

## Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 18 June 2025

### Housing Annual Compliance Report

Purpose	An interim Housing Compliance report was presented to the Executive Management Team on 10 December 2024, as part of the twice-yearly reporting arrangements on statutory compliance across the housing service. This report provides the next scheduled update on Housing compliance performance which will also be presented to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 18 June 2025 and to Cabinet on 6 August 2025.
Classification	<b>Public</b>
Executive Summary	Compliance with statutory safety standards is a critical priority across the Housing Service. This report provides the next scheduled update on housing compliance and performance across a range of statutory safety requirements in respect of the council's housing stock. The data in this report is a snapshot in time reflecting the position on 31 March 2025. Figures can fluctuate over the year based on equipment replacement and individual resident needs.
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>Note the annual compliance report for Housing compliance.</b>
Reasons for recommendation(s)	It is recommended that EMT note the annual Housing Compliance report covering the period up to 31 March 2025 in respect of the Housing Services' performance against key statutory compliance measures to ensure effective scrutiny is provided at all levels of governance in the Council.
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Steve Davies – Housing and Homelessness

Strategic Director(s)	Richard Knott – Strategic Director, Housing and Communities.  Paul Thomas - Assistant Director, Housing.
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## Introduction and background

1. An interim Housing Compliance report was presented to EMT on 10 December 2024, as part of the twice-yearly reporting arrangements covering statutory compliance across housing.
2. Monthly reporting is presented to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness and this report will also be presented to the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 18 June 2025.
3. This report provides the next scheduled update to EMT across a range of statutory safety requirements in respect of the council’s social housing stock.
4. 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, last met on 2 April 2025.
5. The Housing Service, introduced a suite of M365 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. This report will include an overview of key items to include:-
  - Fire Safety;
  - Asbestos;
  - Recruitment;
  - Damp, Mould, and Disrepair.

## The Tenant Satisfaction Measures

6. In 2023 the Council submitted its first 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. Additional detail can be found here [TSM Dashboard \(24-25\) - Power BI](#)

**Table 1: Target Performance against compliance TSMs along with latest scores for 2024/2025.**

<b>Tenant Satisfaction Measures</b>	<b>24/25 NFDC Target</b>	<b>24/25 Results</b>	<b>25/26 Target</b>
Decent Homes standard (RP01)	90%	98.80%	97%
Emergency Repairs (RP02)	90%	93.40%	90%
Non-Emergency Repairs (RP02)	90%	93.69%	90%
Gas Safety (BS01)	97%	99.98%	98%
Fire Safety (BS02)	95%	100%	97%
Asbestos Management (BS03)	95%	100%	98%
Water Safety (BS04)	95%	100%	98%
Lift Safety (BS05)	95%	100%	98%

**Table 2:- Comparison of data relating to tenant perception of repairs performance 2024 and 2025**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>Outturn</b>
Overall satisfaction	81%	84%	↑ 3%
Overall repairs	82.8%	81%	↓ 1.8%
Time taken repairs	82.8%	82%	↓ 0.8%
Well maintained home	82.1%	78%	↓ 4.1%
Safe home	84.7%	85%	↔

7. Table 2 shows a 3% increase in overall tenant satisfaction. A 1.8% drop in overall satisfaction of repairs and 4.1% drop in tenant perception of a well-maintained home, could be attributed to increased work to raise the profile of condensation, damp, and mould and general awareness of reporting dissatisfaction. There is a significant programme of work taking place to better understand our residents and IT system changes are planned over the next 12 months aim to improve these results.
8. 24/25 has seen a significant period of positive change to merge the Electric and Gas Safety Teams, to fully implement the learning of complaints and a new round of improvement plans linked to the Government's new Consumer Standards. The Council will continue to value resident feedback and the learnings to improve satisfaction.

### **Housing Compliance Performance Monitoring**

9. In addition to the TSMs, the service operates a more detailed set of indicators in the form of a housing compliance reporting dashboard, run monthly. This snapshot gives a more in-depth view of servicing components and frequencies than the TSM dashboard. [Housing Compliance Report - Power BI](#)

**Table 3:- Additional Compliance monitoring targets 31st March 2025.**

<b>Housing Compliance</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Equipment</b>
Lift Checks	95%	Stairlifts, Hoist, through floor lifts – safety records each year
Heating Safety	95%	ASHP, oil, and solid fuel – 175 safety records each year
Fire Safety Risk Assessments	95%	166 blocks risk assessed each year
Electrical Safety Inspections	95%	Domestic and commercial installations – 5,461 tests every 5 years
Water Hygiene Tests	95%	29 blocks inspected (All outlets and frequencies)
Doors & Shutter Inspections	90%	82 Inspections (All frequencies)

10. Periodic policy reviews are underway and include new and revised policies covering:-

- Lifts and Lifting Equipment;
- Playgrounds and Play Equipment;
- Maintenance and Repair;
- Voids and Mutual Exchanges;
- Electrical;
- Gas;
- Water Hygiene.

The revised Policies will be brought to EMT and the Housing O&S Panel during the Summer 2025, for approval, before being published on the Council's webpages [Housing strategies and policies - New Forest District Council](#)

### **Damp, Mould, and Condensation (DMC)**

11. The Council's Damp, Mould and Condensation policy was presented at the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 19 March 2025 with recommendation made to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness to approve the policy by way of Portfolio Holder Decision.
12. The Council has already put in place additional resources to bring about improvements and strengthen the council's approach to disrepair reports via a dedicated task force of customer services triage lead, inspector and trade responders. A recently procured survey and cleaning company will help deliver the short turnaround times proposed under Awaab's law.
13. Officers will continue to work to improve residents' awareness of the risks where DMC is present, through HomeTalk, social media and the council's web pages.
14. Repairs Supervisors have received a level 2 VRQ certificate in understanding and prevention of damp and mould in housing. The course is designed specifically for officers involved with damp and mould prevention focusing on legislative standards, guidance, best practice and tenant rights.
15. The Council has purchased equipment to better detect and reassure residents reporting loss of cavity insulation and excessive cold. Damp meters, moisture meters and new thermal camera are now available to officers.
16. In complex cases the council is using environmental sensors to provide insights in tackling high humidity, reports of excessive cold and providing residents insights to help awareness around ventilation.

17. Table 4 shows a drop in overall cases of reported damp and mould, which is attributed to the priority and process adopted to managing DMC within the housing service.

**Table 4:- DMC monitoring 2024/25**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Jobs Raised</b>	<b>Area 1</b> (Totton, Hythe Dibden)	<b>Area 2</b> (Lymington, Pennington Milford on Sea)	<b>Area 3</b> (Ringwood, New Milton, Fordingbridge)
2023-2024	500	194	135	171
2024-2025	317	119	99	99
Total	817			

### **Disrepair**

18. The council's [corporate complaints procedure](#) aligns with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. The Pre-Action Protocol now utilised by the Council, states that the parties should consider whether some form of alternative dispute resolution procedure would be more suitable than litigation for these sorts of claims and for council tenants a suitable option includes the council's own complaints procedure.
19. The council as at today is dealing with 16 active cases of disrepair, where a letter of claim has been served under the Pre-Action Protocol for housing conditions claims. These continue to be managed through the corporate complaints' procedure and legal process, supported by Legal Services.
20. Awaab's Law forms part of the government's White Paper pledge to reduce non-decency in rented homes by 50% by 2030. In February 2025, the government released an update which will require social landlords to investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould in set time periods and repair emergency hazards within 24 hours from October 2025.
21. This is part of a phased approach through the Renters Reform Bill which aims to introduce phased improvements in standards which are likely to include expanding current legislation in 2026, to apply to a wider range hazards like excess cold and excess heat in domestic buildings, risk of structural collapse, fire, electrical and explosions and hygiene hazards.

22. The Council is implementing improvements to make sure that we are working to the new standards now. We are actively participating at round tables and other networking events, training staff and undertaking process improvements.
23. In 2027, the requirements of Awaab's Law will expand further to the remaining hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) (excluding overcrowding). The full list of hazards can be found in schedule 1 to [the Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(England\) Regulations 2005](#).
24. Officers are continuing to attend key meetings with other local authorities and key stakeholders, to stay informed of the latest news and best practice, which will be fed into policies and processes accordingly.
25. Housing teams continue to focus on good ventilation and fabric warmth, through its retrofit programme adopted through the Greener Housing Strategy, which prioritises ventilation and insulation and through its planned capital work programmes.
26. To increase knowledge within the housing teams, two planned surveyors have now completed their level 5 Diploma in Retrofit Coordination and Risk Management.
27. The council's retrofit and new development programme is increasing the number of homes with renewable technology. The majority of homes within the district are heated with gas central heating. The government have proposed changes to how Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) are calculated, this is likely to favour electrical sourced of heating like air Source Heat Pumps.
28. The current KW price of electricity is still prohibitive in swapping the councils 4,582 gas homes for electric alternatives, without increasing costs for residents.
29. Three Electricians have completed their solar Photovoltaic (PV) qualifications, which will allow the Council workforce to safely repair and maintain domestic PV panels on council roofs.
30. Five Gas Engineers have completed their qualifications in repairing and maintaining air source heat pumps. These renewable qualifications will maintain the best level of service to tenants and improve staff morale and retention as we invest in their skills and development.

## **Gas Registered Business**

31. The Council is a registered Gas Safe Business, employing 14 registered engineers including a Gas Supervisor and Gas and Electrical Manager.
32. Corgi Technical services operate as the council's independent auditors for gas. Their monthly assessments help the council to monitor quality and performance to include health and safety legislation under the **Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 (PSSR)** regulations designed to ensure the safe design, installation, operation, and maintenance of pressure systems in the workplace and the **Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)** regulations that aim to protect people from risks related to fire, explosions, and substances that can corrode metal.
33. Corgi have currently completed 21 independent Gas Audits since April 2025. This includes work in progress (WIP) and gas safety certification audits. A link to May's figures has been included:- [Corgi Gas Compliance Snapshot](#). The results provide assurance that the Council are complying with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations.
34. Through a restructure of the Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing team in July 2024, the council has appointed a new Gas and Electrical Manager replacing separate gas and electrical roles. This will create greater oversight of utilities inspections and bring together the operatives as the council moves towards its goals for decarbonisation and whole house retrofit programmes.
35. The new Manager holds a Level 3 VRQ Certificate in Gas Auditing Processes, and a VRQ level 4 in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing, while they are currently undertaking a CIH level 4 certificate in housing.

## **Electrical Registered Business**

36. The Council is a registered business of the Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC). This ensures that installation work we undertake meets the standards expected.
37. Under the Approved Contractor Scheme, the council employs 11 registered engineers, including an Electrical Supervisor who takes the role of registered Qualified Supervisor (QS). The council recently supported one of its electrical engineers to complete their QS competency improving resilience across the service.

## **Southern Internal Audit Partnership**

38. Southern Internal Audit Partnership, (SIAP) commenced a review of the council's lift servicing and maintenance regimes. Giving a 'Substantial' assurance opinion with 3 identified management actions. A close off audit meeting covering lift servicing took place in April 2025 with the following actions identified:-
1. Introduce formal monitoring/reporting for defects and delivery timeframes (Action complete);
  2. Ensure a full stock condition list for all lifting equipment. To include a risk status Low, medium, high. (Revised condition report to incorporate high/med/low status, underway);
  3. Utilise TCW document reader to identify gaps in safety records, and act on information to improve safety (Commenced).
39. SIAP commenced audits of gas and asbestos safety compliance in 2024/25 Q4. A close off audit meeting took place on 2 May 2025 for asbestos and the draft audit report has been approved for publication, giving a 'Substantial' assurance opinion with no identified management actions. A close off audit meeting covering gas is scheduled to take place late May 2025.

## **Key Compliance Measures**

### **Asbestos**

40. The council's Corporate Asbestos Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) ensures that there is clarity in terms of structure and responsibility for managing asbestos across the council, with an established Asbestos Working Group overseeing the council's approach to ensure good practice.
41. The Housing Service takes a lead role in ensuring a consistent approach across the whole Council, with individual Service Managers being required to comply with the same policy for the property assets falling within their respective areas of responsibility.
42. The Council has in place a multi-supplier 4-year framework for the provision of providing specialist asbestos related works and services, including surveying, analytical work, training, and asbestos removal. The framework is due to expire in July 2025 and is included within the procurement pipeline for retender prior to expiry.
43. A programme of surveys on all communal areas of housing blocks was commissioned and completed in 2022. An annual reinspection programme covering all housing blocks and garages is undertaken in

house by the Council's Asbestos Management Officer and the annual programme is progressing on time.

44. Asbestos management surveys are carried out on all void social housing properties (approx. 400 each year) prior to any maintenance work commencing, which also enables us to provide asbestos information guides to the incoming tenants. All refurbishment surveys required to support capital planned maintenance works, i.e., kitchens, bathrooms etc. are now commissioned under one survey to cover both asbestos management and refurbishment, which in time will improve asbestos management data held on all individual housing dwellings.
45. All corporate buildings, including offices, depots, public conveniences etc., where maintenance and repairing responsibilities rests with the council also undergo an annual reinspection programme. The majority of re-inspections for 2024 were outsourced to Casa Environmental and a handful of smaller buildings inspections undertaken inhouse. Inspections are ongoing on a rolling bases forming part of our annual re-inspection programme and records updated where necessary to reflect any change in material assessment.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **100%**

## **Electrical Safety**

46. The Council is required to carry out periodic electrical installation safety inspections on all housing stock, including communal landlord supplies every 5 years.

Defects are categorised as:-

- **C1 (Danger present)**  
Immediate danger and requires urgent attention.
- **C2 (Potential danger)**  
Something that could become dangerous if left unresolved.
- **C3 (Improvement recommended)**  
Not immediately dangerous but not up to current standards.

47. C1 and C2 rated defects are completed by operatives completing their safety inspections. C3 defects could include items such as replacing plastic consumer boards with metal equivalents. The Council takes a pragmatic approach to such changes in line with IET

wiring Regulations (BS-7671) as there is no immediate requirement for replacement, unless other issues arise.

48. Officers are implementing a new certificate auditing system called **Technical Compliance Workflow (TCW)**. The cloud-based software has the ability to read all electronic certificates for the Council's compliance areas. Starting with electrical certificates. Defects will be easily recorded and prioritised into planned programmes of works. The system will be used to improve operative training and remove the need for manual checking.

### Domestic

49. As of 12 May 2025, from a total of 5,320 5-year cyclical inspections there are currently 23 inspections overdue. Of these, 9 require remedial works, 3 are being progressed to appointment and 11 have been escalated to the tenancy sustainment team to support further engagement with tenants before being managed through the Council's legal process.
50. Due to retirement, we are currently recruiting 1 electrician with 1 further post being allocated to incorporate emergency light testing within our in-house electrical team. Interviews have taken place and vacancies offered.

Compliance of domestic EICR inspections is **99.57%**, an improvement of 0.03% from December's report. (December's figure 99.54%)

### Landlord Communal

51. The Council has 140 housing blocks with communal power and/or lighting. Of these landlord electrical installations we have 3 blocks not in date, this is due to 2 requiring remedial works following inspection and 1 block requiring further repair investigations.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **97.9%** a decrease of 2.1% from December 2024 report.

### **Fire Safety**

52. The Council is using a combination of in-house resources and external contractors to respond to the necessary actions.
53. The Council has retained the services of project management consultants and fire safety specialists who are assisting the council where required, and officers continue to work closely with the Fire

Service through the Joint Fire Steering Group Liaison Meetings, Local Remediation Plan meetings, and as a Statutory Consultee forming part of the building regulatory regime.

54. In December 2022, the Council appointed an external specialist to undertake cyclical fire risk assessments (FRAs) to the council's housing blocks and corporate buildings for the next 3 years. FRAs are undertaken on a rolling basis continually throughout the year and there are always likely to be outstanding actions reported. Each FRA is reviewed within 14 days of completion and high-risk actions scheduled as a priority.
55. Regulation 10 of the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 requires that, if the top storey of the building is above 11m in height (typically, a building of more than four storeys) the Responsible Person must use best endeavours to check all flat entrance doors at least every 12 months and carry out checks on any fire doors in communal areas at least every 3 months. Although the Council do not have any housing residential buildings that fall within the requirements of the current regulations, it is likely that the height requirement will be lowered at some point in the future and is considered best practice.
56. The housing building safety team are in the process of building a detailed fire door asset register using a new barcoding and door tag system in preparedness to commence formal periodic fire door inspections as soon as reasonably practicable during 2025.
57. Compliance on completing periodic fire risk assessments currently sits at **100%**.
58. As of 20 May 2025, a total of 788 Fire Risk Actions have been raised since December 2022. Of these 773 were deemed unlikely or low-risk and 15 medium-risk. No high-risk actions have been observed. Of those actions raised, 542 have been completed (68.78%) and 246 are in progress of being actioned (31.22%). Of these, 39% relate to items included within our capital planned maintenance programmes for 2025/26 with an estimated completion date of 31 March 2026 and 26% related to building housekeeping and managing resident behaviour.
59. As FRAs are undertaken on a rolling basis continually throughout the year there are always likely to be outstanding actions reported, and these often include resident related housekeeping issues observed at the time of inspection. For example, items stored within common escape routes which are required to be kept clear.

**Table 5:- Fire Risk Actions**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sub Description</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Compartmentation	-	<b>20</b>	<b>8.13</b>
Fire Doors or Hatches	Repair	1	
	Notional doors (Stores)	10	
	Notional doors (Flats)	28	
	Self-closing device	10	
	Loft hatches	49	
		<b>98</b>	<b>39.84</b>
Fire Stopping	-	<b>34</b>	<b>13.82</b>
Housekeeping	Balconies	2	
	Behaviour	17	
	Periodic inspection	1	
	Security	2	
	Service cupboards	13	
	Signage	22	
	Waste	7	
		<b>64</b>	<b>26.02</b>
Means of Escape	-	<b>26</b>	<b>10.57</b>
Testing & Commissioning	Evidence of testing & commissioning	<b>4</b>	<b>1.63</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Progress against Plan – Workstream A

60. A programme of work commenced in the Spring of 2022 on the 3 Extra Care blocks (Barfield’s Court, Gore Grange and Winfrid House) to deal with compartmentation issues, install a new fire alarm system including a Telecare system (to ensure communication between tenants and the onsite care provider), replacement fire doors to dwellings, ancillary and cross corridor doors and other remedial works. Forming part of this work, the council piloted a newer innovation, in the form of a fire suppression sprinkler system, in Barfield’s Court and Winfrid House. The final phase of this work at Winfrid House concluded in May 2024.
61. There was a need to temporarily decant Robertshaw House in Lyndhurst to enable necessary safety work to be undertaken. The work required within this block replicated that of Compton and Sarum House which completed in November 2023 A two-phase programme of work commenced in the May 2023 and concluded in August 2024.
62. Retrofitted glazed screening enclosing what were originally open balcony walkways on 2 further housing blocks has been removed and

work to retrofit 32 double glazed panels with smoke vents within the stairwells at 7 North Milton Housing blocks has also been completed.

63. Investigatory work has now concluded to inform the necessary scope of work for 4 further general needs age-restricted blocks. This investigatory work was supported by the council's commissioned fire engineer to determine the regulatory fire strategy for each building. Pre commencement planning, design and tender scoping is now underway and will inform the necessary building regulatory regime formal approval process.

#### Progress against Plan – Workstream B

64. The key elements of fire safety improvement work completed includes circa 50 ad hoc replacement fire doors, upgrading electrical meter boxes and loft hatches within common means of escape, fire stopping, fire signage and ongoing monitoring and clearance of communal areas to maintain sterile environment. This work is ongoing with work to a further 24 walk-up blocks nearing completion.

#### **Investment**

65. For the 2025 -26 financial year our proposed budget includes a total of £22.11m to be spent on maintaining tenant's properties including fire safety, statutory compliance, and our accelerated decarbonisation programme, respectively.
66. During the preceding three financial year period 2022 -25 we invested £52.13m on maintaining tenant's properties including £6.2m on identified fire safety improvements, £2.7m on major refurbishment to bring empty properties suffering structural disrepair back into use, £21.07m on capital planned maintenance programmes, £3.16m on decarbonisation and £18.98m on statutory compliance and general repairs and The Council is currently in the process of procuring a four-year framework agreement for the replacement of fire doors and communal doors. The programme anticipates the replacement of approximately 150 to 200 fire doors annually. Officers are required to submit full building control applications for each fire door replacement to ensure full compliance.

#### **The Building Safety Act 2022 – Section 156**

67. Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 was introduced under Article 50 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and came into force on 1 October 2023 and applies to all non-domestic premises, such as where people work, visit, or stay, including

workplaces, and the non-domestic parts of multi-occupied residential buildings (e.g., communal corridors, stairways, plant rooms). The requirements do not apply within individual domestic premises.

68. The new legislation had the effect of amending the Fire Safety Order to require the Responsible Person/s to undertake specific duties and require the Responsible Person/s of buildings containing two or more sets of domestic premises to provide residents with relevant fire safety information. The additional duties placed on the Responsible Person/s strengthens the status of statutory guidance issued under Article 50 of the Fire Safety order. More information can be found here: [Check your fire safety responsibilities under Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)
69. Local fire and rescue authorities remain the primary enforcing body for the Fire Safety Order, including these additional requirements. The Housing Act 2004 lists enforcement by the Local Authority in non-domestic parts of multi-occupied residential buildings.
70. The council's housing fire safety web pages have been redesigned to comply with the requirements and to respond to hard copy requests for information by exception.  
<https://www.newforest.gov.uk/firesafety>
71. Housing managers continue to work closely with HIWFRS via our Fire Safety Management Steering Group and our Building Safety team are in the process of rolling out new fire and building safety posters to our larger housing schemes, with posters modified to reflect the individual characteristics of each scheme. An example can be found here:- [Robertshaw House House 2025\\_Housing\\_Building Safety Posters.pdf](#)

## **Training and Development**

72. The Council continues to invest in its housing team to maintain the skills and knowledge adapting to proposed changes in legislation and energy efficiency:-
  - The council's Housing Fire Safety Manager and Senior Building Safety Officer commenced the Level 4 Fire Safety Inspector and Level 3 Fire Safety Advisor apprenticeships respectively in September 2024 utilising the apprenticeship levy;
  - The Gas and Electrical Manager successfully completed an RVQ level 4 in Gas Safety Management in social housing;

- Seven operatives completed training in renewable technology which will help the Councils manage a transition to renewable technology;
- Two Planned Maintenance Surveyors completed their level 5 Diploma in Retrofit Coordination and risk management;
- Two Service Managers started the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) level 5 qualifications in Housing;
- Housing Managers and Supervisors completed their IOSH Managing safely certificates;
- Construction Design Management (CDM) Workshops have been provided to staff to improve knowledge and management of Health and safety;
- RVQ Level 2 in damp and mould and compliance Certificates completed by Repairs Supervisors;
- Operatives have benefitted from training that improves personal safety to include Tetra ladder training.

## **Gas Safety**

73. The council's in-house team of qualified gas engineers complete yearly gas safety inspections of all 4,582 housing properties containing a gas burning appliance.
74. As of 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025, there are 7 inspections overdue. Of these, 3 were escalated to the Tenancy sustainment team to support engagement with residents, with 3 expired certificates escalated to legal services seeking an injunction to gain access. 1 expired certificate is in the process of having a replacement boiler.
75. Landlord Gas Safety Records (LGSR's) Are currently paper based. As a new software is introduced, electronic certification will further improve compliance reporting.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **99.85%**

The Council has 25 housing blocks served by communal boiler plant rooms supplying heating and hot water.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **100%**

76. In addition, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requires landlords to inspect equipment acting under or containing pressure. The Pressure System Safety Regulations (PSSR) is an essential safety check completed yearly.

Compliance on inspections required currently sits at **100%**

77. Housing blocks with gas supplies, must comply with the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR). A zoned, risk assessment for the council's 30 applicable blocks, including meters, is required to identify and manage the suitability and safety of pipework installations through each building. While the risk of an incident is low. Should an explosion occur, the impact could be significant.
78. The council is currently completing new risk assessments for all applicable blocks, which is anticipated to complete in July 2025.
79. All blocks are routinely inspected by the council's Building Safety Officers, whose role it is to observe and mitigate safety issues.

### **Legionella Safety**

80. Statutory legislation requires weekly flushing of outlets in communal bathrooms and kitchens along with temperature checks at nearest, intermediate, and furthest points from feed tanks or calorifiers in 30 housing blocks where communal water tanks or heating cylinders are present. These checks are carried out monthly to ensure compliance.
81. Additionally, the council carries out annual risk assessments, including sampling and cleaning of water tanks in all 29 of its applicable blocks, and all actions arising from these risk assessments are dealt with as they arise.

In April 2025, contractors identified 13 actions. 5 of these require monitoring of water temperatures which will take place throughout May and June 2025. 5 repairs were identified which will be repaired before the next round of monitoring. 3 units have been isolated from the water supply so were unable to be tested, 2 relate to supplies to guest rooms in blocks at Evergreens and Compton House, and further investigation as to why they have been isolated are underway. 1 shower has been isolated from the water supply as it is no longer in use. The Shower is to be removed from the asset list in due course.

Compliance on assessments required currently sits at **100%**

## Lifts and Lifting Equipment

82. In domestic properties there are currently 141 stairlifts, 21 track hoists, 3 bath lifts, 1 step lift and 7 through floor lifts. In communal areas there are 11 passenger lifts and 7 stairlifts.
83. Stock Condition information has been collated for all 11 passenger lifts. As a result of this information, the passenger lift at Howard Oliver House was refurbished in 2024. No passenger lifts are planned for replacement in 2025.
84. The Lifts and Lifting Equipment Policy and external regulation sets out the frequency schedule for lift maintenance and safety inspections. Communal passenger lifts are serviced monthly and undergo a detailed inspection every 6 months. Track hoists, through floor, bath and communal stairlifts are serviced and inspected every 6 months, and domestic stairlifts are serviced and inspected annually.
85. Temple Lifts were successfully re-appointed as the council's lift contractor on 14 October 2024.

Compliance for the 11 passenger lift inspections and servicing sits at **100%**

Compliance for other lifting equipment is set out in table 6 below:-

**Table 6: Lift equipment compliance**

Lifting Baths	<b>100%</b>
Domestic Stair Lifts	<b>94.37%</b> Due to access
Communal Stair Lifts	<b>100%</b>
Track Hoists	<b>100%</b>
Through floor lifts	<b>100%</b>

Domestic Stair Lifts which result in non-access are regularly monitored through the Council's access process in collaboration with tenancy sustainment officers.

## Playground and Play Equipment

86. The housing landlord service has 8 playgrounds under its responsibilities which are subject to weekly routine visual inspections undertaken by the council's Stock Condition Surveyors. Specialist RoSPA trained contractors complete quarterly and yearly detailed inspections.

87. The condition of the playgrounds has been collected. This information has been reviewed, a strategy for upgrading and future provision will be developed in due course, and which will consider consultation responses from the community.

### Other Compliance Measures

88. The council’s communal buildings contain the following specialist safety systems designed to detect, warn, and protect residents in the event of a fire.

**Table 7: Fire alarm equipment servicing**

<b>Compliance Risk</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Compliance</b>
Fire Alarms	33	100%
Automist and fire suppression systems	5	100%
Fire Fighting Equipment	22	100%

89. Every home contains multiple smoke detectors which are serviced annually. Carbon monoxide detectors are installed in every room containing a fuel burning appliance. An example would be 1 monitor located within a kitchen with a gas boiler and 1 monitor in a living room with gas fire. They have sealed batteries and are replaced at the last yearly service before the detectors expire. Details for each smoke and carbon monoxide detector are recorded for each home on its asset database, Keystone.
90. 118 Blocks contain emergency lighting which illuminate in the event of a loss of power. The systems are tested on a monthly rolling basis by an external contractor and are also subject to a full battery drain down on an annual basis. From 01 October 2025, the Council will take ownership of its Emergency Light testing, giving greater control over compliance and increased resilience within the electrical team with the aim to achieve 100% compliance by the next interim report.
91. On 12 May 2025 there were 4 blocks which had a small number of failures, and works are booked to replace individual light fittings which have failed since the last testing.

Testing compliance currently sits at **96.61%**

### Heating

92. The council has several alternative fuel source heating systems shown in table 8:

**Table 8: Heating types and servicing compliance**

<b>Heating Type</b>	<b>Number of appliances</b>	<b>Services out of time</b>	<b>Compliance %</b>
Air source heat pumps	135	21	84.4%
Solid fuel boilers	15	0	100%
Oil fired boilers	25	0	100%
LPG	3	0	100%

93. The above are subject to annual inspection and servicing by appointed specialist contractors.
94. The council has 151 unvented hot water cylinders. These systems are pressurised and contain safeguards which require regular maintenance and yearly servicing.
95. The housing stock has 90 automatic opening doors. These range from individual entrance doors to properties for those tenants with disabilities, communal entrance doors to blocks and automatic roller doors to buggy stores. These are tested and inspected 6 monthly.

Compliance currently sits at **100%**

### **Repairs**

96. Between 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and 01 April 2025, the council received 2,000 customer contacts requiring emergency repairs. 1,868 were attended in time and 132 were completed outside of our standard response times.

Compliance for urgent repairs currently sits at **93.4%**

97. In the same period the number of non-urgent repairs orders raised was 18,065. 1,150 of these repairs were attended to outside of the allotted timescales. This figure is closely linked to customer satisfaction and links to the resilience within our teams. Monitoring these figures alerts the council to trends and themes to such as the breakdown of components such as old and aging equipment, helping plan more effectively for planned capital works.

Table 9: Details the compliance in each category over the last 12 months.

**Table 9: Repair response performance**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total 01 April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025</b>	<b>Out of time</b>	<b>In time</b>	<b>%</b>
3 hours	2,000	132	1,868	93.40
24 hours	2,728	94	2,634	96.55
5 working days	3,118	116	3,002	96.27
20 working days	10,006	933	9,073	90.67
90 days	2,213	7	2,206	99.98

### **Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR)**

98. The council has 20 MVHR units and 1 x air conditioning unit which requires yearly inspection. The Council has 2 MVHR systems which have not been serviced due to non-access. Officers are working with colleagues and residents and will utilise other regulatory inspections where access continues to be denied.

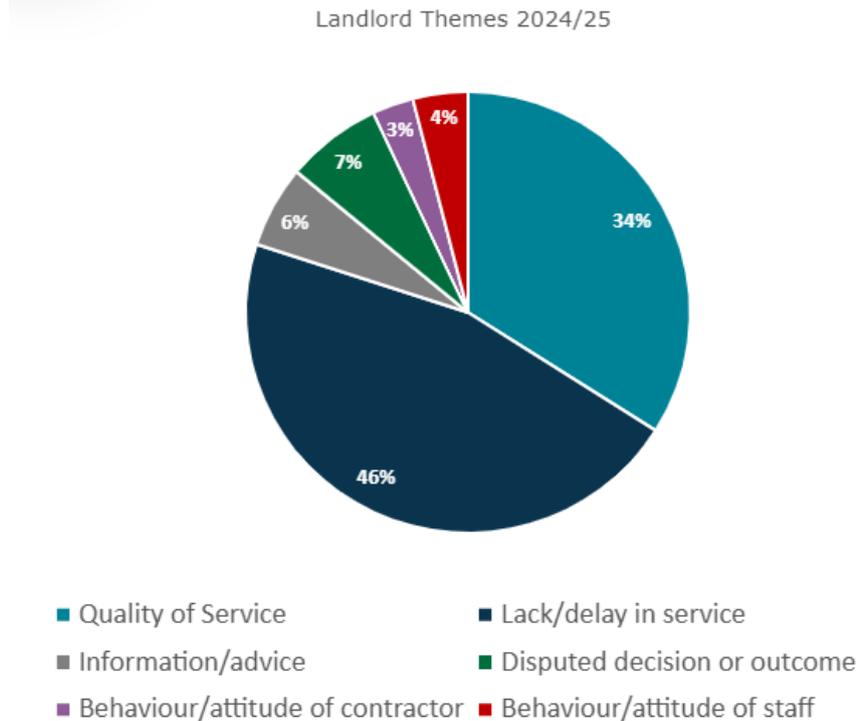
Servicing compliance currently sits at **90%**

### **Complaints**

99. The Housing Maintenance Programmes and Servicing Service has received 45 Stage 1 complaints and 18 Stage 2 complaints for the period March 2024 to March 2025. The Council is currently awaiting the outcome of 1 Housing Ombudsman decision relating to a resident complaint, over the handling of a gas leak.

100. The complaints received have increased 45% when compared to the same 12 months in 2023/2024. Internal investigation highlighted two main themes: Tenant perception of a quality service and lack/delay in service. Officers and operatives are undergoing training on the Council's customer records, to make sure officers record all resident interactions. Operatives will also be encouraged to add detailed job notes to assist. There has been an increase in the number of routine appointments being rebooked since January due to Vacancies within our electrical team and their completion of 5 yearly safety inspections, increased demand to DMC, general sickness absence both resident and operative appear to be the root cause. A decrease

in available vacancies and better weather has reduced demand on the service.



**Fig 1: Complaint themes**

101. Complaint handling is reported through monthly Portfolio Holder Briefings and to the wider housing teams, Improved technology through resident self-serve and new housing maintenance system will enable better data insights to help improve service to residents.

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

102. 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.

103. 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.

## Resources

104. Current Vacancies within the housing maintenance teams are set out in table 10 below:-

**Table 10: List of current vacancies**

<b>Position</b>
Planned Maintenance Surveyor
MTO Plumber
MTO Carpenter (Reactive) x1
MTO Carpenter (Voids) x 2
Mobile Cleaner

Officers have worked hard to reduce the number of vacancies from 12 posts to 6 over the last 6 months.

105. There are currently 6 trades vacancies. Carpenters continue to be difficult to recruit, due to a shortage nationally which is increasing competition. After several rounds of unsuccessful recruitment, Managers are exploring alternative solutions.
106. One option has been to proactively communicate with people who may be job seeking, or who have updated their CV recently through the recruitment site *Indeed*. This has proven to be successful in recruiting electricians and gas operatives.
107. The second is through apprenticeships, whereby a business case will be put forward in June to establish recruitment of people at the start of their careers, pairing them with experienced operatives, offering both an opportunity to learn and pass on years of experience.

## Corporate plan priorities

108. This report supports 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).

## Options appraisal

109. There are no alternative options to consider in the report at the current time. The Transformation process and replacement ICT

systems will provide additional opportunities for change and review in due course.

110. The Service Manager for Housing Maintenance and Compliance is reviewing all approaches to compliance response and will bring forward any options for change if, and when required.

### **Consultation undertaken**

111. None arising directly from this report. However, compliance performance is regularly reported to the Housing Portfolio Holder and Tenant Involvement Group (TIG). In addition, this specific report will be presented to the Portfolio Holder, TIG and Housing & Communities Scrutiny Panel in June 2025.

### **Financial and resource implications**

112. 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.
113. 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.
114. 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.
115. Further fire safety work was identified with £1.500 million approved to continue the capital fire safety expenditure programme.

### **Legal implications**

116. 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.
117. 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.
118. Poor quality or unmaintained homes increase the risk of tenant harm and property damage.

## **Risk assessment**

119. [The housing maintenance risk register 2025/26](#) is a working document used to identify and manage uncertainties that could impact our ability to maintain residents' homes. The main risk continues to be the department's new asset management system; dynamic repair scheduler and repairs management system's replacement during 2025. A dedicated project team are meeting regularly to minimise disruption.
120. A move from analogue to digital, continues to progress as the Council transfers its analogue telephony for fire alarms, careline services, door entry and lift monitoring to digital solutions.
121. Health and safety, compliance continue to play an important part in keeping homes safe for residents, while providing a safe working environment for operatives and contractors. Accredited training on health and safety and Construction (Design and Management (CDM) workshops has provided staff with updates on building regulation changes and management of CDM within the Council. A revised Standard Operation Procedure has been drafted in response with collaboration from staff and corporate health and safety team leads.
122. Decarbonisation of the council's housing stock and improving homes to EPC band C by 2030 presents significant challenges relating to cost. Reaching EPC band C is achievable, with a focus on insulation and collaboration with our own capital work programmes as required, as government funding focuses on homes with low energy performance certificates and those 'off-gas'. The Council receives little funding for its 'on-gas', EPC band D rated homes as these homes don't attract grant funding as they are often the better performing homes.

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

123. 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.
124. The introduction of TWC software and move to digital compliance certificates has now started. This will reduce paper usage and make the process of update compliance certification faster helping to improve compliance scores.

## **Equalities implications**

125. The Council is required to consider what adjustments it can reasonably make when carrying out work within a tenant's home to manage disabilities, or other issues arising. Such adjustments are considered on a case-by-case basis following consultation and assessment with the council's Housing Occupational Therapist.
126. The design of fire safety systems and evacuation strategies considers the vulnerability and disabilities of residents, and each building will receive a different a tailored response to its individual circumstances.
127. Implications arising from the capping of gas supplies to ensure safety and compliance are addressed separately in the Gas Safety Policy and Report, but which provide a welfare assessment and practical support to tenants affected by such action.

## **Crime and disorder implications**

128. 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**

129. 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.
130. Careful consideration of resident data and their individual needs is critical in maintaining high levels of compliance in all areas.
131. The council receives digital compliance records from several external providers.

## **New Forest National Park / Cranborne Chase National Landscape implications**

132. This report covers compliance actions for properties located within the New Forest National Park, and the Cranbourne Chase National Landscape. Properties in rural areas are often the worst performing in terms of energy efficiency and are more likely to feature in works programmes in the next few years.

133. Any works requiring planning permission in the New Forest National Park are submitted to the NPA Planning Service.

## **Conclusion**

134. 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.

135. Retaining staff and staff recruitment is an ongoing risk which will require careful consideration; an aging work force, sickness and national shortage is creating an increased turnover remains a risk in 2025.

136. New and expiring contracts create a risk in performance which needs close monitoring and contract management to avoid dips in Key Performance Indicators.

137. The council's compliance is considered of a good overall standard, and in comparison, with peers features as top quartile performance, which will continue to be improved by replacement software systems, process improvements and digitisation in the coming months.

### **Appendices:**

None

### **Background Papers:**

Housing Maintenance  
Programmes and Servicing  
Service Plan 2024-25.docx

Housing Major Projects Service  
Plan 2024-25.docx