



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Reaching Every Tenant Policy (Housing)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out how South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) identifies, engages with, and tailors support to meet the needs of tenants living in our properties. It explains how we take a proactive approach to ensure that tenants with specific needs feel safe, receive appropriate support and can maintain their tenancies successfully.

2. Scope and purpose

- 2.1 This policy applies to all SCDC tenants and sheltered housing leaseholders. For the purposes of this document, these groups are collectively referred to as 'tenants'. The policy does not include other leaseholders or properties managed by Ermine Street Housing or Shire Homes Lettings.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent and compassionate approach to identifying, engaging with and providing tailored support to individuals or groups who may have specific needs and are less likely to engage with the housing service. These groups may face barriers to communication, access, or trust, and may be at greater risk of exclusion or harm if not proactively supported.
- 2.3 This policy outlines how SCDC will:
- Recognise and respond to indicators of individuals requiring tailored support
 - Use inclusive and accessible engagement methods.
 - Ensure that no tenant is overlooked due to limited contact or visibility.

3. Identifying hard to reach tenants

- 3.1 Tenants who are considered hard to reach often have specific or complex needs and may be experiencing vulnerabilities. They may be at greater risk of harm, feel excluded or unsupported, or are struggling to cope independently and may need additional assistance.
- 3.2 While there are many touchpoints through which SCDC can engage with tenants, there are some tenants who do not engage with the housing service directly or ignore our attempts to engage with them. This policy recognises the importance of identifying and supporting these individuals to ensure no one is overlooked.



- 3.3 SCDC fully upholds each tenant's legal right to enjoy their home in peace, free from unwarranted interference. At the same time, we recognise our duty to identify and offer tailored support to tenants who have specific needs, particularly where a lack of engagement could signal risks to their wellbeing or the sustainability of their tenancy. We also have a responsibility to ensure homes are properly maintained and kept safe.
- 3.4 Any tenant could have specific needs. Identifying individual needs should be done on a case-by-case basis. Vulnerability is changeable and everyone is likely to have specific needs at some point in their lives.
- 3.5 Vulnerability may arise from a range of personal, social or economic factors. Examples include, but are not limited to:
- **Disability and Health Needs**
Includes physical, sensory, mental health and learning disabilities.
 - **Vulnerability and Safeguarding**
Covers survivors of abuse, individuals affected by trauma or addiction, and those subject to safeguarding concerns.
 - **Social and Economic Disadvantage**
Encompasses financial hardship, unemployment, low income and fuel poverty.
 - **Housing Instability and Support Needs**
Includes tenants who need enhanced support, those with hoarding behaviours, history of homelessness, rent arrears, or failed tenancies.
 - **Marginalised and Minority Groups**
Covers refugees, asylum seekers, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and individuals with protected characteristics.
 - **Life Transition and Isolation**
Includes older people, those living alone, care leavers, new or young parents, and households experiencing bereavement or relationship breakdown.
- 3.6 All relevant staff are trained to recognise indicators of individual and potentially multiple needs through a range of methods, including, (but not limited to):
- Direct disclosure by tenants.
 - Observations made during interactions.
 - Referrals from partner agencies.
 - Creating opportunities for tenants to self-identify where appropriate.



3.7 Relevant staff are equipped to identify and respond to a wide spectrum of needs, which may include:

- Mental health conditions.
- Physical or learning disabilities.
- Financial hardship (for example, low or unstable income, unemployment, debt, fuel poverty).
- Substance or behavioural addictions (such as drug, alcohol, gambling).
- Experiences of domestic abuse.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Past or ongoing Trauma.
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- Housing/tenancy history (e.g. history of rent arrears, homelessness, previous eviction or failed tenancies).
- Care leavers.
- Support requirements.
- Under or over occupation of housing.
- Hoarding behaviours.
- Changes in household circumstances (e.g. bereavement, relationship breakdown, lack of support networks, becoming new or young parents, difficulty furnishing a home).

4. Recording individual needs

4.1 To enable SCDC to tailor its housing services using data insights and identify any potential risks, the Council maintains records for each tenant. These records may include details of known individual needs or risks. All information is stored securely and handled in strict accordance with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) requirements. For further information please see our [Privacy Notice](#).

4.2 As part of the information held, SCDC will also ask for details of the Next of Kin or Emergency Contact in case we are unable to engage with the tenant and are concerned for their wellbeing.

4.3 If the tenant lacks capacity, we can communicate with the following individual if we receive explicit consent and legal authority from the tenant to do so:

- Attorney under a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA).
- Court-appointed Deputy.
- Public Authority Deputy.
- Court of Protection Order.



5. Indicators and data insights

5.1 There are many touchpoints through which we engage with tenants, such as routine property inspections, tenant record updates, home visits and general enquiries. If a tenant has specific needs and has not engaged, SCDC will take proactive steps to contact them. Some indicators of a tenant needing tailored support are (but not limited to):

- Rent arrears.
- Missed appointments.
- Repair requests.
- Anti-social behaviour complaints.
- Estate management – identifying hoarding, property neglect for example.
- Concerns raised by neighbouring tenants, staff, contractors, Local Elected Members, etc.
- No access provided (e.g. for gas servicing, electrical checks, stock condition surveys etc.).

5.2 SCDC utilises data to help identify indicators of individual needs. This includes information relating to the following areas:

- No response to calls/emails and home visits from Housing Services Officers (HSOs)
- No repair requests
- No contact regarding rent payments or rent arrears
- No resident engagement
- No requests for additional support

6. Engaging with tenants

6.1 SCDC interact with tenants via a range of methods, all of which could identify individuals who may have specific needs, particularly those who are not actively engaging and may need tailored support.

6.2 All Council staff and contractors acting on its behalf have a duty to remain vigilant to signs of individual needs. Where such signs are identified, they must refer or signpost individuals to appropriate tailored services in line with safeguarding procedures.

6.3 Outlined below are some of the routine interactions that SCDC undertake as part of its housing management and maintenance service.



Engaging with New Tenants

As part of SCDC's preventative and early intervention approach, targeted engagement is undertaken with all new tenants during their 'Introductory' tenancy period. Housing Services Officers (HSOs), or Sheltered Estate Officers (SEOs) for sheltered schemes, meet with new tenants at the start of their tenancy to explain their rights, responsibilities, and the support available. This early contact helps identify any initial needs, vulnerabilities or barriers to engagement. Follow-up visits are carried out at 6 weeks and 36 weeks to ensure the tenancy is progressing well, to identify any emerging concerns such as budgeting difficulties, repair issues or signs of vulnerability, and to offer tailored support where required. These visits enable staff to address issues before they escalate and reduce the risk of tenancy failure. Where challenges arise, such as rent arrears, property condition concerns or anti-social behaviour, HSOs/SEOs will work collaboratively with the tenant to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity. For tenants who continue to face difficulties, additional support or referrals to partner services may be offered to help sustain the tenancy and promote long-term stability.

Gas safety inspection and services

SCDC inspect and service gas appliances owned by SCDC every 10 months. It is a condition of each individual tenancy agreement that tenants must provide access to their homes upon request for a gas safety check. SCDC will make every possible effort to gain access and will ultimately take legal action if access cannot be secured to comply with gas safety regulations.

No repairs for two years

If a tenant has not requested any repairs or had contact with the housing service in the past two years, SCDC will carry out a home visit to check that the property is being maintained, address any tenancy concerns, ensure the tenant is aware of available support, and confirm there are no significant issues affecting their wellbeing.

Housing stock condition surveys

SCDC will undertake a stock condition survey of every property on a rolling 5-year programme. As part of the survey, tenant details will be checked to ensure all records are up to date.



Data collection

To ensure SCDC maintain accurate and up to date records, all tenants are requested to update their contact details and tenancy profile information, including any disabilities or individual service needs. Any tenants with limited engagement will be contacted by letter, email (if applicable), or telephone. Should these methods prove unsuccessful, a home visit will be conducted to establish contact and ensure that no tenant with specific needs is overlooked.

7. Reasonable adjustments

7.1 SCDC is committed to ensuring that the housing service is accessible and inclusive for all tenants, including those with disabilities or who require enhanced support. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, SCDC will make reasonable adjustments to remove or reduce barriers that may disadvantage individuals.

7.2 Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Contact preferences
- Offering home visits
- Use of advocates or interpreters
- Alternative communication formats such as large print or translated materials
- Adjusting appointment times or locations to accommodate mobility or health needs
- Home adaptations

7.3 Requests for reasonable adjustments will be considered on a case-by-case basis, considering:

- Individual specific needs
- The practicality and cost of the adjustment
- The effectiveness of the proposed adjustment in removing any barriers

8. Available support

8.1 SCDC offer a range of tailored services to support tenants to maintain successful and sustainable tenancies. These services are designed to promote tenancy sustainment by addressing a variety of needs, including financial hardship, health and wellbeing, social isolation and other individual needs. Support may be provided directly by the Council or through referrals to specialist partner agencies.



- 8.2 Further information on the types of tailored services provided can be found in the Tenancy Sustainment & Support Policy.

9. Service requests and complaints process

- 9.1 A tenant should report initial service requests, such as repairs or safety concerns, through the designated channels:

Repairs: [Online](#) via the Council's [website](#).
By phone via the Repairs Hotline: 0800 085 1313.
Through the **M&Me** Mobile App

General Queries: Tel: 01954 713 000 or email
duty.housing@scambs.gov.uk.

The [Communications Charter for tenants and leaseholders](#) sets out detailed guidance on how to contact the Council and the service standards that can be expected in relation to communication and responsiveness.

- 9.2 SCDC aims to provide excellent customer service but recognise that mistakes can happen. If a tenant is dissatisfied with the service received following a service request, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. To make a complaint, visit our [website](#) or telephone 01954 713000 or email housing.complaints@scambs.gov.uk.

10. Legislation

- [Hazards in Social Housing \(Prescribed Requirements\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#)
- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#), [Consumer Standards \(Tenancy Standard\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)
- [Regulator of Social Housing – Safety and Quality Standard](#)



11. About this policy

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed every 5 years. However, earlier reassessment may be required following tenant feedback, further guidance or where there are changes in operations and/or legislation.
- 11.2 This policy has been produced in consultation with tenant representatives. If a tenant is interested in getting involved in shaping the housing service, further information is available on the [website](#), or contact resident.involvement@scambs.gov.uk.



12. Our values

Ambitious

- We are proactive and take a forward-thinking approach to addressing challenges.
- We create smart solutions and reach our goals with determination and a clear vision.

Collaborative

- We foster a culture of teamwork and open communication.
- We work with and involve stakeholders, to improve how the organisation works and serves the public.

Compassionate

- We prioritise empathy and understanding in decision-making and service delivery.
- We consider the wellbeing of people and communities in everything we do and we replicate this when we talk to our colleagues because we know that when we support each other, we all do better.

Accountable

- We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.
- We own up to mistakes and make sure we fulfil our commitments.