed to its legal and moral obligations as a Landlord of social housing. Every Tenant has the right to a warm, secure, safe and decent home and to be treated with dignity and fairness.
16. These Policies support the council's People Priority 3; meeting housing needs and People Priority 2: Empowering our residents to live healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. We are working with our housing tenants to understand their needs and provide high quality service standards in line with the government's new Social Housing Charter and regulatory regime measured through the percentage scores for the 5 safety and compliance management Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).

### **Consultation undertaken**

17. Consultation has taken place with a wide range of housing officers, including the tenant engagement team in shaping the revised Policies. Consideration has been given to national best practice, Ombudsman spotlight reports, Regulatory Notices, and the learning from corporate complaints.
18. The revised policy drafts were presented to the Tenant Involvement Group (TIG) on 7 August 2025 and were positively received. The Tenant Involvement Group receive regular service updates on our approach in dealing with the maintenance and repairs of their homes, and in shaping our tenant guides and content published in Hometalk and on our website.
19. On the 12<sup>th</sup> August, The Service Manager for Housing maintenance, repairs and servicing presented the policies to the Council's Executive Management Team. They were considered and approved. EMT discussed the minor updates relating to the structure of service

arrangements, roles and responsibilities, and transfer to the new corporate policy template.

20. On 17<sup>th</sup> September the Service Manager for Housing maintenance, repairs and servicing, presented a rewritten Maintenance and Repairs to Empty Homes and Homes undergoing Mutual Exchange Policy for consideration by members of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel. This policy is attached as Appendix 7.
21. It is intended that the revised Policies for Housing (Landlord Services) are formally adopted once Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness has approved the Decision.

### **Financial and resource implications**

22. The Housing Revenue Account Budget and Housing Public Sector Capital Expenditure Programme 2025/26 was approved by Council at its meeting on 22nd January 2025. The policy activities proposed are all contained within existing budgets.
23. It was agreed for there to be an enhanced level of capital spending of £18.939 million to deliver an increased level of improvement works, to include fire safety and statutory compliance as well as decarbonisation works and energy efficiency measures.
24. Funding of £2.234 million was approved for 2025/26 cyclical maintenance budget to include resources for the mainstream statutory safety requirements, such as gas, electrical, legionella, and lift inspections etc.
25. Further fire safety work was identified with £1.500 million approved to continue the capital fire safety expenditure programme.

### **Legal implications**

26. There are significant risks and implications for the council should the council fail in its compliance duties in any area, including unlimited fines and punitive legal action that can be taken against it.
27. An increased number of complaints may lead to greater intervention by our legal teams and increase in the risk of maladministration findings by the Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman can also issue

unlimited fines for serious failings or maladministration and will refer wider breaches to the regulator.

28. Poor quality or unmaintained homes increase the risk of tenant harm and property damage.

### **Risk assessment**

29. The policies recognise and acknowledge the serious impact to safety risks and well-being of residents that can arise when statutory regimes are not undertaken:-
  - a. **Increased Risk of Accidents and Injuries:** Without proper safety measures, buildings become more prone to accidents, leading to injuries or fatalities.
  - b. **Legal Consequences:** Non-compliance with safety regulations can result in legal actions, fines, and penalties for individuals and the council.
  - c. **Financial Losses:** Accidents and legal issues can lead to substantial financial losses due to compensation claims and increased insurance premiums.
  - d. **Damage to Reputation:** Failure to adhere to safety standards poses the risk of suffering reputational damage, affecting relationships and resident trust in the Council as Landlord.
  - e. **Operational Disruptions:** Safety incidents can cause significant disruptions to operations, leading to delays, decreased productivity and additional cost.
30. The Council foster a collaborative partnership culture to support our tenants and seek to resolve issues raised swiftly. This collaboration supports our tenant engagement strategic priorities of '**listening to our tenants**', '**putting tenants first**', '**knowing our tenants**', and '**how we communicate with tenants**', to ensure everything we aim to achieve is supported by the tenants' voice, and those who will implement the actions.

31. In certain limited circumstances, it will not be possible for the Council to meet the timescales set out within the policies for reasons beyond our control, but we will take all reasonable steps to do so.

### **Environmental / Climate and nature implications**

32. The Council will implement data collection and insight measures, making every contact count to assist with informing us of the possible risks to our properties and residents so that we can undertake proactive measures and prevent repeated visits or reparation work.
33. The Council considers climate change as part of the tender evaluation questions for every tender. Allocating a percentage of the awarded scores to contractors who are working towards a reduction in carbon emissions, or through other improvements like recycling of packaging or commitment to reduce paper-based activities.

### **Equalities implications**

34. Certain individuals may be at increased risk due to health-related or age-related vulnerabilities, or because they are less able to report or act on guidance related to repairs or equipment within their home. Our policies consider approaches to support vulnerable people, and the formation of our Tenancy Sustainment Team is designed to assist tenants receive services and maintain health and well-being in their homes.
35. The Council is required to consider what adjustments it can reasonably make when carrying out work within a tenants' home to manage disabilities. Such adjustments are considered on a case-by-case basis following consultation and assessment with the council's Housing Occupational Therapist.
36. Implications arising from the capping of gas supplies to ensure safety and compliance are addressed separately within the Gas Safety Policy, but which provide a welfare assessment and practical support to tenants affected by such action.

## **Crime and disorder implications**

37. It is important for housing providers to ensure that statutory safety work is carried out to a high standard. Poorly performing landlords can be fined or prosecuted for failing to take the necessary measures to protect tenants.

## **Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications**

38. The council's asset management system holds all records for the council's properties, the responsive repairs system is used to log all repairs, and the dynamic scheduling system plans all appointments for operatives. These systems are in the process of being replaced due to aging software and potential security concerns.
39. Careful consideration of resident data and their individual needs is critical in maintaining high levels of compliance in all areas.
40. The council receives digital compliance records from several external providers, with these managed with data sharing agreements and internal control procedures.

## **Conclusion**

41. The revised Policies set out the Council's approach in dealing with our responsibilities as Landlord to achieve statutory legislative requirements, clearly defines roles and responsibilities and the framework to support residents, in order for them to hold us to account.
42. The council prioritises the safety of its tenants and its homes, which is reflected in this report, performance measures, TSMs, its corporate plan, and transformation journey.

## **Portfolio holder endorsement**

I have agreed to the recommendations of this report.

Sign: Cllr Steve Davies

Date: 2 October 2025

**Appendices:**

1. HLSPOL02 Gas Safety Policy
2. HLSPOL03 Water Hygiene & Legionella Policy
3. HLSPOL04 Lifts and Lifting Equipment Policy
4. HLSPOL05 Maintenance and Repairs Policy
5. HLSPOL06 Playgrounds and Play Equipment Policy
6. HLSPOL07 Electrical Safety Policy
7. HLSPOL08 Maintenance and Repairs to Empty Homes and Homes undergoing Mutual Exchange Policy

**Background Papers:**

None.

Date on which notice given of this decision – 2 October 2025  
Last date for call in – 9 October 2025