

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

**Date and Time:-** Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 10.00 a.m.

**Venue:-** Rotherham Town Hall, The Crofts, Moorgate Street, Rotherham. S60 2TH

**Membership:-** Councillors Steele (Chair), Bacon (Vice-Chair), Baggaley, Blackham, A. Carter, Keenan, Knight, Marshall, McKiernan, Pitchley, Tinsley and Yasseen.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view [via the Council's website](#). The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

### AGENDA

**1. Apologies for Absence**

To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 October 2024 (Pages 7 - 20)**

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 9 October 2024 and to approve them as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of items listed on the agenda.

**4. Questions from Members of the Public and the Press**

To receive questions relating to items of business on the agenda from members of the public or press who are present at the meeting.

**5. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.

## **Items for Pre-Decision Scrutiny**

In accordance with the outcome of the Governance Review in 2016, the following items are submitted for pre-scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 18 November 2024. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

### **6. Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update) (Pages 21 - 69)**

Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services.

#### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the progress made to deliver the in-house children's residential development, the positive impact for Children in Care and financial efficiencies that will be achieved.
2. Approve the Care Leavers addendum to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023 – 2028.
3. Agree that the LAC and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy Delivery Plan be updated to increase the appropriateness and number of available accommodation options for Care Leavers as per the Care Leaver addendum to the LAC sufficiency strategy (see 2 above).
4. Note that on 16 October 2023 authority was delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to acquire up to 100 properties in line with the Housing Acquisitions Policy, which includes scope to acquire properties to meet the accommodation needs of Children and Young Peoples Services.
5. Authorise the Councils Designated Property Officer, or relevant Strategic Director in their absence, to negotiate any additional accommodation required and complete necessary transactions, in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer, Strategic Director Children's and Young Peoples Services, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services and the Assistant Director of Legal Services.

### **7. Temporary Accommodation Policy (Pages 71 - 148)**

Report from the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health.

#### **Recommendations:**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the increase in homelessness and growing demand for temporary accommodation and the work being undertaken by the Council to respond to this demand.
2. Approve the adoption of the new Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy (Appendix 1).
3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health for a 3-year period in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make operational amendments to the Policy when the need is identified.
4. Note officers' intention to continue to pursue opportunities for a 3-year period to increase the portfolio of Council-owned temporary accommodation to meet service demands, subject to available budget and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

## **8. Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Pages 149 - 222)**

Report from the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health.

### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1).
2. Approve the increase in decoration allowance from £25 to £50 per room, up to a maximum of £350 per property, as proposed in the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1).
3. Note the ongoing work to scope the future repairs and maintenance delivery model for Rotherham and agrees to receive a further update on this work in 2025.
4. Approve the Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy (Appendix 2).
5. Approve the Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy (Appendix 3).
6. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make amendments to the following housing policies in line with operational, regulatory and legislative demands:
  - Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy
  - Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy

- Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy
- Housing Services Fire Safety Policy
- Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy as it relates to housing assets.

**For Discussion/Decision:-**

**9. Annual Compliments and Complaints Report 2023-24 (Pages 223 - 271)**

To consider the report which outlined the complaints and compliments received within 2023/24 and identifies the key trends within complaints and compliments over a five-year period.

**10. The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Annual Report 2023-24 (Pages 273 - 308)**

To consider the SRP annual report 2023-24 in line with the requirements of section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, which states that annual scrutiny is required of decisions made and actions taken by responsible authorities in connection with the discharge of crime and disorder functions.

**11. Response from Cabinet 16 September 2024 to the Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Referral from Council to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region" (Pages 309 - 328)**

The purpose of this report is to consider the response of Cabinet (following its meeting of 16 September 2024), to the recommendations arising from OSMB's consideration of the petition referred from Council "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region".

**For Information/Monitoring:-**

**12. Work Programme (Pages 329 - 331)**

To consider the Board's Work Programme.

**13. Work in Progress - Select Commissions**

To receive updates from the Chairs of the Select Commission on work undertaken and planned for the future.

**14. Forward Plan of Key Decisions - 1 November 2024 - 31 January 2025 (Pages 333 - 342)**

To review and identify items for pre-decision scrutiny from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions covering the period from 1 November 2024 - 31 January 2025.




**15. Call-in Issues**

To consider any issues referred for call-in from recent Cabinet meetings.

**16. Urgent Business**

To determine any item which the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

**The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board  
will be held on Wednesday 11 December 2024  
commencing at 10.00 a.m.  
in Rotherham Town Hall.**



**SHARON KEMP OBE,  
Chief Executive.**

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday 9 October 2024**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Blackham, A. Carter, Knight, Marshall, McKiernan, Tinsley and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Bacon, Baggaley, Keenan and Pitchley.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-  
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2024**

**Resolved:** - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 10 September 2024 be approved as a true record, which included Councillor Yasseen's amendment that the Council did not have more children going into care than other Local Authorities but it does have more in SEND children than other Local Authorities.

**34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were none.

**36. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were none.

**37. FUTURE ROTHERCARE MODEL**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health outlined the Council's assistive technology offer, which was delivered in-house by a dedicated service known as Rothercare. Members were informed that Rothercare provided an end-to-end telecare service, managing referrals, installing equipment, monitoring, and responding to alerts. The service would also procure all technical aspects including both hardware and software. The review of the service aimed to ensure it remained fit for purpose and could respond to future needs and technological advances, including the transition from analogue to digital due to the UK Telecom infrastructure upgrade.

The Cabinet Member outlined that the Council's ambition for Adult Social Care was to deploy and utilise assistive technology to enable the people of Rotherham to live independently in their own homes for as long as

possible. Increasing the amount and variety of assistive technology deployed would help to realise and anticipate the model of care by using non-intrusive devices to prevent the deterioration in people's needs whether they were living at home or in supported environments. This type of technology would contribute to the efficient use of resources across Health and Social Care services. The review of the service identified opportunities to address any operational challenges and to remodel the assistive technology offer, as the service could not expand in its current format.

She explained that several options had been explored. One recommended within the report (Option 1) would be a collaborative approach between an independent sector technology partner and Rothercare, which would achieve significant advantages compared to the other three options from the report.

It was explained that under Option 1, Rothercare would continue to handle referrals, triage, monitoring, and response to service, while the assistive technology element would be delivered by a technology partner procured from the independent sector. This partner would be responsible for identifying assistive technology solutions, installation, recycling, disposal, and maintenance of all assistive equipment.

Rothercare was currently funded through a combination of weekly charges to customers and a subsidy from the Housing Revenue Account. The revenue cost associated for the collaborative approach between an independent sector technological partner and Rothercare was estimated at £1.6 million per year. The ongoing service costs would be met through income generated by the service to ensure its sustainability. Consequently, there was a need to revise the charging policy and the associated Rothercare weekly service charge.

The Cabinet Member further explained that it had been proposed to increase the weekly charge from £3.50 to £4.50, representing an additional £1 per week for a 12-month period from 2025 to 2026. Costs would then rise annually in line with fees and charges, covering the costs associated with the ongoing UK's digital infrastructure digital upgrade across the country. Benchmarking with other Local Authorities who delivered similar services indicated that Rothercare charges were significantly lower making the proposed increase reasonable. It was anticipated that the full revenue costs would eventually be recouped through a phased increase in the weekly charge for both existing and new customers, which would eliminate the need to use the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health stated that customers who received a subsidised service would continue to do so until they left the service. For anyone who did not want to continue, an opportunity would be provided to have their needs for assisted technology identified before opting out of the charge.

The report submitted to the Commission proposed three recommendations. The first recommendation sought approval for the implementation of a new 'tech-enabled, 'care delivery model offered through a collaborative approach between Rothercare and an independent sector technology partner. The second recommendation was approval for a competitive procurement process and to award a contract on the basis of a five-year initial term and would include potential extensions for up to three years and would start from April 2025. The third recommendation was to obtain agreement to the new charging policy and rates for Rothercare from 2025 -2026 for existing customers and a policy to apply this rate to new customers from 2025 -2026 onwards.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health acknowledged the Cabinet Member's comprehensive statement which covered all the key points. He informed the Commission, that there were several factors which had come together which contributed to the review. He explained that the first reason, was the forced technology upgrade from analogue to digital, a national plan by the Government from 2017. Additionally, the rapid advancements in technology over the years had made it challenging for the service to keep updated. He emphasised the importance of selecting the right technological solutions to provide the best service for the people of Rotherham to live independently. Another significant change was the traditional linkage of Rothercare support to tenancy arrangements, as there were people currently paying for Rothercare that did not require the service and the Council was committed to change this arrangement.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health also addressed the issue of service charges, stating that the Council aimed to keep the rate of increase as low as possible to ensure affordability. Working with a technology partner would provide several benefits including in-depth knowledge of the markets, lower costs for purchasing equipment, which would ultimately provide the best deal and service to customers. He reiterated that Rothercare would continue to provide a telecare response service and provide ongoing support to those who needed the service. However, it had been found that some people who paid for Rothercare may not require or even need the service. Members were informed that the Council was committed to change this arrangement, as it wanted to provide the best deal for customers going forward, and to help people who wanted to remain independent and have access to the equipment they needed.

Councillor Blackham queried the estimated cost of £587,000 stated in the report to contract a third-party technology partner and wanted to know how robust the estimate was. The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed that the estimate provided in the report, was robust in terms of understanding the market, understanding the costs, soft market testing, which meant they were confident with the estimated costings they had presented.

Councillor Blackham then queried whether any soft market testing had been conducted, and if a shadow model had been used to evaluate the services the technology partner would provide and compared that to the market testing, to ensure the estimate was robust. The Strategic Director replied that although not all the information was included within the report, the work had been done and was reflected in the content of the report.

He assured Members that full soft market testing had been conducted. They had evaluated how the services would be mapped and considered against other providers. In addition, they had also received external advice from Rethink on how other Local Authorities were managing similar work. He confirmed that they were following a similar and trusted process even though not all details were included in the report.

Councillor Yaseen agreed that the shift from analogue to digital was crucial for advancing the service and establishing the right infrastructure. She noted that many customers had expressed that current systems felt outdated and welcomed this change. She sought assurance that there would be minimal disruptions during the transition to the digital system and enquired about the historical issues with charging for this service.

Regarding customer options, Councillor Yaseen wanted to know if those who needed the service had choices. She explained that some sheltered housing already had the system installed, and new tenants were expected to pay for it regardless of their need. This lack of choice was concerning, especially for individuals on lower incomes, such as pensioners, for whom the cost could be substantial. She emphasised the importance of fully understanding the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy and exploring what could be done to offer more choices and address this change.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed that the Council had already initiated the transition from analogue to digital, meaning it was not reliant on a technology partner to start the switchover. He explained that the service had begun testing and was managing all responsibilities within their control. However, he emphasised that much of the responsibility also was with National Telecom, who were the key driver behind this change. He assured Members that efforts were being made to ensure that connectivity with Rothercare remained uninterrupted during the transition.

Furthermore, the Strategic Director informed Members that the proposals for the change had been modelled to ensure both the telecare system and any additional assistive technology would be equally available to everyone. He confirmed that there would be no change in the charging fee rates, as this was considered the right approach. While some local authorities charged different rates based on the amount of equipment a customer received, Rotherham Council had proposed a flat rate charge. This approach was deemed the fairest and most consistent way to deliver

the service, acknowledging that people's needs would change over time, and they may require different equipment.

Councillor Yaseen welcomed the response but sought clarification on whether the service would offer a more tailored and flexible choice for tenants and customers. She noted that some customers, particularly those who moved into bungalows with the service already installed, had no choice but to pay for it even though they did not need it. She also enquired whether current staffing levels would be sufficient to support the transition from analogue to digital or if additional staff would be needed.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed that the changes aimed to provide a more flexible service. He explained that tenants who did not want the telecare service would not be required to pay for it. He acknowledged that Rothercare was undergoing significant changes with the analogue-to-digital switchover, necessitating the installation of a whole new system. Additionally, he mentioned that there had been a recent increase in cyber-attacks, highlighting the need for Rothercare to focus on maintaining the best possible service. He strongly believed that partnering with an external technology provider would ensure support during the transition, allowing Rothercare to continue to deliver its services.

Councillor Carter expressed concerns about the financial implications for older people, such as changes to pensions and the potential removal of winter fuel payments, which would have a negative impact on those who were financially vulnerable. He enquired whether there was any data on how many current or prospective Rothercare customers were on pension credits and if any work had been done to explore a means-tested system, to support those least able to afford the new charges. Additionally, he asked what measures had been taken to assess the impact of increased charges on those unable to live independently, as this could lead to more people entering residential care, therefore increasing future budget pressures on adult social care.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health acknowledged the concerns about the affordability of the Rothercare service. He assured Councillor Carter that the incremental approach taken was designed to prevent customers from feeling immediate financial pressure. He confirmed that impact modelling had been conducted, but due to the lack of detailed financial information for every customer, a means-tested system was not undertaken as it would require additional processes and costs. He noted that benchmarking with other Councils revealed that they did not use a means-tested approach, although affordability and impact remained a concern for all Local Authorities.

The Strategic Director emphasised that if anyone required the service as part of a Care Act assessment, they would not be denied care based on affordability. He explained that while some individuals might be concerned about the costs, there would always be an opportunity for discussion

through a Care Act assessment to ensure no one was excluded. The Council's intention was to expand and improve the service to prevent people from entering long-term residential care until absolutely necessary.

Councillor Carter enquired whether a national impact assessment had been conducted, including benchmarking, and if members of the commission could review this information. He also asked the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health whether they considered means testing to be a reasonable approach for the Council.

The Strategic Director explained that he would be happy to share the information with members, provided it was non-personal and non-descriptive to protect individuals' data. He would verify if the information could be shared on that basis following the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health responded to Councillor Carter and stated that their preferred approach was not to implement means testing. Instead, they aimed to support those most in need through Care Act assessments, ensuring individuals claimed the benefits to which they were entitled too.

Councillor McKiernan queried the cost of the service without the HRA subsidy, noting that other Councils offered significantly cheaper services. He wanted to know how much Rotherham Council was subsidising the service per week. The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed that if the Council implemented the changes from April 2025, the cost would be £7 per week.

Councillor McKiernan then sought more details about the recommended option in the report, which involved a five-year contract with an external technology partner. He wanted assurance that the contract would not lead to increased pricing, which could impose further financial pressures on the Council in the forthcoming years. The Strategic Director explained that contracts within his Directorate were 'fixed and firm', based on output with a fixed cost. This meant that during the contract term, there would be no changes in costs. If the provider could not meet the agreed costs, the Council could seek another provider or change providers to manage costs over the contract term. He emphasised that the costs were non-negotiable for the Council. While market changes could exert pressure on costs, this issue would be the provider's responsibility, not the Council's, due to the way the contracts were structured.

Councillor Marshall enquired about a table in the report that compared the telecare services of other Local Authorities, such as Barnsley and Doncaster Councils, and asked if a comparison had been made with the in-house telecare services provided by those Councils.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed that comparisons had been conducted with other Local Authorities on several levels. The table in the report illustrated the range



of options and methods by which Local Authorities delivered this service. He explained that it was crucial to deliver a service tailored to Rotherham's specific needs. Comparisons included conversations with Doncaster and Barnsley, as well as desktop analysis. As a result, it was determined that partnering with an external technology provider would be the best approach for Rotherham, which would offer more benefits than an in-house model such as Doncaster Council had. He clarified that this was not a criticism of other Councils but rather a decision based on what was deemed best for Rotherham.

The Chair asked whether there would be any staff transfers to the contracted partner and if the Strategic Director had a potential provider in mind. He enquired whether the Council had considered transferring existing Rothercare staff as part of the proposed approach or if the service would be split between Rothercare and the potential technology partner.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed that there would be no TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment) transfers, and Rothercare staff would remain within the service. He explained that the Council would continue its duty of care to its customers, with the service remaining under Rothercare. The external technology partner would be responsible for delivering the practical and technical aspects of the work, using the best available technology, and reviewing the Council's existing equipment.

The new partner would assess which market equipment would work best, including reviewing and disposing of existing equipment to avoid unnecessary retention in people's homes, and recycling equipment where possible. He emphasised that customer responsibility and service would remain with Rothercare. The Strategic Director also informed Members that several technology partners in the market might be potentially suitable and they had shown interest.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 42 of the report, which discussed the skills and knowledge required to deliver and improve assistive technology. She asked whether proceeding with an external technology provider would result in redundancies, given that the necessary skills and knowledge were currently beyond the Rothercare service and would take time to develop.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health clarified a few important points. He first confirmed that the Rothercare team had worked extremely hard and diligently to keep people safe in their homes, and recommended that the proposals were not a reflection or criticism of their work. He stated that the team had developed their own skills and knowledge over time, which was evident in the quality of service they provided. However, it was recognised that existing Rothercare staff were not IT or technology specialists. Partnering with a technology expert would assist the Council with the digital transition and enhance service

delivery. The Strategic Director categorically confirmed that there would be no redundancies within the service.

Councillor Marshall then questioned whether, in light of the proposed contract cost (£587,915), the Council had considered upskilling existing staff or recruiting new staff with the required skills and knowledge, and if this would be more cost-effective.

The Strategic Director explained that while they had considered recruiting specialist staff, this had been deemed inappropriate. He noted that although specialist staff could be recruited, they would not provide the same benefits as a partner who were established in the market and understand national and international trends and purchasing equipment at more competitive rates. Maintaining the necessary skill and knowledge levels would be challenging, especially given the rapid pace of technological change. He assured Members that partnering with an external technology provider was believed to be the best option and outcome for the people of Rotherham. He stated the Council had robust processes in place to continually review and monitor the contract, which was outlined in the Council's procurement and contract policies.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health highlighted the advantages of outsourcing technical support to an external partner. She explained that the Council would benefit from partnering with a team of experts in various aspects of assistive technology, which would be an effective way to stay updated on continuous technological advancements. She noted that creating a small in-house team would be challenging and that the Council and the service would gain the most value from having a partner with specialist technical knowledge. The Cabinet Member also addressed how the Council would monitor the partnership through the contract to ensure it was effective and would take the necessary steps if they were not.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health added that any contract involving public money required close scrutiny and management, which was a prerequisite for contract management across the Council. He explained that the Directorate manages a range of contracts with the independent sector and are all monitored under the same programme. Each contract has an allocated Contract Manager, with regular meetings at the start of the contract that are then reduced to monitoring meetings to review the contract as it progresses.

The Strategic Director also informed Members that the contracts include Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and regular discussions with customers to review and evaluate the service. He explained that this monitoring would ensure that the service met its contractual agreements, and if issues arose, then remedial actions would be taken to find solutions. He also assured the Commission that if any issues could not be resolved or solutions found, then the contract would potentially be ended, and another provider sought.

Councillor Carter enquired about the benchmarking discussed earlier with Councils such as Barnsley, Doncaster, and Sheffield and to look at comparative charges for this type of service. He asked whether there had been any collaborative work with other Local Authorities across South Yorkshire on a common scheme within the Mayoral Combined Authority area to potentially achieve savings and efficiencies.

The Strategic Director confirmed that conversations had taken place with other Councils in the South Yorkshire region. However, he acknowledged that the main challenge for the Council, had been the pace at which it needed to work to enable the analogue to digital switchover to happen. He stated that the switchover was an immediate priority for the Council and the customers of the Rothercare service. However, co-ordinating efforts across the Mayoral Combined Authority or with partner Local Authorities would happen later beyond the timeframe of the switchover. He explained that essentially, the timing of the change had posed serious challenges for all Local Authorities both regionally and nationally.

Councillor Carter then enquired about the work the Council had undertaken since the Government announced the switchover in 2017, seven years ago. He wanted to know what had been done since then and whether the Council had considered the benefits of collaborating with other Councils to reduce costs, which could have been passed onto customers in terms of lower charges.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health informed Members that the Council had not waited since 2017 to start the work but had already begun working towards the digital switchover. He explained that when the Government made the announcement in 2017, the issue for all Councils was that the market itself, which was not in a position to respond to the switch from analogue to digital. He stated that the market's capacity to handle such a sheer volume of switchovers would be substantial, as all Councils across the country would need to prepare for the switchover and secure the necessary equipment for their services.

The Strategic Director then referred back to the question on the Council adopting a more collaborative approach. He stated that conversations could possibly have been done earlier with other Councils, but the reality was that the other Councils were not in a position themselves, to have those conversations. However, it would be the intention of the Council moving forward to work collaboratively where possible.

Councillor Tinsley enquired about the number of people using the Rothercare service and asked about ongoing conversations regarding collaboration with other local authorities, noting that the West Midlands Combined Authority had already considered a joint tender for the same service.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health assured

that everything possible was being done to provide the best service for the people of Rotherham. He explained that it was a matter of determining what was right at the time and learning from other Combined Authorities. He explained that the Council would be happy to revisit this at a later date to see what progress other Combined Authorities had made and what learning could be applied to Rotherham. He confirmed that there were figures on who used the service and who did not, and which customers would not be required to pay for it. He reiterated that if a person or family no longer needed the service, then they would not be expected to pay for it.

The Chair reiterated back to the Commission that all Combined Authorities had been all set up differently and had powers at different times. He noted that Councils in Barnsley, Doncaster, and Sheffield could be further down the track on this change or have looked at what their own needs are which could be different to Rotherham's, or even signed into their own contracts. However, moving forward, Local Authority leaders and the Combined Authority had plans to look at this in future. In terms of the contract, the Council proposal would be to look at a five-year contract with further extensions for a possible three years. That would be the proposal presented to the Commission for their consideration.

Councillor McKiernan then referred to page 38 of the report section 1.14, which stated that the service had received 32,000 alerts. He was concerned on the high volume of alerts and wanted to know if the new technology would reduce the number of alerts and improve the service to customers.

The Strategic Director explained that they did not expect less alerts when the new technology would be implemented. However, he did note that there was the potential with the new technology that it could help streamline and improve the process, but they did still expect a high volume of alerts in the future. He stated that the Council was already aware that the existing system was outdated and inefficient and it was intended for the new technology to help filter and respond to calls more effectively enabling improvements in the service. In terms of other benefits, the service would be looking at the system to better understand patterns of behaviour and need, which would help to focus the services' response and positively impact the delivery of the service.

Councillor McKiernan agreed that he was hoped the new technology could, for example, prompt a customer remind them that they have a low battery alert so the customer would replace their batteries. He explained that he hoped the new contract would provide such a service and issue prompts, which would increase the quality of service. The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed this was the expectation they also had from the new technology and such outcomes would be an integral part of any contract with a technology partner.

Councillor Marshall referred to page 70 of the report, which looked at the

weekly service charge and she had noted that the service charge excluded VAT. She enquired whether this would mean that the weekly service charge would rise to £4.50, and whether VAT would be added on top, she also wanted to know whether this figure would include the £1 per week for the SIM.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health explained that the service was subject to 20% VAT on the weekly charge. However, customers could declare if they were chronically sick or disabled and used the service for their own personal domestic use, in which case, the Council would apply zero VAT instead of the 20% VAT.

Councillor Marshall sought further clarity on whether the weekly charge would include the £1 for the SIM. The Strategic Director confirmed that it would.

Following this, Councillor Yaseen revisited her earlier question on affordability. She expressed concern about the increased charges from £3.50 to £4.50 per week, noting that it could potentially rise to £6.88. She sought clarification on the subsidy amount for current customers and whether some customers received additional financial support from the Council, which meant that not everyone would pay the higher amount for the service.

Additionally, she enquired whether the expected increase in costs and the flexibility for people to opt out of the service had been considered in the service design, and if a decline in customers was anticipated. She also asked if the Council aimed to attract more private customers to choose the Rothercare service over other private sector options, such as Age UK, which had its own system.

Councillor Yaseen's main concern was the financial impact on pensioners, as she felt that £6.88 would be too costly for them. She wanted assurance on how this issue would be addressed by the Council, acknowledging that while the progression to digital was essential for providing a higher quality of service, cost and affordability remained significant concerns.

The Strategic Director explained that affordability was a key consideration, which was why the proposed model aimed to soften the financial impact through incremental increases. He stated that new charges for the service were agreed on an annual basis, which would take into account changes in costs such as inflation. The Council retained the authority each year to decide on fees and charges for the service. If charges were to increase by 2%, then the Rothercare service would need to adjust their charges over a phased four-year period, although no specific date for this had been set. He reiterated that this would be an annual decision made by the Council, where a number of would be considered.

The Strategic Director further explained that based on their modelling, it was expected that some people would naturally leave the service, but it was also expected that more people would require the service in the future due to the growing population in the UK. Through increased marketing and better identification of those who would need the service, the service was anticipating a growth in this market particularly within private sector housing. The Strategic Director assured Members and stated that for people who required support, no one would leave the service without a Care Act assessment undertaken, where conversations would take place to ensure that those unable to afford the service would be supported.

Councillor Yasseen thanked the Strategic Director for his comprehensive response and asked when the last time the service had increased their fees and charges. The Strategic Director confirmed that it was in the last financial year, 2023-2024.

With discussions concluded the Chair moved to the recommendations.

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendations that Cabinet:

1. Approve option 1 to implement a new technology enabled care delivery model under a collaborative approach between Rothercare and an independent sector technology partner.
2. Approve a competitive procurement process and award of contract on the basis of a 5-year initial term. The contract will include potential extensions for up to 3 years (to be taken in any combination). The new arrangements will commence April 2025.
3. Agree the new charging policy and rates for Rothercare from 2025/26 for existing customers and the policy of applying a new rate to new customers from 2025/26 onwards.
4. Be advised that a progress report was to be provided in twelve months to OSMB following the implementation of the new technology enabled care delivery model.

### **38. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Governance Manager referred to the work programme for the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and provided Members with an updated position on a number of items within the OSMB's work programme. This included the potential spotlight review on 'Life-Saving Equipment and Bylaws,' where plans had been made to meet with the officers involved in the original review to understand what had been discussed when it previously had been brought to OSMB. Members were informed that the Commission intended to contact members to form a small working party as part of this review.

With regards to the 'Agency Staff' review, a briefing note was to be drafted and presented at a future scrutiny meeting.

Concerning the potential spotlight review on 'Grass Cuttings and Grounds Maintenance,' the Assistant Director was to produce a scoping document for the Commission to consider around mid to late November, where further discussions on the progress of this item would take place.

Resolved: That the Work Programme was approved.

### **39. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS**

The Vice-Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission noted they had met on the 17th September and presented with the outcomes of the Ofsted focus visit. He informed Members that the outcomes from the Ofsted report did not rate the focus visit as 'outstanding.' However, the Vice-Chair believed from his own experience with Ofsted, that the wording and findings within the report actually indicated many outstanding individual aspects which had been identified by Ofsted. However, he stated that previous assessments were based on the old framework, which had since been replaced by a new framework, which eliminated single word judgements.

The Vice-Chair informed OSMB, that the next meeting of Improving Lives Select Commission on the 21st of October, would be a consultation workshop on the 'SEND Strategy'. This hybrid meeting, scheduled from 11 till 12.30pm, would be led by the Head of Commissioning Performance & Quality, Cary-Anne Sykes.

Additionally, the Vice-Chair informed Members that on the 29th of October, the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual report and the Safeguarding Adults Board report would be presented. These presentations would be attended by representatives from the South Yorkshire Police and the Interim Care Board.

The Vice Chair of the Health Select Commission, Councillor Yasseen provided a review of the work that had taken place since the election. One of the key highlights of the work programme was the 'Oral Health' review, which was the first time the Council included oral health in the Commission's work, and it would be reviewed on an annual basis.

In July, the Health Select Commission worked on a South Yorkshire-wide approach to oral health and the Commission decided that it would need to revisit this, to review the recommendations which had been made 12 to 18 months ago. It was agreed by Members that, given the progress over the past 18 months, that the recommendations needed to be reviewed to ensure they were still relevant and appropriate.

The Vice-Chair informed Members that another key area on the Health

Select's agenda was the Integrated Care Board (ICB), the new system for managing and delivering health services across South Yorkshire, which replaced the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group). A primary focus for the Health Select Commission, would be to ensure that ICB decision continued to have community influence and input.

Regarding the last meeting by the Health Select Commission, which focused on the NHS, Rotherham Trust Annual Report and Accounts, the Vice-Chair stated the Commission found significant health outcomes delivered by Rotherham Trust and noted progressive responses to government shifts on areas such as the four-hour emergency response window. She stated that while national targets were not being met due to increased demand for emergency care in Rotherham, the response times were something which needed continuous review.

Additionally, the Vice-Chair highlighted other notable findings identified from the report. One key point was the potential, 'mothballing' of some hospital accommodation. She suggested that the Council should consider this as an opportunity from a housing perspective, instead of building houses on green spaces. The Health Select Commission wanted to support a decision on how the Council could work with its NHS partner to potentially acquire that land, which was a potential outcome identified from the meeting.

Finally, the Vice-Chair informed commission members that the Health Select Commission received a presentation from Health Watch, a community representative body in Rotherham, which identified key priorities, including access to GP appointments as an annual priority.

**40. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 OCTOBER 2024 – 31 DECEMBER 2024**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 October 2024 – 31 December 2024.

Resolved: That the Forward Plan was noted.

**41. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no call-in issues.

**42. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items however, the Chair indicated the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would be held on Thursday 17th October 2024 commencing at 5.00 p.m.



**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 18 November 2024

**Report Title**

Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update).

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Nicola Curley – Strategic Director, Children & Young Peoples Service

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected.**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2028 was approved by Cabinet in October 2022. The Strategy was developed in line with the duty to provide or procure placements for Looked After Children (LAC) by the Local Authority.

This report provides an update on the in-house children's residential development that was agreed at Cabinet on 17 February 2020. Previous progress updates have been reported to Cabinet in June 2020, September 2021, and October 2022.

The children's residential development responds directly to Rotherham Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) strategic intention to reduce the number of external residential placements for children and ensure more Rotherham Children in Care (CiC) and young people are placed within Borough, close to their family and community networks.

The new provision, along with foster care, third party placements, semi-independent provisions, and other family-based placements, aims to provide a mixed economy of arrangements which will seek to effectively meet Rotherham's statutory duties, outlined in the Sufficiency Strategy.

In January 2023, a new judgement for Care Leavers was introduced to the Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Services for Children (ILACS) inspection framework. In March 2023, the Government introduced new national standards for the registration, regulation, and

inspection of supported accommodation for Looked After Children aged 16 and 17 years, to be overseen by Ofsted.

A Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review took place between 12 to 15 March 2024, at the request of the Council. The Peer Review identified *“Services are making a real difference to the lived experience of care leavers, however, the range of accommodation services needed for Care Leavers in Borough is insufficient.”*

The Peer Review recommended the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023 – 2028 be updated to better reflect the needs of Care Leavers in the context of the regulatory changes.

This report includes a proposed addendum to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2028 which summarises the needs of Care Leavers. The report also includes an update to the LAC Sufficiency Strategy delivery plan to better reflect the needs of Care Leavers.

### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the progress made to deliver the in-house children’s residential development, the positive impact for Children in Care and financial efficiencies that will be achieved.
2. Approve the Care Leavers addendum to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023 – 2028.
3. Agree that the LAC and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy Delivery Plan be updated to increase the appropriateness and number of available accommodation options for Care Leavers as per the Care Leaver addendum to the LAC sufficiency strategy (see 2 above).
4. Note that on 16 October 2023 authority was delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to acquire up to 100 properties in line with the Housing Acquisitions Policy, which includes scope to acquire properties to meet the accommodation needs of Children and Young Peoples Services.
5. Authorise the Councils Designated Property Officer, or relevant Strategic Director in their absence, to negotiate any additional accommodation required and complete necessary transactions, in consultation with the Council’s Section 151 Officer, Strategic Director Children’s and Young Peoples Services, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services and the Assistant Director of Legal Services.

### **List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Care Leavers Addendum to LAC Sufficiency Strategy 2023 – 2028  
Appendix 2 Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy Delivery Plan (Updated 2024)  
Appendix 3 Part A Initial Equality Screening Assessment  
Appendix 4 Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

Looked After Children and Care leaver's Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2028

Operational Delivery of LAC Sufficiency Strategy Cabinet Report 17th February 2020

Operational Delivery of LAC Sufficiency Strategy - New Residential Provision Progress. Report June 2020

Operational Delivery of LAC Sufficiency Strategy - New Residential Provision Progress. Report September 2021

Pathways to Care: Extensions and Adaptations to Homes of Foster Carers, Special Guardians and Adopters – (revised policy 2021) Cabinet Report 16 August 2021

Operational Delivery of LAC Sufficiency Strategy - New Residential Provision Progress Report October 2022

Housing Acquisitions Policy. Cabinet Report – 16 October 2023

Review of the Housing Allocation Policy. Cabinet Report – 10 June 2024

Housing Delivery Programme Report – 2024/25. Cabinet Report – 22 January 2024

[Ofsted Report - How local authorities plan for sufficiency: children in care and care leavers](#)

[Ofsted Report- How local authorities and children's homes can achieve stability and permanence for children with complex needs](#)

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

**Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update)**

**1. Background**

1.1 The Cabinet report dated 17 February 2020 outlined Rotherham Children and Young People's Services strategic intention to reduce external residential placements and ensure more Rotherham Looked After Children and young people are placed within the Borough, close to their family and community networks. Progress updates have been reported to Cabinet in June 2020, September 2021, and October 2022.

1.2 Overall Cabinet have approved four phases of the development to deliver 20 residential beds and 2 emergency beds across 11 registered settings.

1.3 Phase One milestones agreed in the February 2020 Cabinet report were:

- A 4-bed home and 1-bed emergency accommodation (5 beds in total) to be operational by Autumn 2020.

Phase Two milestones agreed in the June 2020 Cabinet report were:

- Two x 2-bed homes and 1-bed emergency accommodation (5 beds in total) to be operational in March 2021.

Phase Three proposed milestones agreed in the September 2021 Cabinet report were:

- Two further 4-bed homes (8 beds in total) to be operational between October 2022 and 2023/24.

Changes to the Phase Three proposed milestones agreed in the October 2022 Cabinet report were:

- Change phase three from 2 x 4-bed homes (8 beds in total) to 4 x 2-bed homes (8 beds in total) to better meet current demand, improve occupancy rate and cost efficiency.

Phase Four proposed milestones agreed in the October 2022 Cabinet report were:

- Two further 2-bed homes (Partially funded by the Department for Education (DfE) Children's Home Capital Programme to be operational by 2024/2025.

1.4 On 17 October 2022, Cabinet approved the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023 – 2028. The Strategy was developed in line with the duty to provide and/or procure placements for Children Looked After by the Local Authority. The legislation and guidance include Children Act 1989, Sufficiency Statutory Guidance 2010, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2011. The duty of 'sufficiency' requires Local Authorities and Children's Trust partners to ensure that there is a range of sufficient and appropriate placements which meet the needs of children and young people in care. There is also a responsibility to take steps to develop and shape service provision to meet the needs of all children and young people in care at a local level, as far as is reasonably possible.

- 1.5 The Strategy set out how Rotherham Children and Young People's Services will fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent and meet its statutory sufficiency duty by providing good quality care, effective parenting and support to children and young people in care and leaving care. It describes the principles that are applied when seeking to commission the provision of secure, safe, and appropriate accommodation and support, to Children in Care and Care Leavers over the next five years.
- 1.6 The Strategy provided the underpinning needs analysis that has informed market management, seeking to ensure that there is the right mix of provision available to meet the needs of children and young people and that this provision mix provides positive outcomes and value for money.
- 1.7 Whilst this Strategy is not primarily a financial one, it is expected that the commissioning intentions are essential to the sustainability of improved outcomes and the Council Budget. This report contains an update and impact analysis on the new residential provision as part of the operational delivery of the LAC Sufficiency Strategy.
- 1.8 In January 2023, a new judgement for Care Leavers was introduced to the Ofsted ILACS inspection framework. An LGA Peer Review, took place between 12 to 15 March 2024. The Peer Review identified Services are making a real difference to the lived experience of Care Leavers, however the range of accommodation services needed for Care Leavers in Borough is insufficient.
- 1.9 In March 2023, the Government introduced new national standards for the registration, regulation, and inspection of supported accommodation for Looked After Children aged 16 and 17 years, to be overseen by Ofsted.

The new standards are based on four key areas:

- Leadership and Management (Regulation 4)
- Child Protection (Regulation 5)
- Accommodation (Regulation 6)
- Support (Regulation 7)

- 1.10 Supported accommodation providers for 16- and 17-year-olds in care and Care Leavers were required to become Ofsted registered, regulated, and inspected from 28th October 2023.

## **2. Key Issues**

### **2.1 Progress overview**

The four phases of the programme aimed to deliver 20 residential beds and 2 emergency beds across 11 registered settings. So far, the programme has delivered 10 residential beds and 1 emergency bed across 6 registered settings. This includes 1 x 4 bed provision, 3 x 2 bed homes and 1 x 1 bed emergency provision. There is a current total in house capacity of 11 beds.

## 2.2 Progress Update

## Phase One progress update

Objectives: 1 x 4-bed home and 1-bed emergency accommodation (5 beds in total).

Target	Achieved	Next Steps
4-bed home	Pegasus	Complete.
Autumn 2020.	Three children now living in the home.	
Met		
1-bed emergency accommodation	Phoenix	Complete.
Complete		

## Phase Two progress update

Objectives: 2 x 2-bed home and 1-bed emergency accommodation (5 beds in total)

Target	Achieved	Next Steps
2 bed home March 2021	Beech Tree Registered with Ofsted March 2021.	Complete.
Met	Two children now living in the home.	
2 bed home March 2021	Quarry House Registered with Ofsted September 2021.	Complete.
Complete	Step down Statement of Purpose transferred from Pegasus house (as per Cabinet report September 2021 section 2.2).  Two children now living in the home.	
1 bed emergency accommodation	Name TBC – Property 1  Planning Permission achieved.	Finalise programme of works.
Autumn 2020 Revised target Operational Quarter 2, 2022/23	Programme of works to prepare for Ofsted registration underway.	Deliver modifications.
Re-profile Quarter 1 25/26	Property is being used pre-registration.	Register with Ofsted.
BEHIND SCHEDULE		

Phase Three progress update  
Objectives: 4 x 2 bed homes

Target	Achieved	Next Steps
2 bed home  Reprofiled to Quarter 1 23/24  Complete	Dragonfly. Registered with Ofsted July 2024.  Two children now living in the home.	Complete.
2 bed home  Quarter 2 23/24 Re-profiled to Quarter 3 24/25  BEHIND SCHEDULE	Name TBC – Property 2  Planning Permission achieved.	Property Purchased.  Finalise programme of works. Deliver modifications. Register with Ofsted. Recruit staffing.
2 bed home  Quarter 2 23/24 Re-profiled to Quarter 3 24/25  BEHIND SCHEDULE	Name TBC – Property 3  Planning Permission achieved. Property purchase delayed due to legal issue, now resolved.	Finalise programme of works. Deliver modifications. Recruit staff. Register with Ofsted.
2 bed home  Quarter 4 24/25  BEHIND SCHEDULE	Property not yet identified.	Property Searches ongoing

Phase Four progress update

Target	Achieved	Next Steps
2 bed home May 2024  Complete.	Peacock  Ofsted registration submitted.  Manager and Staff team recruited.  2 Children matched.	Complete – Awaiting registration.

2 bed home  Quarter 4 24/25	New build of purpose-built children's home approved.  Programme of works agreed.  Contractors in place and on site.	Complete works – due February 2025.  Recruit staff. Register with Ofsted.
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## 2.3 Progress

### Accommodation

2.3.1 As discussed above, there is a current total in house capacity of 11 beds.

2.4 A further home, Peacock Lodge, is currently awaiting registration with the property complete and fitted out following purchase in Q3 23/24. Property 3 was purchased in August 2024 and is awaiting a programme of refurbishment ahead of submitting registration.

2.5 Approval was received for a new build children's home which is currently being built on previously vacant land. Property 1 is identified as the final emergency one bed provision with planning permission in place and a programme of capital works currently being developed.

2.6 Property searches are underway to identify the final property for phase 3, a more detailed breakdown on existing homes and those in the implementation phases is covered within the body of the report.

2.7 The identification of homes has been a challenge throughout all phases of the in-house residential programme. This is due to homes needing to satisfy both service requirements, be acceptable to Ofsted and granting of planning permission for the change of use of the property.

2.8 The following routes to acquire properties are utilised in collaboration with Housing and Asset Management:

- Open Market purchases.
- New build Housing developments.
- Corporate assets which can be refurbished and developed into children's homes.

2.9 All potential offers include a briefing outlining the required due diligence, incorporating input from Planning, Surveyor, Asset Management, Police, Education and Social Care.

2.10 From January - December 2023, 55 properties from the open market were identified as being potentially suitable as part of the in-house programme, of these 34 were short-listed for visits with 6 offers placed. 4 of these offers were accepted with 2 progressing through planning. Of this one property was purchased (property 3).



## 2.11 Workforce

Each home has its own dedicated and suitably qualified staff team; this comprises a Registered Manager, Deputy Manager, 6 Practitioners and support from a casual bank of Residential Support Workers. As the homes under phases 3 and 4 operate as small 2 bed homes, Registered Managers can be dual registered providing management across 2 homes.

- 2.12 The overall operation of the homes and strategic development is led by the Operations Manager for Residential Services. This post was developed to support the growth of the service following the opening of the first homes under phase 1. The post leads on workforce development with a rolling programme of training and development in place across the residential service in line with the therapeutic model of support delivered across in house provision.
- 2.13 Recruitment and retention of residential staff continues to be a challenge due to the competitive nature of the market, with this being a known national area of challenge. A residential recruitment operations group identifies opportunities to improve the pipeline of applicants, with workstreams including marketing campaigns, use of the residential recruitment landing page on the RMBC website, recruitment agency support and attendance at job fairs/recruitment events.
- 2.14 All open homes are fully recruited, along with Peacock Lodge, which is currently awaiting registration. A rolling programme of recruitment will support the successful opening of the remaining homes under phase 3 and 4.

### **Original Recruitment Requirements phase 3.**

	2 bed home	2 bed home	2 bed home	2 bed home	Total
Casual	7	7	7	7	28
Practitioner	6	6	6	6	24
Deputy	1	1	1	1	4
Manager	.5	.5	.5	.5	2

### **Original Recruitment requirements Phase 4**

	2 bed home	2 bed home	Total
Casual	7	7	14
Practitioner	6	6	12
Deputy	1	1	2
Manager	.5	.5	1

## 2.15 Registration and Regulation

There is no published timescale for Ofsted to complete the children's home registration process however historically this has taken around 16 weeks. Ofsted acknowledged that there were delays in processing registration applications (in a press release published on 29 February 2024). This predominantly is in response to the increase in requests for registration for supported accommodation providers.

- 2.16 Some delays to the registration process have been experienced. Registration for the first emergency accommodation, Phoenix House, was significantly delayed and although registration for the latest 2 bed home (Peacock House) has been submitted, this has not yet been processed by Ofsted.
- 2.17 All Rotherham registered children's homes are visited by an independent person once a month. The monthly visit is called a Regulation 44 visit or an Independent Monitoring Visit. The purpose of the visit is to make sure it is a safe place to live and that children are happy, healthy, and cared for. Regulation 44 Visits are carried out under Regulation 44 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015. Registered children's homes also receive an annual inspection from Ofsted.
- 2.18 Although Ofsted reports are published in the public domain, the identity of the homes remain confidential and are not disclosed.
- 2.19 In October 2022, Rotherham Cabinet approved changes to the residential development programme in recognition of the challenges in the market and the complexity of children needing homes. These challenges are reflected regionally and nationally. In November 2022, Ofsted published a report, "how-local-authorities-plan-for-sufficiency-children-in-care-and-care-leavers" (background paper) about how local authorities plan for sufficiency, the report highlighted the lack of suitable homes available for children with complex needs and the difficulty local authorities face in finding homes for them. The report found that children's homes are often reluctant to accept referrals for children with complex needs due to sector-wide challenges with recruiting and retaining skilled and experienced staff, the potential for disruption for other children at the home and the perception that looking after a child with complex needs will negatively affect the home's Ofsted inspection judgement.
- 2.20 Children's homes in Rotherham consistently receive positive feedback from the independent visitors and during Ofsted inspections. Where recommendations for improvement have been made, these have related to disruption for other children when children with complex needs are living in the home, and the capacity of the workforce to meet the specialist needs of individual children.
- 2.21 In January 2024 Ofsted published a further report, "How local authorities and children's homes can achieve stability and permanence for children with complex needs" (attached as a background paper). This report acknowledged the challenges experienced across the country as well as in Rotherham and affirms Ofsted's commitment to addressing concerns and continuing to work with the sector to manage these sensitivities.

## 2.22 **Evaluation**

### **Placements**

As of Q1 2024/2025, there were 9 in house residential placements, 8 of which had been made in the preceding 12 months. Placements are split across the 5 registered provisions with an active overall capacity of 11 beds.

- 2.23 Average occupancy presumptions are set at 85%, with progress showing that the 2 bed properties are achieving this figure on a more consistent basis. Occupancy rates given sometimes differ from original assumptions for 2 bed properties, this includes when a young person has needed a period of solo placement or where beds become vacant due to transition. Dragonfly opened in a phased way in Q4 to support a positive implementation and transition for placements.
- 2.24 Achieving full occupancy has been a challenge for the programme, particularly on the 4 bed children's home, Pegasus, completed during phase 1. This is often due to the difficulty in successfully matching young people to the home.
- 2.25 Average occupancy across the 4 and 2 bed homes since April 24 is included below:

Home	Beds	Average Occupancy this financial year
Pegasus	4	72%
Beech Tree	2	100%
Dragonfly	2	76%
Quarry	2	61%

- 2.26 Since commencement of the in-house residential programme, there have been 23 young people that have benefited from in-house residential care. Of the 23 young people, 13 (56%) were residing outside of Rotherham.
- 2.27 Of the 13 external placements successfully transitioned in to in house residential provision, 12 (92%) were either in high-cost external residential settings or in emergency provision prior to placement in-house.
- 2.28 The average length of placement including those placed currently is 296 days, this supports the overall strategy for in house provision to be short to medium term focused and support step down to family-based settings where appropriate.
- 2.29 Of the 23 young people who have benefited from in-house residential care, 4 (17%) have had a successful reunification back to family, 5 (22%) have transitioned into leaving care accommodation, and 11 (48%) remain in in-house provision with only 2 (8%) requiring accommodation in another external residential setting.
- 2.30 Placement information to date on the in-house residential programme has shown the service performing well in terms of providing step down opportunities linked to care planning arrangements for Looked After Children. This is set against national sufficiency challenges particularly a shortage of foster carers which can result in increased reliance on placement in residential provision.
- 2.31 **Outcomes for Children**  
**Case study demonstrating impact for children.**
- 2.31.1 AB had resided in an external residential provision at distance from Rotherham since 2021.

- 2.31.2 AB's progress had been monitored via various children in care panels over the duration of his time in an external residential provision, with agreement to continue to support the placement at distance.
- 2.31.3 Through permanence panel, it was agreed to explore the possibility of AB returning to Rotherham. Following a number of planning meetings, AB was suitably matched to one of the new in-house residential homes.
- 2.31.4 Working collaboratively with education colleagues, the right in house residential home was selected, which allowed attendance at a new local education provision which could meet AB's needs. AB was integral to planning and leading the change. AB now lives locally, attends a local school with local peers and is able to see his family network regularly. This is supporting positive planning in preparation for adulthood.
- 2.31.5 The previous residential provision for AB offered care and education; the external placement cost was £6,436 per week. The budgeted rates of the in-house residential home at 85% occupancy rate are £4,242 per week, therefore, the move achieved efficiencies to the Council of £114K per year.
- 2.31.6 The case study demonstrates the effective planning process to support step down arrangements as part of long-term placement planning, in this instance both the Looked After Children and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transformation workstreams were able to work seamlessly together to source newly developed residential and SEND education provision.

### **Sufficiency Plan Update in relation to Care Leavers**

- 2.32 The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that it has carried out appropriate needs analysis of both its children in care and care leavers' placement and accommodation needs, and then should create a strategy that addresses the resultant sufficiency priorities and a clear local offer for Care Leavers. The delivery of the residential development programme remains a clear priority within the LAC Sufficiency delivery, but it is also important to focus explicitly on the needs of Care Leavers. The Care Leavers Addendum to the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy (Appendix 1) does just that and identifies a requirement to further develop provision to meet the needs of young people and young adults. It is also important to ensure that this provision provides positive outcomes and value for money.
- 2.33 The analysis of future need within the Care Leavers addendum suggests there will be 551 Care Leavers in Rotherham in 2027, this is significantly higher than the 353 Care Leavers in Rotherham in May 2024. In May 2024, 88 Care Leavers were accommodated in externally commissioned accommodation; the forecast number of Care Leavers in externally commissioned accommodation in 2027 is 156.
- 2.34 As current Care Leavers move into alternative arrangements, within family networks or by securing independent tenancies, existing available externally commissioned accommodation will be utilised (where this meets quality assurance and best value commissioning standards).

- 2.35 The gross budgeted spend on 16+ and 18+ is mainly externally commissioned accommodation in the region of £4.0m per annum. Increasing the amount of externally commissioned accommodation would result in further spend.
  
- 2.36 Better value can be achieved through meeting the accommodation needs of young adults by; increasing the number of dispersed properties, increasing the number of places in more cost-efficient group living accommodation and reducing the number of externally commissioned high-cost groups living placements. The financial implications are outlined in para 6.13. For young people and young adults who are ready to live independently the most value can be achieved by using increased dispersed properties sourced from HRA as opposed to spend on commissioned supported accommodation placements.
  
- 2.37 Whilst the Council can confidently project the number of Care Leavers (16/17) year olds transitioning through the care system over the next 3 years, based on current numbers of young people aged between 14-17, the types of properties that are required is more difficult to forecast.
  
- 2.38 Increasing the available dispersed accommodation, which can be provided with floating support is likely to reduce the reliance on higher costing commissioned services. An increase in dispersed accommodation by at least 21 beds, over the next 3 years, is likely to meet expected demand. Achieving above this number, will further reduce reliance on higher cost options if the complexity of the leaving care population remains the same.
  
- 2.39 Many Care Leavers identified in the needs analysis will not require the Council to source additional accommodation as they will be in a position to secure independent tenancies through the housing market, including through mainstream council housing allocations or in the private rented sector with appropriate support. Care Leavers receive priority in respect of housing applications in line with the current Housing Allocations Policy. The available data suggests at least 14 allocations to Care Leavers were made in the first six months of 2024/25. The true number is likely to be higher, because some Care Leavers will have received Band 1 priority for other reasons (e.g. because they were owed a homelessness duty). In June 2024, Cabinet approved a full review of the Council's Housing Allocation Policy. Agreement of a new policy (from 2025) will be subject to Cabinet approval and recommendation to Council.
  
- 2.40 In addition, part of the identified need for non-regulated dispersed accommodation for Care Leavers can be met through the Council's existing housing acquisitions workstream, which forms part of the Housing Delivery Programme. In October 2023, Cabinet authorised a new Housing Acquisitions Policy which included acquisitions for CYPS accommodation. A budget and authorisation are available for up to 100 acquisitions to meet general housing needs of all kinds in 2024/25 and 2025/26. Acquired properties must be held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Whilst this will be of real benefit, there will continue to be significant pressures on allocation. The Council will continue to seek opportunities to acquire properties for Care Leavers as part of this wider programme, with the intention that they would return to general needs use once they are no longer required by CYPS.

- 2.41 The Assistant Director of Housing Services recently authorised a doubling of the number of HRA properties available for use as supported dispersed accommodation for Care Leavers linked to the Council's Care Leaver supported accommodation service, meaning that in total 20 dispersed properties will now be available for that purpose. Council officers are working on identifying suitable properties from within the Council's housing stock.
- 2.42 In order to reduce the time required to find locate or acquire new properties, and to disproportionate impact in one area of the borough, CYPS and Housing will be considering additional locations as well as the central area close to the existing provision.
- 2.43 The Council is also working with housing associations that are potentially interested in developing accommodation solutions for Care Leavers.
- 2.44 The option to increase the availability of dispersed accommodation through new build developments has been explored. Traditional build projects can take 18 months or more to complete, consequently this has been discounted as a solution to provide additional care leaver accommodation to meet the demand over the next two years. However, the potential use of modular accommodation, which has the advantage of a much faster build period, is being explored to meet various accommodation needs in the borough and this will include the potential to support Care Leavers.
- 2.45 Finally, the Council retains the option to enter into leasing agreements with private sector landlords, including for Housing of Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodation. A delegation is sought from Cabinet to enable the relevant Assistant Director with responsibility for Property and Facilities Services to enter into lease agreements on the Council's behalf.
- 2.46 In order to maximise opportunities to increase availability of more cost efficient dispersed and group living accommodation described in 2.43, 2.44 and 2.45, through work with Housing Associations and Private Landlords and new developments, the relevant Assistant Director with responsibility for Property and Facilities Services would need to negotiate the acquisitions required and complete necessary transactions.
- 2.47 The options described in this report need to be considered in the context of the ongoing national homelessness crisis and growing demands on the HRA, and the wider housing stock, to meet a range of housing needs.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

#### **3.1 Option 1 Do nothing.**

- 3.1.1 Although the residential development programme has not achieved the anticipated outcomes and associated cost avoidance and savings to date due to delays to delivery, once operational, homes are able to evidence positive impact for Children in Care and financial efficiencies in comparison to the procurement of external placements.

- 3.1.2 Failure to update the LAC and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan risks the needs of Care Leavers not being identified and met leading to poor outcomes.
- 3.1.3 The increase in the number of Care Leavers in future years will create a cost pressure if other available options for accommodation are not maximised. A wider variety of housing solutions are required to meet the needs of Care Leavers, an inability to negotiate and provide these presents a financial risk and may lead to poor outcomes.
- 3.1.4 This option is not recommended.

## 3.2 **Option 2.**

- 3.2.1 Approve the delivery of the updated LAC and Care Leavers Sufficiency Delivery plan, to include completion of the residential development programme and joint work between CYPS, Housing and Asset Management to enable the development of a wider variety of housing solutions for Care Leavers.
- 3.2.2 This option is recommended.

## 4. **Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 A plan is in place, guided by the Voice, Influence and Participation Lead, for the consultation and engagement of Children in Care and Care Leavers in the development and implementation of the proposal.
- 4.2 It is recognised that it is critically important that Looked After Children are effectively engaged and can inform and influence both the plans and implementation.
- 4.3 A communication plan is in place, which covers all key stakeholders including members of the public.

## 5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The in-house children's residential development will deliver:
  - Property 1 (1 bed emergency provision) by Q1 2025/26
  - Property 2 (2 bed residential provision) by Q3 2024/2025
  - Property 3 (2 bed residential provision) by Q3 2024/2025
  - New build children's residential home by Q4 24/25
- 5.2 The LAC Sufficiency Strategy delivery plan will be approved by the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board by January 2025.

## 6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications:

### In-house Residential Homes Programme

#### Revenue implications

- 6.1 The in-house residential homes programme is one of a number of actions within the LAC Sufficiency strategy to address the sustainability issue in the Children in Care placement budget.
- 6.2 The latest revised budgeted cost for the delivery of the 20 beds through the in-house Residential Home Programme (currently phased to be completed by the end of 2024/2025) is £5.2m. This is an increase when compared to the last reported position (£4.3m) to Cabinet in Sept 2022. The revised cost is based on the following:
- The revised costs (based on 2024 prices) represent the full year effect of all the homes being open and operational.
  - Revenue budgets for the homes is through a realignment of the external residential placement budgets. An 85% occupancy level has been assumed.
  - Budget for staffing and running costs of the homes have been updated for inflationary increases since 2022.
  - Increased budgeted cost for Phoenix (emergency placements) is due to it being staffed as a 2-bed home; however, it is operated as a solo bed emergency home (for high complex placements).
- 6.3 The delivery of all the new homes (i.e. 20 beds), when fully operational, is planned to deliver cost avoidance of £1.3m per annum (£0.9m reported in Sept 2022). This is based on the £6,500 per week budgeted cost (2024/2025) of an external residential care placement. The increase in the cost avoidance savings since the Sept 2022 report reflects the rise in the weekly cost of external residential placements due to inflationary pressures.
- 6.4 A financial evaluation of the phase 1 and 2 homes in 2023/24 showed a mixed picture in respect of the cost avoidance achieved – see table below:

<b>2023/24</b>	Actual occupancy rate**	Planned spend	Actual revenue costs	Comparable external placement costs*	Variance
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Ph 1 - Pegasus	63%	753	753	832	-79
Ph 1 - Phoenix	58%	374	534	356	178
Ph 2 - Beech tree	98%	426	641	644	-3
Ph 2 - Quarry	87%	426	621	576	45
			<b>2,551</b>	<b>2,410</b>	<b>141</b>

\*Comparable external placement costs are based on the average unit cost of an external residential care placement on 31 March 2024 (c.£6,500).

\*\* actual occupancy rate is calculated based on the number and duration of placements made in the year across all homes



6.5 The above variance can be explained by a number of factors, most of which are one-offs in nature:

- Pegasus: - under-occupancy was a factor, with placements at the home continually short of the full 4-bed capacity. There were one-off agency costs (£23k) relating to the previous year and the Brightsparks recruitment contract (£30k) for the whole programme charged against this home's budget.
- Phoenix: - low occupancy rate was the main factor for the poor value for money in 2023/24. This is exacerbated by the high staffing ratio (3:1) in place for a complex placement during the year (the budgeted staffing ratio is 2:1). There was prolonged furlough of the home in the year due to works relating to Ofsted registration.
- Beech Tree: - the high running costs of the home is due to increased staffing costs from the following: 1fte manager cost was charged (against a 0.5fte budget due to its dual registration), one-off agency costs (£13k) relating to previous year, and 3:1 staffing ratio put in place for one solo placement during the year.
- Quarry – high running costs was the main issue in 2023/24 due to the following: full time manager costs charged (against a 0.5fte budget), one-off premises costs (£11k) and high-level sickness cover in the year.

6.6 It should be noted that some of the above factors are one-offs and unlikely to recur in 2024/25. As a result, the above is not an indication of the cost avoidance savings position for these homes in 2024/25 and in future years.

6.7 It is expected that improved occupancy levels, decision making and effective cost control in the running of the homes will ensure delivery of the target operating model and the planned cost avoidance (see table below).

<b>2023/24</b>	No. of places	Planned spend**	Comparable external costs***	Cost avoidance savings
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Phase 1 - Pegasus & Phoenix*	4	1,212	1,573	-361
Phase 2 - Beech Tree; Quarry*	4	1,185	1,439	-254
Phase 3 – Dragonfly; W Lane; W Drive; & 2 bed home	8	1,836	2,304	-468
Phase 4 – Peacock; Rowan	4	918	1,152	-234
	<b>20</b>	<b>5,151</b>	<b>6,468</b>	<b>-1,317</b>

\* Excludes emergency homes places

\*\* Based on 85% occupancy level for the year

\*\*\* Assumed average unit cost for an external placement of £6500

6.8 Whilst two homes have been more expensive than the average cost of external provision to date, work is being undertaken to ensure the costs are lower than external provision in future. The following details the management actions and grip currently in place to drive value for money and reduce running costs of the in-house residential home programme:

1. Revised processes to necessitate the exploration of in-house provision prior to agreeing to commence external placements. These are currently only able to be progressed with the approval of the Assistant Director.
2. The service has also increased senior leadership capacity with a new Head of Service for Provider Services who has taken the lead on ensuring that in-house residential care services are deployed in the most effective manner. This will increase grip and governance over this project and ongoing resource deployment for Children in Care.
3. There is ongoing work and case clinics scheduled to review children and young people currently placed in external provision and work to be done to transition these children in-house where appropriate.
4. A revised campaign to recruit, and retain, residential care practitioners is underway – to address recruitment barriers and over reliance on agency staff usage (which reduces the quality and consistency of care offered but also increases unit cost).

6.9 Progress has been made in the delivery of the in-house residential home programme. As per the target operating model, the in-house residential home programme still represents a cost-effective approach to managing pressures in the Children in Care placement budget over the medium and long term.

#### Capital Implications

6.10 The revised proposal (approved at Cabinet September 2022) was for a change to Phase 3 from 2 x 4 beds to 4 x 2 beds and a proposed Phase 4 for a further 2 x 2 beds in line with a bid against the DfE's Children's Home Capital programme, with 50% match funding of the proposed 2 x 2-bed homes. This bid was successful and in line with the specified timescales, this will bring a further 2 x 2 bed homes online by March 2025.

6.11 The Capital Allocation set out in September 22 of a total programme spend of £4.362m remains the same. Overall projected capital spend on the programme is forecast to be in line with the allocated capital budget.

6.12 Set out below is the current capital projected spend against budget:

<b>Residential Homes Programme</b>	<b>Bed capacity</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Spend to Date</b>	<b>Total Forecast spend</b>	<b>Variance against budget</b>
		£'000k	£'000k	£'000k	£'000k
Phase 1 - Pegasus & Phoenix	4 beds	177	178	178	1
Phase 2 - Beech Tree; Quarry	4 beds	843	728	928	85
Phase 3 – Dragonfly; W Lane; W Drive; & 2 bed home	8 beds	2,228	609	1,888	-340
Phase 4 – Peacock; Rowan	4 beds	1,114	560	1,359	245
<b>Total</b>	<b>20 beds</b>	<b>4,362</b>	<b>2,075</b>	<b>4,353</b>	<b>-9</b>

### 6.13 Updated cares leavers sufficiency strategy – revenue implications

Current budgeted cost of accommodating 16+ and 18+ Care Leavers is £4.5m, comprised of £4.0m (external commissioned provision) and £0.5m (in-house provision – supported accommodation / disbursed). The above excludes grant funding and unaccompanied asylum seekers children income from the Home Office.

- 6.14 The objective of the updated Care Leavers sufficiency strategy is to increase available dispersed accommodation (externally commissioned including with floating support and in-house provision) to meet forecast future demand. This would reduce the use of (and reliance on) costly external supported accommodation properties. The following table summarise the proposed sufficiency plan (and the number of available beds) over the next 2 years:

	Apr-24	Mar-25	2025/26	2026/27
<u>Commissioned placements</u>				
Supported Accommodation 16+	52	49	38	38
Dispersed – floating support 18+	20	26	26	15
Group Living 18+	15	9	15	21
	<b>87</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>74</b>
<u>In-house placements</u>				
H supported accommodation	9	9	9	9
Dispersed properties	10	20	30	40
	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>49</b>
Living independently	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>62</b>
	<b>138</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>185</b>

- 6.15 The following table summarises the indicative financial cost of the above sufficiency plan and underlying assumptions:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Commissioned Placements	1,813	1,603	1,320
In-house placements – dispersed	527	571	615
Living Independently	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,340</b>	<b>2,174</b>	<b>1,935</b>
<b>Cumulative savings</b>		<b>-166</b>	<b>-405</b>

- 6.16
1. Commissioned placements costs have been forecast using 2024 prices i.e. £1,160 for 16+ supported accommodation placements and £600 (average) for 18+ dispersed / group living properties.
  2. In-house placements costs represent current Care Leaver supported accommodation plus additional dispersed properties costs such as council tax / rental costs. Associated costs of the dispersed properties relate to rent payments at an average of £92 per week. At 18 it is proposed that the tenancy would transfer to the young person, where eligible housing benefit would be claimed. Council tax is payable by CYPS for any children under 18 or void properties (the current Band A charge is £1,434 p.a). The Council has a Council Tax exemption scheme for Care Leavers aged 18-21.

3. The forecast savings reflect the increased availability and use of in-house dispersed properties compared to commissioned placements.

## 6.17 **Procurement Implications**

As an update report, there are no direct procurement implications to reference. The purchase of properties falls outside the scope of procurement legislation and therefore in these instances, there are no procurement implications. Where the Council are engaging contractors to deliver new build schemes or refurbish existing properties, this engagement must be undertaken in compliance with relevant procurement legislations (Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023) and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules

## 7. **Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The Children Act 1989 S17 imposes a general duty on Local Authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need which can include the need for accommodation.
- 7.2 The Children Act 1989 S33 (1) states "The Local Authority has a duty to receive a child into its care for the duration of any Care Order" Section 22 A – D of the same act provides for statutory responsibility for providing any looked after child with accommodation. Section 22 C (7) – (9) states that the responsible authority must ensure that as far as reasonably practicable the placement: -
  - Allows the child to live near his / her home.
  - Does not disrupt his / her education.
  - Provides accommodation which is suitable to the needs of the child if the child is disabled.
  - Is within the local authority's area.

The duties and powers of Local Authorities to provide accommodation under sections 20 and 21 of the 1989 Act are not affected by these provisions.

- 7.3 Section 22 G makes provision that "The responsible Local Authority must also take steps to ensure that they are able to provide sufficient accommodation within the Local Authority's area to meet the needs of Looked After Children". Section 22G requires Local Authorities, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for those children that meets their needs and is within their local authority area.
- 7.4 Considering the above legislation, the statutory duties, and responsibilities for Looked After Children, the proposal to increase accommodation provision falls within the legal requirements expected of a Local Authority. Any provision where accommodation is being provided must comply with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Guidance Regulations 2011 including the requirement to be an Ofsted regulated placement this is irrespective of the length of time the provision is provided.
- 7.5 Section 63 of the Children Act 1989 states that 'no child shall be cared for and provided with accommodation in unregistered children's homes. Where an unregistered children's care home provides care and accommodation to a child, the

person carrying on the home commits an offence. It will be necessary for the provision to be registered. However, consideration has been given to this at "Registration and Regulation" above.

- 7.6 For clarity, there is provision in law to place a child in an unregulated placement; this is usually where a child (aged over 16) needs support to live independently rather than needing full time care. This policy will allow the Local Authority to comply with its duties under the prescribed legislation.
- 7.7 To reduce the risks of any legal challenge, the Council needs to ensure that it fully complies with all relevant legislation and properly consults in relation to any proposals set out in this report.
- 7.8 There is no legal implication by following the recommendation proposed at 3.2.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 Recruitment of staff for the residential homes continues to be a challenge. HR will continue to support the service in the recruitment and appointment of staff.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 Implications to vulnerable children and young people are covered within the report.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 A range of approaches will be used to ensure that Looked After Children play a key part in delivery of the strategy. The LAC Council have been involved with the development of the strategy and influence decision making and delivery.
- 10.2 Frontline staff, partner agencies, foster carers and parents/carers have been and will also be consulted and be able to inform the development and implementation.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy sets out how Rotherham Children and Young People's Services will fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent and meet its statutory sufficiency duty by providing good quality care, effective parenting and support to children and young people in and leaving care.
- 11.2 It describes the principles that are applied when seeking to commission the provision of secure, safe, and appropriate accommodation and support, to Children in Care and Care Leavers over the next three years.
- 11.3 The Strategy provides the underpinning needs analysis that will inform market management, seeking to ensure that there is the right mix of provision available to meet the needs of children and young people and that this provision mix provides positive outcomes and value for money.
- 11.4 The development of residential settings is a priority within the strategy, this means there will be some low-level impact in terms of car use for staff getting to the

home/their place of work and transporting children. There will also be an increase in refuse from the individual homes as they support children and staff potentially.

- 11.5 In order to monitor and mitigate the impact the distances travelled will be monitored and the settings will access electric vehicles.

## 12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Education, Police and Health partners have been significantly involved in the implementation process and will continue to contribute to the effective delivery of the programme.

## 13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 This report relates to two key corporate risks for the Council – the risk of safeguarding failure and the risk of inspection failure in Children's Services.
- 13.2 The proposal will help improve support for some of the most vulnerable young children and young people in the borough. In addition, this work should reduce the risk of inspection failure in children's homes and help to improve the overall rating for services for Looked After Children.
- 13.3 Key operational risks include the risk of not being able to recruit the required qualified and experienced staff, timeliness of Ofsted registration and ability to identify and acquire properties that meet the specifications. All these risks, if realised, could cause delay to the overall implementation timescales.

## 14. Accountable Officers

Name, Helen Sweaton Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Quality. Children and Young People's Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	04/11/2024
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	25/10/2024
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	25/10/2024

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

## Appendix 1: Addendum

## Section 6 Children in the Care of the Local Authority

**Care Leavers**

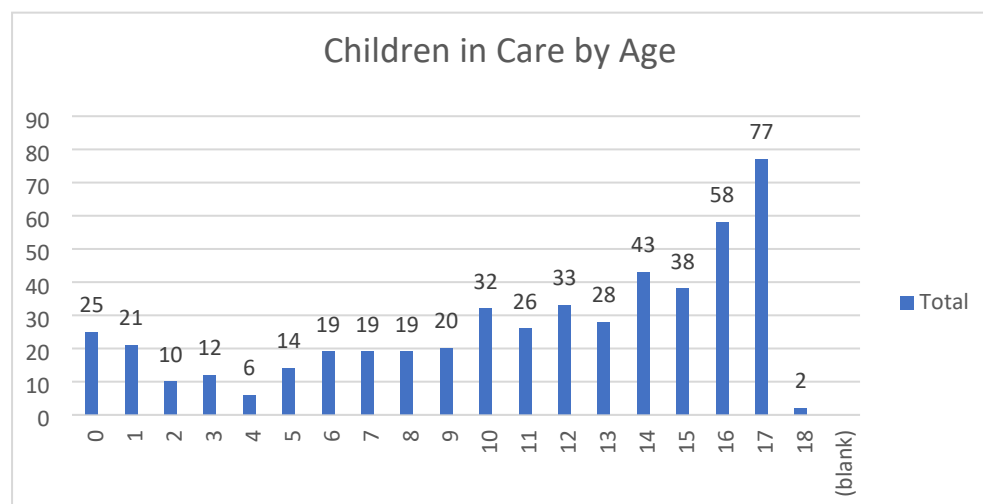
The Care Leavers Strategy Strategic Priority Two: Safe and Affordable Accommodation highlights the need for suitable accommodation for Care Leavers and acknowledges that sourcing the right accommodation is becoming more challenging.

The Strategy states agencies and services in Rotherham will work together to:

- Ensure there is a range of suitable accommodation options, including staying put, supported lodgings, semi supported, shared accommodation, houses of multiple occupancy and independent.
- Expand our in house supported accommodation to 20 dispersed properties which is staffed 24/7. These properties will help young people to get ready for independent living.
- Maintain close links between commissioning, children in care, leaving care, residential and in house supported accommodation to forecast accommodation needs and commission appropriate services.
- Establish a 16+ Panel to track young people to appropriate destinations.
- Work with trusted providers to ensure accommodation and support is of good quality.
- Support Care Leavers to develop independence skills, to ensure they transition positively to independent living, including budgeting, paying bills, food shopping, cooking and prioritising.
- Work with Care Leavers and services to jointly create Pathway plans which consider future living arrangements for young people, including what support will be offered to help to get them there.

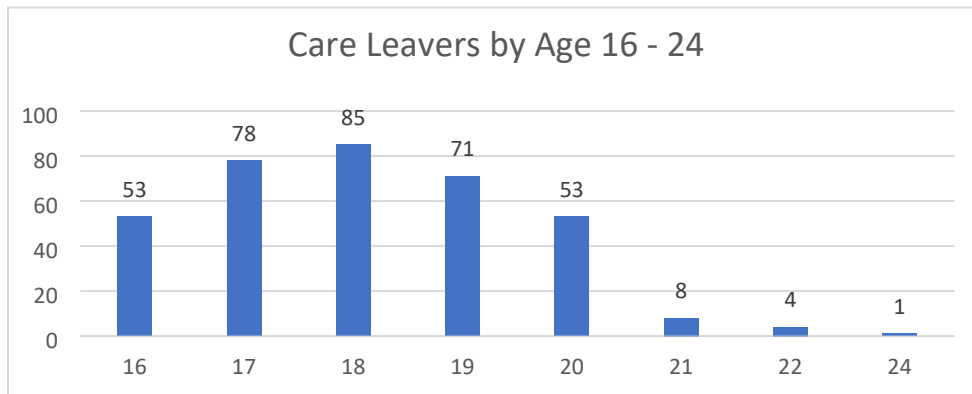
**Analysis of children in care by age**

At the end of May 2024 Rotherham had 502 Children in Care aged 0 – 18 with 135 of those children in care aged 16 - 17.

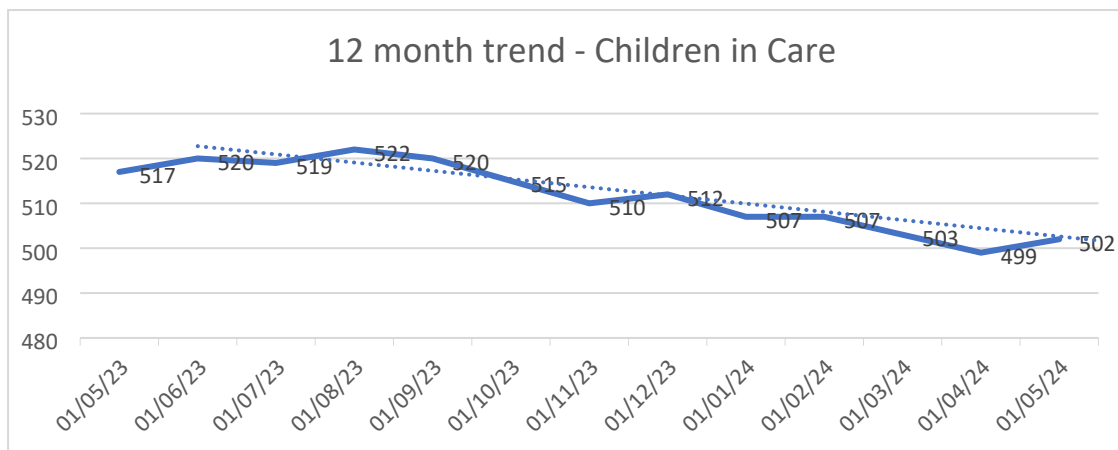


Graph 1

At the end of May 2024 Rotherham had 353 Care Leavers aged 16 – 24. This includes any young person 16 and over who is currently or has previously been in the care of the Local Authority and who has an allocated Social Worker or Personal Advisor. This does not include those young people over 21 who no longer have an allocated Personal Advisor (however they may access support from the leaving care team).

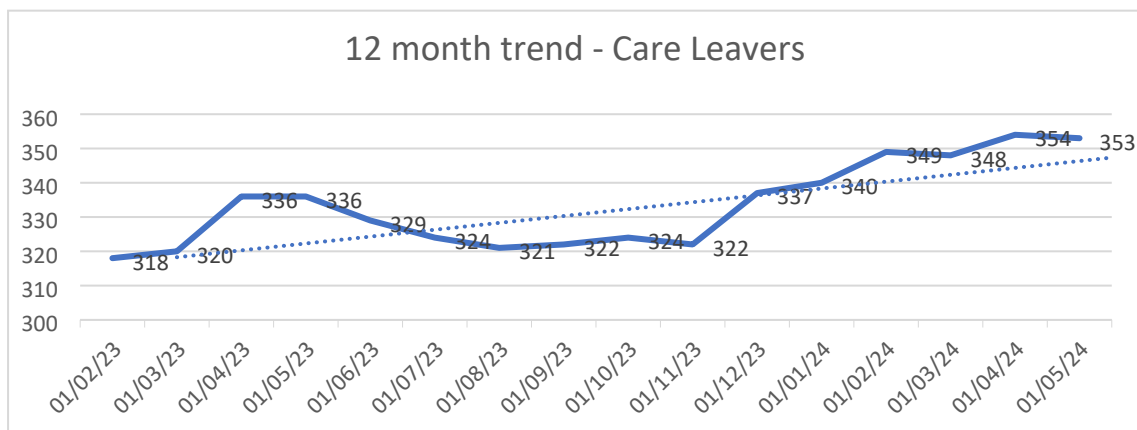


Graph 2



Graph 3

The number of children in care has reduced over the last 12 months.

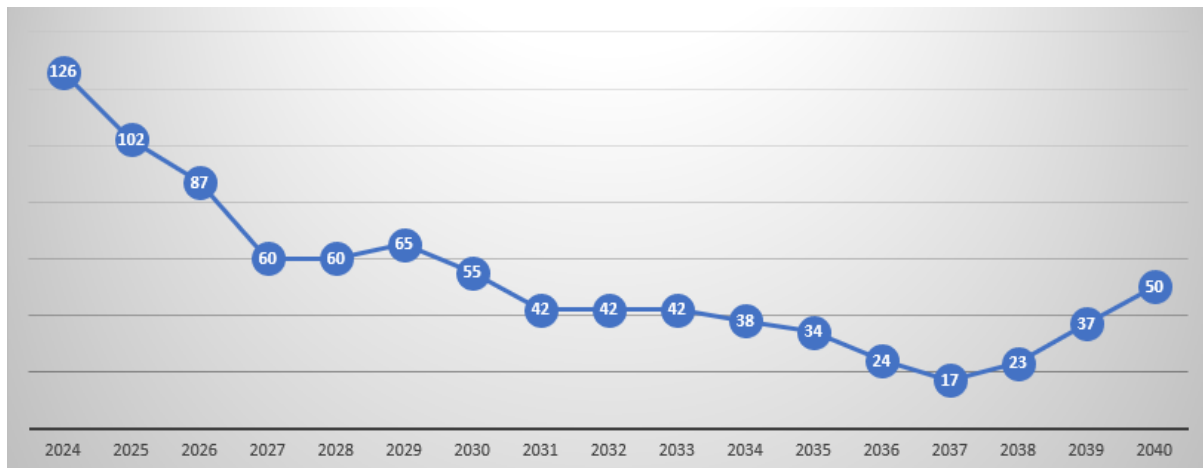


Graph 4



The number of Care Leavers has increased over the last 12 months.

Graph 5 projects the Rotherham 16+ care leaver population for the next 16 years based on the current children in care remaining in care until they are 16. This does not reflect new entrances to care or discharges from care that are expected and therefore does not reflect the actual number of anticipated care leavers.



Graph 5

The graph demonstrates there will likely be a reduction in care leavers in 2031 as we see the impact of the reducing number of children in care.

#### Analysis of children in care Aged 14 – 17 years old

Table 1 show the breakdown on children in care aged 14 to 17 at the end of May 2024.

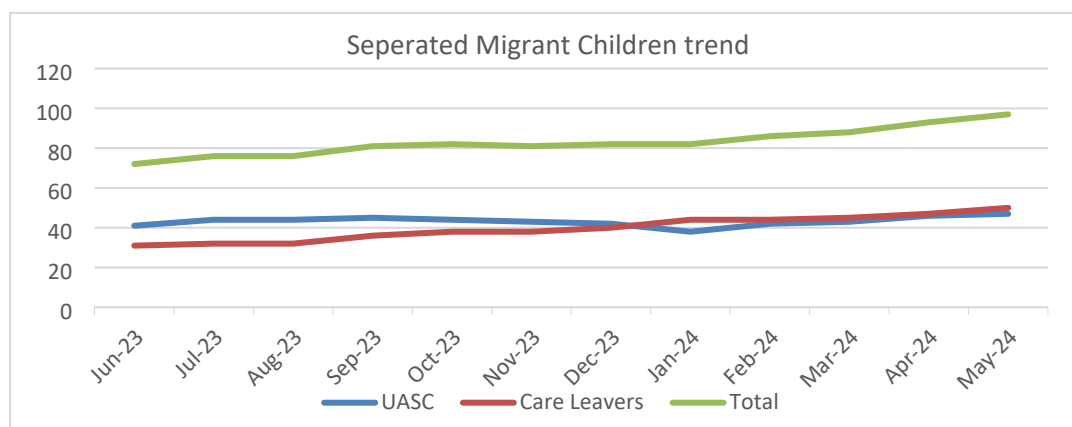
Number of Children & Young People (CYP)	Age				
	14	15	16	17	Grand Total
H5 – Registered Provider of Supported Accommodation		2	16	40	58
H5 – Resid. Accom. not subject to Children's Homes Regulations.		1			1
K1 – Secure Unit			1		1
K2 – Children's Homes	8	12	5	4	29
P1 - Placed with parents or other with Parental Resp.	2	3		1	6
P2 - Independent living (flat/lodgings/friends/B&B)			2	6	8
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or Independent Fostering Agency (IFA)	2			1	3
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	16	13	11	17	57
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	14	8	22	9	53
Unregistered Unregulated Accommodation		1			1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>217</b>

Table 1

Rotherham will have an additional 40 children in care aged 16 and 17 within the next two years, not including any new entrances into care or discharges from care (increase of 30% per year for the next two years).

### Separated Migrant Children and Young People

At the end of May 2024 Rotherham was receiving funding for 47 separated migrant children and young people at the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) National Rate (for under 18s) and 50 at the Care Leavers rate (18+).



Graph 6

The total number of separated migrant children and care leavers has increased over the last twelve months. The number of children under 18 has increased from 41 at the end of June 2023 to 47 at the end of May 2024 (37% increase). The number of care leavers over 18 has increased from 31 at the end of June 2023 to 50 at the end of May 2024 (62% increase).

Table 2 shows the number and breakdown of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children in care aged 14 and over at the end of May 2021

Number of CYP	Age				
<b>Immigration Status</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Asylum Seeker			1		1
Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR)				1	1
Leave to Remain			1	7	8
Pre-Settled Status – EU Settlement Scheme	1				1
Refused Asylum, appeal applied for				1	1
Settled Status – EU Settlement Scheme	5	2	4	4	15
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Child		1	13	19	33
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>60</b>

Table 2

Table 3 shows the anticipated numbers of separated migrant children who will become 18+ (UASC) from 2024 to 2026. The table assumes that there will be 1 additional accommodated separated migrant child becoming 18+ every month and that it will take a maximum of 12 months for young people to receive a decision of their rights to remain (R2R).

Movement	Jul-Sep 24	Oct-Dec 24	Jan-Mar 25	Apr-Jun 25	Jul-Sep 25	Jan-Mar 26	Apr-Jun 26
Start of Period	28	35	25	28	32	30	27
New in @ 18	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Turn 18 in period	4	3	8	9	2	5	1
Achieve R2R	0	-16	-8	-8	-7	-11	-12
End of Period	35	25	28	32	30	27	19

Table 3

The projection for 18+ (UASC) assumes a net 25% increase year on year based on the assumptions above.

#### Care Leavers with a disability

11 of the 135 children in care aged 16 and 17 are recorded on the Local Children's System as having a disability.

24 (11%) of the 217 children in care aged 14 to 17 are recorded on the Local Children's System as having a disability.

#### Summary

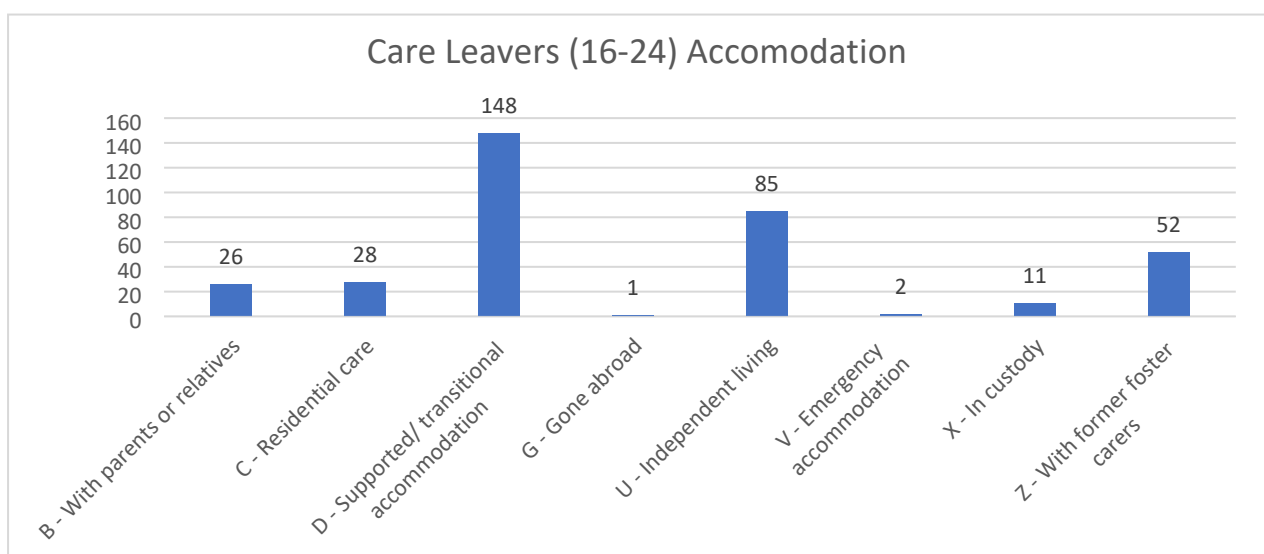
**The projection for the total number of care leavers, after discharges from care, suggests a 25% increase year on year for the next 3 years.**

**The projection for 18+ (UASC) suggests a net 25% increase year on year based on the assumptions above.**

**There will likely be a reduction in care leavers in 2031 as we see the impact of the reducing number of children in care.**

### Section 7 Homes for Children in the Care of the Local Authority

#### Analysis of Leaving Care Accommodation



Graph 7

Care Leavers over 21 living independently in appropriate accommodation who are no longer allocated a Personal Advisor (PA) are not reflected in graph 7.

Table 4 shows the breakdown of provision types for children in care aged 16 to 17 at the end of May 2024

<b>Number of CYP</b>	<b>Age</b>		
<b>Placement Types</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
H5 – Registered Provider of Supported Accommodation	16	40	56
K1 – Secure Unit	1		1
K2 – Children’s Homes	5	4	9
P1 - Placed with parents or other with Parental Resp.		1	1
P2 - Independent living (flat/lodgings/friends/B&B)	2	6	8
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA		1	1
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	11	17	28
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	22	9	31
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>135</b>

Table 4

#### Care Leavers with a disability

Table 2 show the number of disabled children and breakdown of provision types for children in care aged 16 to 17 at the end of May 2024.

<b>Number of CYP with Disability</b>	<b>Age</b>		
<b>Placement Type</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
H5 - Registered Provider of Supported Accommodation		3	3
K2 - Children's Homes	1	4	5
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering		1	1
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	2		2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>

Table 5

#### Analysis of External Leaving Care Accommodation

Table 5 shows the number of young people aged 16 and over accommodated in external leaving care provision (excluding 18-year-olds UASC already in affordable shared accommodation).

<b>Number of CYP</b>	<b>Age</b>				
<b>Provision Type</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Lot 1 – Group Living	16	31	10	1	58
Lot 2 – Dispersed with Floating support	2	7	12	9	30
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>88</b>

Table 6

Lot 1 – Group Living

58 of the 88 (66%) of the young people are accommodated in high cost, supported group living arrangements.

11 out of the 58 (19%) of those young people are aged 18 and over.

Lot 2 – Dispersed with Floating support.

30 of the 88 (34%) are accommodated in dispersed properties with floating support.

21 out of the 30 (70%) are aged 18 and over.

It should be noted that the availability of accommodation can influence where young people are accommodated. Where an outcome in the pathway plan for a young person is for them to live independently in appropriate accommodation in Rotherham the preference for the service is for the young person to be accommodated in a property that can transfer into their name, preventing the need for unnecessary home moves. This is dependent upon the level of support they need, however anecdotal information from the service suggests the majority of young people could receive floating support in their own dispersed property and the decision to utilise supported accommodation is usually based on the lack of availability of dispersed properties and floating support.

**Analysis of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) in external accommodation**

64 UASC aged 16 - 19 are accommodated in external leaving care accommodation.

Table 6 shows the number of USAC aged 16 and over accommodated in external leaving care provision (excluding 18-year-olds already in affordable shared accommodation).

Number of UASC Provision Type	Age				
	16	17	18	19	Grand Total
Lot 1 – Group Living	12	20	7	1	40
Lot 2 – Dispersed with Floating support.	0	4	12	8	24
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>64</b>

Table 7

Lot 1 – Group Living

40 of the 64 (63%) of UASC are accommodated in high cost, supported group living arrangements.

8 out of the 40 (20%) of those young people are aged 18 and over.

Lot 2 – Dispersed with Floating support.

24 of the 64 (38%) are accommodated in dispersed properties with floating support.

20 out of the 24 (83%) are aged 18 and over.

## Summary

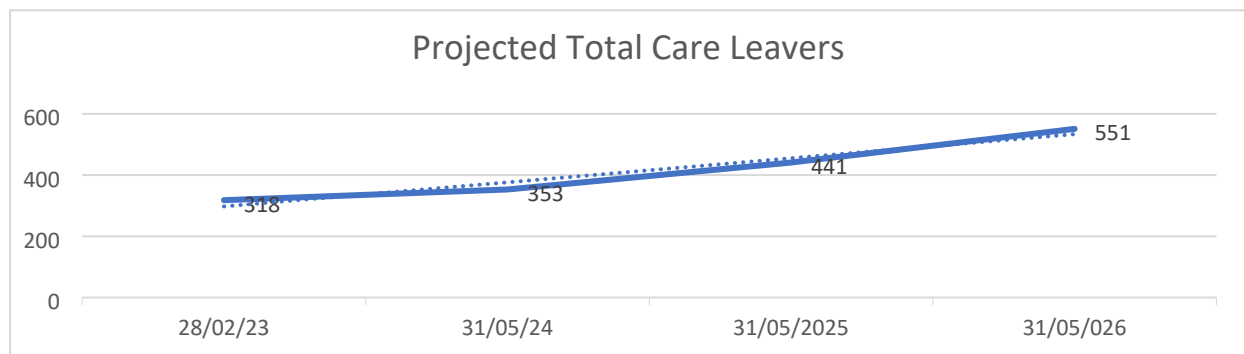
The analysis demonstrates 60 young adults (aged over 18) are currently accommodated in supported accommodation for young people. 28 may not be able to have a tenancy in their own name due to their immigration status. 32 young adults are awaiting availability of appropriate accommodation.

Supported accommodation is appropriate for 92 young people currently accommodated. When a young person is accommodated in a (dispersed) property that can transfer into their name, this prevents the need for unnecessary home moves, additional dispersed properties with the flexibility of floating support may be preferential.

There will likely be a reduction in care leavers in 2031 as we see the impact of the reducing number of children in care.

## Section 8 Future Need Projections

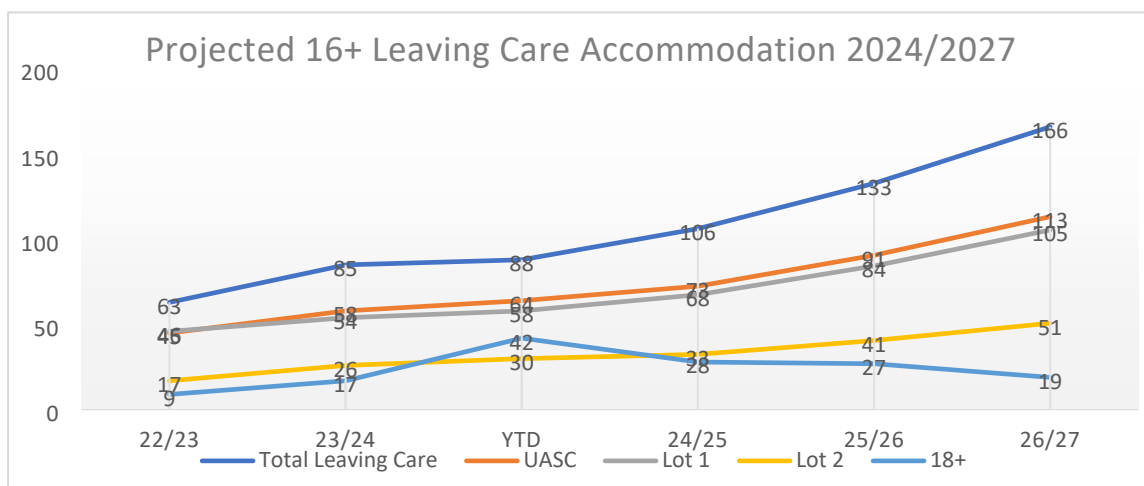
### Number of Care Leavers Projection



Graph 8

Based on the anticipated 25% increase in the number of the Care Leavers for next 2 years there will be 551 care leavers aged 16 – 24 in Rotherham in the 26/27 financial year.

### Projected demand for 16+ leaving care accommodation to March 27



Graph 9

If no changes are made to available in house provision and/ or practice, the projection indicates 166 young people will require external accommodation in the financial year 26/27.

The projection for total leaving care, UASC, Lot 1 and Lot 2 projections assume a net 25% increase year on year after discharges from care based on what we currently know about the 14-year-olds in the system and allows for 5% of care leavers not requiring provision.

The table shows the projected demand for 18+ (UASC) from 2024 to 2026. The table assumes that there will be 1 new 18+ (UASC) accommodated every month and that it will take a maximum of 12 months for young people to receive a decision of their rights to remain (R2R).

<b>Movement</b>	<b>Jul-Sep 24</b>	<b>Oct-Dec 24</b>	<b>Jan-Mar 25</b>	<b>Apr-Jun 25</b>	<b>Jul-Sep 25</b>	<b>Jan-Mar 26</b>	<b>Apr-Jun 26</b>
Start of Period	28	35	25	28	32	30	27
New in @ 18	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Turn 18 in period	4	3	8	9	2	5	1
Achieve R2R	0	-16	-8	-8	-7	-11	-12
<b>End of Period</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>

Table 8

The projection for 18+ (UASC) assumes a net 25% increase year on year based on the assumptions above.

Group living 18+. The 32 (Number of care leavers) is split 20 group living (9 in affordable) and (11 high cost), then 12 currently in dispersed. The 32 also assumes 50% will achieve rights to remain within 12 months of being placed. Demand could peak at 42 if there are further delay with processing rights to remain.

### **Summary**

**The analysis of future need demonstrates an increased need of an additional 47 group living placements and 21 dispersed properties over the next two years. This is in addition to the continued requirement for available housing for those ready to take on their own tenancies. (Currently 32 young adults are waiting for this).**

**As the preference for the service is for the young person to be accommodated in a property that can transfer into their name, preventing the need for unnecessary home moves, additional dispersed properties with the flexibility of floating support may be preferential.**

**Although demand is likely to reduce from 2031 the reduction could be managed by reducing the external accommodation commissioned.**

## Annual Expenditure Projection

### **Lot 1 – Group Living**

The average cost of a Lot 1 – group living accommodation is £1,200 per placement per week.

The projected cost of the 58 young people is £3.6m per year.

The projected cost of the young people aged 18 and over is £686K per year.

### **Lot 2 – Dispersed with Floating support**

The average cost of a dispersed properties with floating support is £438 per placement per week.

The projected cost of the 30 young people is £683K per year.

The projected cost of the 21 young people aged 18 and over is £478K per year.

The Council receives the Government contribution for UASC at £230 per week, which means a high percentage of current placement cost is being covered by the local authority.

### **Summary**

**The analysis of future need demonstrates an increased need of an additional 47 group living placements and 21 dispersed properties over the next two years. The financial projections above demonstrate the financial implication of externally commissioning the required accommodation is in excess of £5.2m. Better value can be achieved through meeting the accommodation needs of young adults through delivery of the accommodation strategy, increasing the number of dispersed properties, increasing the number of places in the more cost efficient in-house group living accommodation and reducing the number of external group living placements.**

## **Homes for Care Leavers Projection of additional need**

Table 9 demonstrates the required accommodation to meet the projected need. Current Capacity assume our ability to meet need internally and externally.

Whilst we can confidently project the number of care leavers (16/17) year olds transitioning through the care system over the next 3 years, based on current numbers of young people aged between 14-17, the types of properties that are required is more difficult to forecast.

By increasing our Dispersed with Floating support provision by 38 over the next 3 years it is likely to meet expected demand. Achieving above this number it is likely to reduce the reliance on higher costing commissioned services, both Lot 1 – Group Living and Lot 2 - Dispersed with Floating support and if the complexity of our leaving care population remains the same.



An increase in the complexity of our leaving care population is likely to mean an increase in demand for the higher supported/high-cost group arrangements.

All the projections with this paper assume that colleagues in Housing can identify suitable housing solutions for care leavers at the current rate, and that this does not create additional demand for dispersed properties.

			Type of accommodation			
	<u>Number of care leavers</u>	<u>Number of Care leavers in external acc</u>	<u>Registered Provider of Supported Acc (16+)</u>	<u>Dispersed properties – floating support</u>	<u>Group living 18+</u>	<u>18+ (own tenancy)</u>
Total (16-19)	353	87	52 (9 in house)	20 (10 in-house)	15	
26/27 Forecast Capacity required (16–19)	551 (based on forecast in graph 8)	166 (based on forecast in graph 9)	49	51	6	62
<b><u>25/26 Proposed Additional capacity</u></b>			38	26  Delivery of 20 additional in-house (10 already committed)	15	32
<b><u>26/27 Additional capacity</u></b>			38	15  Delivery of 10 additional in-house	21	62

Table 9

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Looked After Children and Care Leaver Promise	Aspiration	Objective (What do we want to do)	Action Owner (Who will be responsible)	Timescale (When will it be done by)	Progress report
All Promises	All services take the Rotherham Family Approach - “would this be good enough for my child?” to ensure all Rotherham children and young people are “resilient, successful and safe”, evidenced by Quality Assurance activity.	Promote the Rotherham Family Approach to commissioned services.	Paul Stinson	2023-2028	Quality Assurance Framework in place.
		Develop and deliver the Quality Assurance Framework to measure the use and impact of the Rotherham Family Approach with children and young people.	Paul Stinson	March 2023	Exploration with sub-regional Local Authorities and health and education partners to further develop the quality assurance.
Promise 1 - We will help you to live in a safe place where you are protected from harm	Children and young people have access to a range of homes (internal and external options) that meet their needs and support them to achieve their potential.	Commission homes, interventions, and services that are high quality, compliant, regulated and deliver best value.	Paul Stinson	2023-2028	
		Transform the offer to Rotherham Council foster carers to ensure all children, young people and families receive the help they need	Rebecca Wall	December 2022	
		Continued development and delivery of in-house residential children's homes, promoting residential care as an intervention not a destination	Rebecca Wall	March 2024	
		Work collaboratively with external residential and fostering providers to	Paul Stinson	June 2023	

		ensure all homes for children meet the required regulatory requirements and provide assurance of the quality outcomes delivered			
		Ensure all homes for children meet the required regulatory requirements and provide assurance of the quality outcomes delivered by the Council.	Rebecca Wall	2023-2028	
		Contribute to the delivery of the foster carer recruitment programme in line with development within the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.	Paul Stinson	March 2023	
		Contribute to the delivery of collaborative approaches, frameworks, and bodies to manage the market effectively in line with development within the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.	Helen Sweaton	2023-2028	
		<b>New Action</b> Commission supported accommodation, accommodation and support for Care Leavers that are high quality, compliant, regulated and deliver best value.	Paul Stinson	2024-2028 2025/26: .  2026/27	Commission 20 supported accommodation places (exploring block booking arrangements). Commission 18 supported accommodation places (exploring block booking arrangements).

		<b>New Action</b> Work with private landlords/ commission providers to secure 20 additional dispersed properties.	Paul Stinson Kevin Fisher	2025/26	
		<b>New Action</b> Work with private landlords/ commission providers to secure 6 Group living 18+	Paul Stinson Kevin Fisher	2025/26	
		<b>New Action</b> Deliver 10 additional Hollowgate dispersed beds.	Mark Cummins	2025/2026	

		<b>New Action</b> Work with Housing to enable the provision of appropriate accommodation options to secure 32 independent tenancies.	Monica Green	2025/26	
		<b>New Action</b> Through Housing acquisitions/ work with private landlords/ commission providers deliver 24 additional dispersed beds.	Paul Stinson Kevin Fisher	2026/27	
		<b>New Action</b> Work with private landlords/ commission providers to secure 6 Group living 18+.	Paul Stinson Kevin Fisher	2026/27	

		<b>New Action</b> Work with Housing to enable the provision of appropriate accommodation options to secure 30 independent tenancies.	Monica Green	2026/27	
Promise 8 - We will help you to be happy and healthy	Health, Education and Care Services share a joint understanding of the needs of children and young people in Rotherham and use this to inform commissioning and service delivery to ensure children and young people are able to access the support	Develop joint strategic needs analysis, commissioning processes and funding arrangements alongside partners.	Helen Sweaton	December 2023	Joint Commissioning Strategy 2024 – 2027 approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Place Board.

	they need when they need it				
	Children and Young People and their families and carers can access CAMHS assessment and intervention when needed..	Develop a CAMHS pathway to improve access to assessment and intervention for looked after children.	Helen Sweaton	June 2023	CAMHS pathway established for Children in Care. Reviewed arrangements for the provision of psychological oversight to RMBC therapeutic services has improved the relationship with CAMHS.
Promise 9 - We will help you to explore and be ready for the world of work	Children, young people, families and carers benefit from additional social value in Rotherham e.g. more employment opportunities.	Enable social value principles and outcomes to be integrated into the whole commissioning cycle for services for children and young people.	Paul Stinson	2023-2028	Commissioned contracts are achieving social value e.g. Digital Foster Carer Recruitment contract.
Promise 1 - We will help you to live in a safe place where you are protected from harm	More Young People aged 10+ are able to be cared for safely in their families and communities.	Develop and Deliver the Early Help Strategy	David McWilliams	December 2022	Early Help Strategy 2024 – 2028 approved by Cabinet.  Capacity in Family Group Conferencing
		Increase capacity in Family Group Conferencing	David McWilliams	April 2023	
		Develop 'Wrap around' Edge of Care Services for families with young people aged 13+	Monica Green	January 2023	
Promise 9 - We will help you to explore and be ready for the world of work	More children, young people and families benefit from additional support to improve outcomes and access employment.	Expand the Supporting Families program.	David McWilliams	April 2023	Increased Number of families achieving significant and sustained progress through the supporting families' programme.

END



## Appendix 3

### PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

#### 1. Title

**Title:** Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update)

**Directorate:** Children and Young People's Services

**Service area:** Looked After Children

**Lead person:**  
Helen Sweaton

**Contact number:**  
07554436546

Is this a:

☒

**Strategy / Policy**

☐

**Service / Function**

☐

**Other**

**If other, please specify**

#### 2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy sets out how Rotherham Children and Young People's Services will fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent and meet its statutory sufficiency duty by providing good quality care, effective parenting and support to children and young people in and leaving care.

It describes the principles that are applied when seeking to commission the provision of secure, safe and appropriate accommodation and support, to children in care and care leavers.

The Strategy provides the underpinning needs analysis that will inform market management, seeking to ensure that there is the right mix of provision available to meet the needs of children and young people and that this provision mix provides positive outcomes and value for money.

### 3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	x	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>	x	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>	x	
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

#### 4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

Rotherham's Looked After Children will have protected characteristics. All care planning will take account of the needs of the individual child and seek to match their needs with an appropriate placement. Issues around race, disability, maternity, belief, gender and sexual orientation are carefully considered in the referral matching process when deciding where looked after children and young people are placed.

The Looked After Children's Council meets regularly. The LAC Council have influenced the development of this strategy, the priorities and delivery plan.

Information regarding ethnicity, age, disability and SEN and gender will inform service development and commissioning intentions to secure homes for children that will best meet their individual needs.

Based on this information our priority areas over the next period are to:

- More Young People aged 10+ are able to be cared for safely in their families and communities.
- Children and young people have access to a range of homes (internal and external options) that meet their needs and improve their outcomes.
- All services take the Rotherham Family Approach to ensure all Rotherham children and young people are "resilient, successful and safe", evidenced by Quality Assurance activity.
- Children and young people are able to access the support they need when they need it because Health, Education and Care Services share a joint understanding of the needs of children and young people in Rotherham and use this to inform commissioning and service delivery.
- Children and Young People and their families and carers are able to access CAMHs assessment and intervention when needed.
- Children, young people, families and carers benefit from additional social value in Rotherham e.g. more employment opportunities.
- More children, young people and families benefit from additional support to improve outcomes and access employment.

In addition to Looked After Children delivery of the Strategy may impact on other groups:

Rotherham has an existing community of Foster Carers. RMBC meet with this group regularly to ensure that their voice can inform future planning for new recruitment initiatives as well as support package that is available to Foster Carers. Becoming a Foster Carer provides an employment opportunity to Rotherham residents. All initiatives to recruit more Foster Carers should aim to increase the diversity of the Foster Carer profile across all protected characteristics; this will support children and young people to achieve positive outcomes as placements that are a good match will be available.

Rotherham currently works with a number of Independent Fostering Agencies and engages with this group via a Provider Forum.

Plans to open new residential provision within the borough may have an impact on the wider community. Robust arrangements to consult with the community will be considered as part of the commissioning process with new providers in the borough.

- **Key findings**

Looked after children are some of Rotherham's most vulnerable children. This proposal will seek to improve the health, social care and education outcomes and address inequalities for these children.

The updated LAC Sufficiency Strategy 2023 - 2027 sets out a clear need analysis that helps to support work to meet the needs of Looked After Children in the borough. The work will have a positive impact in terms of addressing the diversity of this cohort through a broader range of placement options.

Work to open new residential provision in the borough may be perceived negatively by local communities. Consultation and engagement work will need to be implemented carefully and sensitively. The Local Authority will maintain oversight of this through the commissioning process and ensure that Elected Members are included in the process.

- **Actions**

A range of approaches will be used to ensure that looked after children play a key part in delivery of the strategy. The LAC Council have been involved with the development of the strategy and influence decision making and delivery.

Frontline staff, partner agencies, foster carers and parents / carers have been and will also be consulted and be able inform the development and implementation.

In summary, these are:

- To continue engagement with the Looked After Children's Council
- To continue to engage with Rotherham Foster Carers
- To continue to engage with the Independent Foster Carer Forum
- To ensure that consultation and engagement with the public is embedded in all plans to open new residential provision in the borough.

Further Equality Impact Analysis will be completed as required as part of the delivery associated with the Strategy.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	Completed
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	November 2024
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Mark Cummins CYPS Transformation Lead

### 5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Helen Sweatton	Assistant Director Commissioning and Performance	Updated and agreed 06/09/2024

### 6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to [equality@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk) For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

<b>Date screening completed</b>	August 2024
<b>Report title and date</b>	Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update)
<b>If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication</b>	16/10/24
<b>Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	06/09/24

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Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
<b>Emissions from non-domestic buildings?</b>	N/A				
<b>Emissions from transport?</b>	Slight increase in emissions	Slight increase in terms of car use for staff getting to the home/ their place of work and transporting children.		Active travel/public transport will be promoted where possible.	Council officer travel is included with the Council's Net Zero 2030 greenhouse gas emissions accounting.
<b>Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?</b>	Impact unknown	Potential slight increase in domestic refuse from the Council owned children's homes.	Potential slight increase in domestic waste if bringing additional children into Rotherham; unknown at this time.	Each home will have access to recycling bins.	Not possible to monitor.
<b>Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?</b>	Impact unknown	Potential increase in emissions from housing if additional placements are provided and additional children are brought into Rotherham; unknown at this time.		For new residential homes, any replacements required (e.g. heating) will be future-proofed for triple-A rating. Fitting new energy efficient boiler systems can be considered as part of property refurbishment	Monitor through energy usage for the new homes

Emissions from construction and/or development?	Increase in emissions	Emissions associated with renovating new residential homes.	Minimal increase relative to overall emissions from construction across Rotherham.		
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	Impact unknown			Attempts will be made to maximise planting trees on any new residential homes; feasibility to be determined	
Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields: N/A					

Please provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:

The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy sets out how Rotherham Children and Young People's Services will fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent and meet its statutory sufficiency duty by providing good quality care, effective parenting and support to children and young people in and leaving care.

It describes the principles that are applied when seeking to commission the provision of secure, safe and appropriate accommodation and support, to children in care and care leavers over the next three years.

The Strategy provides the underpinning needs analysis that will inform market management, seeking to ensure that there is the right mix of provision available to meet the needs of children and young people and that this provision mix provides positive outcomes and value for money.

The carbon impacts from this strategy update are as follows:

- Transport: the development of residential settings is a priority within the strategy, this means there will be some low-level impact in terms of car use for staff getting to the home/ their place of work and transporting children. This is monitored through the council's greenhouse gas accounting. In order to monitor and mitigate the impact the distances travelled will be monitored and the settings will begin to have access electric vehicles with public transport and active travel promoted. Overall transport impact may be reduced due to the potential for less young people to be placed outside of Rotherham
- Waste: There will also be a potential slight increase in refuse from the individual homes as they support children and staff. All homes will have recycling bins and waste is not anticipated to be more than a regular family home.



- Domestic buildings: emissions may rise if additional placements are provided – these may be mitigated with energy efficiency measures.
- Construction and development: increase in emissions from renovating new residential homes.
- Carbon capture and storage: unknown impact – attempts will be made to maximise tree planting where possible.

Supporting information:	
<b>Completed by:</b> <b>(Name, title, and service area/directorate).</b>	Mark Cummins CYPS Transformation Lead
<b>Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].</b>	
<b>If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.</b>	
<b>Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]</b>	CIA339 Katie Rockett, Climate Change Officer

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 18 November 2024

**Report Title**

Temporary Accommodation Policy

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

**Report Author(s)**

Helen Caulfield-Browne

Housing Options Operational Manager

[Helen.caulfield-browne@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.caulfield-browne@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The report seeks Cabinet approval of a new Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy (Appendix 1). The report sets out the objectives and principles that are reflected in the Policy and explains how the Council intends to meet its statutory obligations under the Housing Act 1996 and The Homeless (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012, in line with the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and the objectives and principles of Rotherham's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The report also provides Cabinet with an update on the growing demand for temporary accommodation and the work being undertaken by the Council to improve outcomes for residents and reduce the impact on the Council's financial position. The report requests a specific, time-limited delegation to expand the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio to meet demands.

**Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the increase in homelessness and growing demand for temporary accommodation and the work being undertaken by the Council to respond to this demand.

2. Approve the adoption of the new Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy (Appendix 1).
3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health for a 3-year period in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make operational amendments to the Policy when the need is identified.
4. Note officers' intention to continue to pursue opportunities for a 3-year period to increase the portfolio of Council-owned temporary accommodation to meet service demands, subject to available budget and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy 2024  
Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment - Part A and Part B  
Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

Rotherham's Homelessness and Prevention Rough Sleepers Strategy 2023 -2026  
Households in Temporary Accommodation (England) Commons Library Research and Briefing Report Jan 2023

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Temporary Accommodation Policy

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Housing plays a vital role in supporting residents to achieve and maintain the life they want to lead, and good quality, secure and affordable homes support positive health, educational and economic outcomes. Recognising this, the Council's Homelessness and Prevention Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023-2026 sets out the Council's aim to prioritise homelessness prevention.
- 1.2 National rates of homelessness and use of temporary accommodation are currently the highest on record. According to national housing charity Shelter, 112,660 households were homeless and living in temporary accommodation at the end of 2023, a record high figure and up 12% in a year. In the same year, 317,430 households were accepted as either homeless or at imminent risk of it by their local authority, the highest number since records began, and up 9% on the previous year.
- 1.3 Rotherham is not immune to these national trends. The Council has experienced significant increases in demands for homelessness services over the last few years. In the financial year 2022/23, 1,409 homelessness applications were received. During the same period, there were 771 placements into hotel/bed and breakfast temporary accommodation. In 2023/24 the number of homelessness applications increased by 7.9% to 1,521, while the number of placements increased by 29% to 995. The placement of families with children also increased in 2023/24: 258 families with children were placed in hotel/bed and breakfast accommodation, a 14.2% increase from 2022/23. It should be noted that some households may have been placed more than once.
- 1.4 As well as an increase in the total number of placements, from 771 in 2022/2023 to 995 in 2023/2024, the average length of stay in temporary accommodation is also increasing. In 2023/24, the average length of stay in hotels/bed and breakfast was 36 days, while in self-contained furnished temporary accommodation the average stay was 112 days for singles, couples and families. There is a legal limit of six weeks for families placed in hotel / bed and breakfast accommodation, which the Council has not breached.
- 1.5 The table below provides a breakdown on the numbers of households living in different types of temporary accommodation at the end of March 2023 and at the end of March 2024.

	End of March 2023	End of March 2024
RMBC-owned dispersed properties	80	100
Hotels/B&B	50	74
Privately owned furnished TA (nightly charged)	10	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>175</b>

- 1.6 These significant increases in demand have led to gross expenditure on hotels and private nightly charged temporary accommodation more than doubling between 2020/21 and 2023/24. In the last financial year, the Council spent £1,742,252 on this sort of accommodation.
- 1.7 Many of the factors driving these outcomes relate to national policy – including how the private rented sector is regulated, and the benefits system – and housing market factors. The Council is also seeking to improve its services to manage pressures locally, with three aims:
- Reducing the flow into temporary accommodation through improving prevention and early intervention outcomes and strengthening the quality of casework and statutory decision making.
  - Improving the size, quality and cost effectiveness of the Council's temporary accommodation portfolio.
  - Increasing the flow out of temporary accommodation through enhancing the Council's settled accommodation options for homeless households.
- 1.8 This report focuses on the Council's approach to managing its temporary accommodation service including decision-making, risk management and safeguarding, housing management, support and quality standards.

## **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Council is proposing to adopt a Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy owing to the significant increase in the number of placements being made. Although the adoption of such a policy is not in itself mandatory, there are legal and regulatory standards for performance and compliance regarding temporary accommodation placements that must be observed. The proposed new Policy will formalise some of the extensive work that is already undertaken by the Housing Options Service in assisting those households who are homeless and eligible under the Housing Act 1996 for assistance and in need of temporary accommodation.
- 2.2 The Policy aims to:
- Set out the Council's approach to placing homeless households in emergency and temporary accommodation.
  - Ensure the Council is compliant with legislation, guidance, case law, and good practice relating to the provision of temporary accommodation.
  - Set out the factors that will be considered to make sure that the temporary accommodation being offered is suitable and allocated fairly.
  - Keep households that are homeless safe and supported, including those who are homeless because of domestic abuse.
  - Monitor demand and if required use opportunities that become available to increase the number of temporary accommodation units in Rotherham that are of suitable quality and are affordable.
  - Set out how the Council will provide a good quality temporary accommodation service.
  - Ensure the effective management of temporary accommodation premises.

- Outline how the Council supports households who approach the Council in need of temporary accommodation, to ensure they are treated in a consistent manner and with empathy and respect.
- Improve customer satisfaction with the temporary accommodation service.
- Keep the cost of the Council's temporary accommodation to a minimum by reducing the use of hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation.

2.3 The Council is committed to ensuring that its temporary accommodation portfolio is large enough to meet the overall level of need, and that it contains the right kinds of accommodation to ensure individual needs can be met. However, in practice the availability of suitable accommodation is extremely limited, which is why like many local authorities the Council has made extensive use of hotel/bed and breakfast establishments in recent years. Because of the mismatch between supply and demand, clear policy is needed on how decisions to place households are made.

2.4 The proposed new Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy is contained in Appendix 1. The main features of the Policy are outlined in this report.

#### Temporary accommodation portfolio

2.5 The Policy explains that the Council owns or commissions a portfolio of temporary accommodation that has grown in size over the last few years. The most recent expansion entailed utilising Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) funding to secure an additional 16 dispersed properties, bringing the total to 144 properties (this includes 13 ringfenced for victims of domestic abuse).

2.6 Accommodation that is owned and managed, or directly commissioned by the Council, is generally the best quality and most cost-effective form of temporary accommodation available. The Council is continually reviewing the size and effectiveness of the portfolio with a view to pursuing further expansion. This may include non-self-contained supported temporary accommodation as well as dispersed self-contained properties.

#### Suitability of temporary accommodation

2.7 The Policy provides a clear and consistent approach to assessing households for temporary accommodation in line with statutory requirements to ensure suitability. As far as reasonably practicable, the Council will secure accommodation in the Rotherham area. Where this is not possible, the Council will make all efforts to place homeless households as close as possible to Rotherham and prioritise households with the highest need back into Rotherham at the earliest opportunity.

2.8 The Policy sets out the factors that the Council must consider when determining whether temporary accommodation is suitable for a household, taking into account the location and other factors such as:

- The significance of any disruption that would be caused by the location of the accommodation to the employment, caring responsibilities, or education of the person or members of the person's household.

- The proximity and accessibility of the accommodation to medical facilities and other support that is currently used by or provided to the person or members of the person's household that are essential to the wellbeing of the person or members of the person's household.
- The proximity and accessibility of the accommodation to local services, amenities, and transport.

- 2.9 The Policy reaffirms that hotels or bed and breakfast accommodation is not to be regarded as suitable for 16- and 17-year-olds. The Policy refers to the joint working protocol between Children's Services and Housing for homeless 16- and 17-year-olds and how the Council will approach assessment of needs.
- 2.10 The Policy explains that while families can be placed in hotels or bed and breakfasts when there are no other options available, the Council will adhere to the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 by ensuring that no household with family commitments stays in this type of temporary accommodation beyond 6 weeks for each single homeless application made. There is a commitment that the Council will aim to move families out of hotels or bed and breakfast at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.11 The Practice Guidance for Temporary Accommodation Placements document which sits within the policy document expands upon the approach that should be taken by officers when determining the suitability of a placement, including any associated risks, timely reviews, and robust monitoring.
- 2.12 The Policy sets out how the Council will consider potential risks associated with placing multiple vulnerable households in one location. The Practice Guidance for Risk Assessing and Managing the Impact of Hotel and Bed and Breakfast Placements (Appendix 1 - Part B of the Policy) expands upon the approach that will be taken by officers in the effective management of hotel and bed and breakfast placements within communities.

#### Food and cooking facilities

- 2.13 The Council has no statutory obligation to provide or pay for the provision of food or to provide cooking facilities. Cooking facilities are provided in all Council-owned dispersed temporary accommodation properties but are generally not available in hotels or bed and breakfast accommodation. Some Councils have stopped paying for breakfast for hotel placements and only provide accommodation as a way of addressing the financial pressures due to the increasing demand of temporary accommodation. The Policy proposes that the Council continue the practice of offering breakfast where it is available for hotel placements. The Policy also emphasises partnership working between the Council and voluntary and community sector organisations who may be in a position to assist homeless households with access to cooked meals.

#### Offers, refusals and right to review

- 2.14 The Council always aims to offer suitable accommodation to the household at the first time of offer. The Policy explains that households who have any reservations about the suitability of accommodation being offered should



initially discuss the matter with the officer managing their homeless application. It also explains that the suitability of accommodation provided in performance of the 'main housing duty' is subject to a statutory right to review, and that the consequences of refusing a suitable offer could be that the Council may not owe any duty to provide further accommodation.

#### Households with pets

- 2.15 Many households that experience homelessness rely on their pets for emotional support and safety. However, when requesting assistance with temporary accommodation, pet owners often have to choose between rehoming their pet with friends or family or placing their pet in a kennel or a cattery.
- 2.16 In the Homelessness Code of Guidance, local authorities are asked to be sensitive to the importance of pets to some applicants, who may rely on them for companionship. Although the Code of Guidance recognises that it will not always be possible to make provision for pets, it is recommended that local authorities give careful consideration to this aspect when making provision for households that wish to retain their pet.
- 2.17 During engagement to support the development of this Policy, some customers voiced the importance of their pets and the upset it has caused them not having their pet with them. As a result of this, the Policy proposes that the Council provides a more flexible and sensitive approach to individuals who are pet owners who find themselves homeless and in need of temporary accommodation. Although there is no guarantee suitable temporary accommodation will be available, each case will be considered on its merits and where permission is granted, certain conditions will apply that will be linked to the household licence agreement. This is a shift from the current approach which entails a near blanket prohibition of pets in temporary accommodation owned by the Council.
- 2.18 The Households with Pets Practice Guidance (Appendix 3 – Part D) to the Policy, which sits within the policy document expands upon the proposed approach that the Council will take when considering granting permission.

#### Support and resettlement

- 2.19 Between March and June 2023, a needs analysis was undertaken which identified that approximately 40-50% of people in temporary or emergency accommodation had recognised support needs that relate to their ability to live independently and sustain a tenancy. During engagement to support the development of this policy, customers voiced the importance of receiving good support and having access to the right information and knowing who to contact in the Council.
- 2.20 The Policy sets out how the Council will ensure that support is available to households throughout their stay in temporary accommodation, which will help households achieve a prompt and successful move into a more permanent home and achieve the outcomes agreed in their Personal Housing Plan. All households will be allocated a named officer, and the Council is in the process

of commissioning a specialist service to provide more intensive move-on support specifically for single people and families that are in temporary and emergency accommodation.

2.21 Examples of support that will be offered include:

- Support in understanding rights and responsibilities whilst in temporary accommodation.
- Help in applying for benefits.
- School admissions being addressed, to get children into school swiftly, minimising educational disruption.
- Links established with other agencies where needed e.g., Social Care, Children's Services, Domestic Abuse Services and Drug and Alcohol support.
- Support to register with Health Care, which includes linking in with Gateway Primary Care, which specialises with hard to reach and vulnerable groups.
- Earlier conversations regarding housing options and support to join the Council's housing register.

#### Temporary accommodation service standards

2.22 The Council is committed to providing a high-quality temporary accommodation service. To support this, the Policy introduces a set of proposed service standards (Appendix 1 – Part C within the policy document) influenced by engagement with Council staff, customers with lived experience and external partners. Customers voiced that when living in temporary accommodation, it was important that they felt safe and secure and were being listened to, with empathy and understanding. This is reflected in the standards.

2.23 The Service Standards focus on customer services, physical standards, service management and support and represent a level of quality which council officers will work from. The standards will enable customers to understand what level of service they should expect from the service.

#### Management of temporary accommodation including ending placements

2.24 The Policy includes the actions that the Council will take in relation to breaches of temporary accommodation agreements or where households are believed not to be using their temporary accommodation. This ensures a consistent and fair approach for all households in temporary accommodation and is compliant with relevant legislation. The Policy also commits to the service to developing local operational procedures to work alongside the Policy.

2.25 The Policy also sets out the range of reasons why the Council may discharge its duties to accommodate in line with legislation.

#### Safeguarding

2.26 This Policy makes an explicit link between homeless households in need of temporary accommodation and safeguarding in respect of children, young people, and vulnerable adults placed into temporary accommodation. In particular, the Policy includes the factors the Council must take into account

when determining the suitability of accommodation secured under the Housing Act 1996 as set out in the Homelessness Code of Guidance.

- 2.27 The Policy states how the service will take ownership of its safeguarding responsibilities for children, young people and adults taking appropriate action when required to ensure children, young people and adults are protected in line with corporate safeguarding policies. The Policy emphasises the importance of managing safeguarding risks, both to homeless individuals and others they may come into contact with, through strong multi agency working practice. The Assistant Director of Housing will continue to attend the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board as a full member.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy is approved by Cabinet to help ensure that the Council is compliant with legislation, guidance, case law, and good practice relating to the provision of temporary accommodation.
- 3.2 An alternative option would be to continue without a comprehensive policy. This approach could deliver some of the benefits outlined in this report, but not to the same extent or degree. There is a risk that homeless households, other residents and professionals would not have a clear understanding of how decisions to accommodate households are made and how temporary accommodation is managed.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 The development of the Policy has benefited from the insights of Council and external stakeholders, including voluntary sector agencies, primary health care, adult and children's social care, housing, and customers. Consultation and engagement activities were completed between 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024.
- 4.2 A range of customer engagement activities were undertaken to gather views from a diverse range of people who have lived experience in accessing temporary accommodation. Customer engagement and engagement activities included:
- Home visits to households currently living in temporary accommodation.
  - A telephone survey undertaken with households who had experience of living in temporary accommodation.
  - Housing support providers gathered the views from their own customers.
  - Drop-in sessions were held at Shiloh, a homelessness charity, where customers had the opportunity to express themselves on what was important to them in relation to temporary accommodation.
- 4.3 The voice of our customers has been pivotal in influencing and shaping the Policy. Feedback has included the following:

*"Pets are important and help me through difficult times, they are my therapy".*

*“Hotels need to be the last resort, having no cooking facilities in hotels can be a real struggle”.*

*“Service standards needs to have a good level of furniture, decent decoration, I need to feel safe and secure”.*

*“As a victim of domestic abuse, it was important to have somewhere I could feel safe and clean for my children”.*

*“It’s important to receive good support, consideration needs to be given to each individual’s situation. I needed help to register with a GP and sort out my benefits”.*

- 4.4 In addition to gathering the views of people with lived experience, officers consulted members of the Housing Involvement Panel, the Strategic Homelessness Board, and the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The Assistant Director of Housing will have responsibility for implementing the Policy. It is proposed that the new Policy is introduced on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2025 following the Cabinet decision which will allow a 2-month implementation period. An implementation plan will support the launch of the new policy to ensure that teams are fully informed of any changes to their current practice, identify any training and development needs and ensure operational procedures are aligned with the new Policy.
- 5.2 The Service is committed to continuous improvement and will ensure there is a focus on quality assurance and performance monitoring. The Council will use performance reports and data to proactively understand demand, effectiveness and the outcomes achieved by the temporary accommodation service.
- 5.3 The Policy will be fully reviewed every three years by Cabinet or sooner by the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health if required.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Activity associated with the new Policy will be contained within existing budget provision. It is anticipated that no additional resource or savings will result from the implementation of the new Policy.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations within this report.
- 6.3 The procurement of the housing related support service for single people and families that are in temporary and emergency accommodation referred within the report is being conducted via the Council’s Housing Related Support: Flexible Purchasing System, in compliance the Council’s Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations (as amended).

- 6.4 Any new procurement activity to be developed to respond to temporary accommodation requirements will be procured in line with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations (as amended) or the subsequent Procurement Act.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The adoption of a Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy is not a mandatory requirement. However, in *Nzolameso vs Westminster City Council [2015]*, the Supreme Court recommended Local Authorities produce and keep up to date a publicly available policy for the procurement and allocating of temporary accommodation units, that could be used to explain the individual factors that have been taken into account when offering such accommodation to households.
- 7.2 The legislative framework and guidance relating to the allocation of temporary accommodation can be found in the body of the report. Legal Services have consulted on and reviewed the Policy to ensure no aspects of the Policy are deemed unlawful.
- 7.3 Implementation of the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy will allow for a transparent and consistent approach to the provision of the growing demand for temporary accommodation.
- 7.4 A failure to implement the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy could result in complaints about the allocation of temporary accommodation and the decision-making process and result in local criticism/reputational damage and/or the utilisation of time consuming and resource draining internal review/appeal processes. If matters cannot be resolved internally, they may be escalated to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, which may result in an award of compensation. A decision not to implement the Policy could also lead to legal challenge by way of Judicial Review. If it is implemented, it is vital that the Policy is adhered to as failure to do so poses the same risk in relation to legal challenge.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no HR related concerns.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 Children and Young Peoples Services (CPYS) have been consulted on the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy. All households who have identified vulnerabilities or safeguarding concerns have been considered as appropriate. Children and young people will be appropriately managed and provided with support.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 Data and consultation have been used to understand Rotherham's homeless households needs in relation to temporary accommodation placements. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for this Policy. The Policy

sets out consideration for households with certain protected characteristics in relation to the suitability of a temporary accommodation placement. This includes households with children or who are pregnant should not be in a hotel/bed and breakfast placement longer than 6 weeks. Consideration includes households that have health factors, or a disability, or care and support needs, or the need to access any specialist medical services that are only available in Rotherham.

- 10.2 There is no identified negative impact through the implementation of this Policy. The Policy recognises the diverse needs of homeless households and is inclusive to all people with protected characteristics who are eligible for assistance under the Housing Act 1996. The Policy makes a commitment to providing a consistent and fair approach to the assessment and factors considered when making a suitable placement of temporary accommodation.
- 10.3 The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy recognises the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive service that will cultivate empathy and compassion towards individual needs.
- 10.4 An implementation plan for the launch of the new Policy will ensure information is accessible both online and a customer easy read temporary accommodation leaflet is developed which will explain key elements of the Policy.
- 10.5 The Council makes efforts to ensure that the temporary accommodation portfolio meets the diverse needs of residents in Rotherham. The Council reviews needs and demand regularly to ensure that there is sufficient and suitable temporary accommodation available to meet the expected need. To assist with this the Council will collate and monitor and review equality data to identify trends and improve service delivery.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 Climate change poses a significant threat to environments, individuals, communities, and economies on a local, national, and international scale.
- 11.2 It is the Council's aim to be net carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030, and for Rotherham as a whole to achieve the same position by 2040. It is acknowledged that emissions will be difficult to calculate. The Council will be mindful of energy efficiency measures present in the delivery of the temporary accommodation service and identify any improvements required including the development of future temporary accommodation through its own delivery programme.
- 11.3 Other areas for consideration will include:
  - Transportation - Staff travel, effective planning, and geographical casework to minimise unnecessary travel.
  - Employee Engagement – Educate and engage with staff teams on sustainability practices and encourage them to contribute towards reducing emissions in the workplace.
  - Waste Reduction (furniture/whitegoods) – ensure the use of recycling to minimise waste sent to landfills.

- Supply Chain – Considered when using external suppliers, using local suppliers to reduce transportation.

11.4 Anticipated implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change are detailed in the Carbon Impact Assessment (Appendix 3).

## 12. Implications for Partners

12.1 While the Policy is focused on the Council's statutory role, a partnership approach is key to achieving positive outcomes for homeless households. Many of the key partners have been consulted and engaged in the preparation of the Policy.

12.2 The Policy will provide a clearer pathway to temporary accommodation, providing clear guidance and information for all internal and external partners as well as internal officers. This Policy is aligned with the partnership approach which is embedded within the Council's Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023-2026.

## 13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 The Policy is intended to set a compliant standard for homelessness services and duties in regards of temporary accommodation. Failure to meet the Council's statutory duties can result in potential legal consequences and judicial review along with investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The adoption and implementation of the Policy is aimed at minimising the risks of non-compliance.

13.2 A summary of risks and mitigation is provided in the table below:

Risk Identified	Overall Risk	Risk Management – Mitigations
<p>1. The risk of the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy not adequately communicated leading to incorrect application of the Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial loss</li> <li>• Reputational damage on individual cases</li> </ul>	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The correct staff resources and processes are in place, and through regular and robust progress monitoring.</li> <li>• Local operational procedures will be reviewed and aligned with the new Policy.</li> <li>• Training will be given to officers in regard to the new Policy.</li> <li>• The Policy will be published on the Council's website.</li> <li>• A customer's easy read leaflet on the key areas of the Policy will be developed.</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.</b> The risk of the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy becoming out of date due to policy and context changes at the national and local level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial loss</li> <li>Reputational damage on individual cases</li> </ul>	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy every three years.</li> <li>Monitoring of any legislative changes or significant changes to local demand and need.</li> <li>Making any minor changes to the Policy or any changes to the practice guidance notes, through delegated powers to the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member following the approval of this approach outlined in this report.</li> </ul>
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## 14. Accountable Officer

### 14.1 Assistant Director of Housing

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	04/11/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	21/10/24
Assistant Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	16/10/24

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council aims to work with households to prevent homelessness and encourages people to approach the Council as early as possible if they are threatened with homelessness or are concerned about their housing situation. The Council will do its best to help people remain in their homes, or if that is not possible, to help them find somewhere else that is settled before they have to leave their home. However, in some circumstances, this will not be possible, and the Council may have a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation in line with legislation. This Policy does not cover housing management lettings, or the allocation of accommodation where there are social care statutory duties which do not fall under the homelessness legislation.
- 1.2 This Policy sets out how the Council will meet its statutory responsibilities to provide temporary accommodation for:
- a) Interim temporary accommodation, which is made under Section 188 of the Housing Act 1996, during the relief duty while homelessness enquiries are undertaken.
  - b) Temporary accommodation placements for households accepted as homeless under the main duty under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996.
  - c) Temporary accommodation placements made under Section 190 of the Housing Act 1996 following a decision that a household became homeless intentionally.
- 1.3 This Policy has been developed collaboratively across Housing Services, Health & Social Care, Children's Services and with stakeholders in Rotherham.
- 1.4 The voice of people with lived experience of homelessness and temporary accommodation has played a pivotal part in shaping this Policy. Feedback has been collected from a variety of sources. We have spoken to homeless households who have shared their experience and told us what they consider as important.

## **2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, LINKS TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

- 2.1 Temporary accommodation is a form of housing assistance that local authorities in England may provide to homeless households who are eligible for assistance, in priority need, and not intentionally homeless. The provision of temporary accommodation is governed by Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.2 The Policy has given regard to the above and all relevant legislation, which includes:
- Homeless (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2012
  - Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities)

- Localism Act 2011
- S11, Children Act 2004
- S23 and S42 Care Act 2014
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Associated Case Law, including the following:

2.3 [Nzolameso v Westminster City Council](#) (2015) This case established that the local authority must not make an offer of accommodation outside the applicant's district of residence, unless it is satisfied that there is no suitable accommodation available within the district, and that it has taken into account the impact of the location on the applicant and their family, especially in relation to education and health, social networks. The Supreme Court judgment included a set of requirements that local authorities need to consider when allocating temporary accommodation to homeless households. These include:

- A requirement that local authorities need to explain their decisions in regard of the location of the temporary accommodation offered.
- Each local authority should have, and keep up to date, Policy for allocating temporary accommodation to homeless households.
- The Policy should reflect the authority's statutory obligations, under both the Housing Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2004.
- Where there is an anticipated shortfall of accommodation in the Borough, the Policy should explain the factors to be taken into account when making decisions on where a household is placed.
- The Supreme Court also proposed that each local authority should have a Policy for procuring sufficient units of temporary accommodation, to meet anticipated demand for the coming year.

### **Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023-2026**

- 2.4 The Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy sets out the Council's strategy for preventing homelessness. There is a commitment in the strategy to minimise the use of temporary accommodation and improve the quality of temporary accommodation.
- 2.5 As part of the effort to assist rough sleepers, the Council operates a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) to provide emergency temporary accommodation to rough sleepers to prevent deaths on the streets caused by extreme weather conditions.

### **Council Plan**

- 2.6 This Policy supports the Council's aims and priorities set out in the [Council Plan 2022-2025](#), specifically:
- Every neighbourhood thriving
  - People are safe, healthy and live well

- Every child able to fulfil their potential
- Expanding Economic Opportunity

### **Housing Strategy**

- 2.7 This Policy supports the Council's aims and priorities set out in the [Housing Strategy 2022-2025](#), specifically:
- Supporting people to live independently
  - Strengthening communities

### **Domestic Abuse Strategy**

- 2.8 This Policy supports the Council's aims and priorities set out [The Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027](#), specifically:
- Prevention and Early Intervention
  - Responding to Change and Need
  - Support to Children and Families
  - Providing Safe Accommodation and Appropriate Support

### **Housing Allocations Policy**

- 2.9 The Housing Allocations Policy sets out the criteria and procedures that the Council uses to prioritise households for housing owned by the Council and a proportion of homes owned by our private registered provider (housing association) partners in the borough. Households that are owed a main homelessness duty are given reasonable preference, as set out in the Policy.

### **Housing Acquisitions Policy**

- 2.10 The Housing Acquisitions Policy sets out the Council's approach to acquiring homes to meet local housing needs. It sets out the different methods of acquisition and how the Council will assess housing needs for acquisitions. The Policy provides a route to increase the availability of accommodation to prevent and address homelessness.

## **3. NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT**

- 3.1 There are several challenges placed on the homelessness service overall in terms of the increased demand for temporary accommodation and challenges in procuring accommodation to ensure there is an adequate supply. Demand for temporary accommodation in the longer term is difficult to forecast as it is driven by a complex range of social, economic, and external factors, as well as changes to national legislation and Policy. The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 increased the time that those who are 'intentionally homeless' and 'in priority need' must be accommodated for, through the introduction of the 56-day 'relief duty.' This inevitably increased the use of temporary accommodation.

- 3.2 One of the biggest national and local challenges is the ability for local authorities to successfully move households into permanent and secure housing due to a lack of housing supply.
- 3.3 In Rotherham, there were 175 households living in all types of temporary accommodation at the end of March 2024, a 25% increase from the previous year, as well as an increase of 32% of households living in hotels/bed and breakfast from the previous year. There were 6 families living in hotels/bed breakfast at the end of March 2024 in comparison to 5 at the end of March 2023.
- 3.4 In Rotherham, between April 2022 and March 2023, 36% of households placed into temporary accommodation stated that they had support needs. 65% of those with a support need stated that they had 2 or more support needs. Support needs could include substance misuse, offending behaviour, mental and physical ill health and domestic abuse.
- 3.5 Despite the challenges placed on the Council's homelessness service, the Council is committed to meeting its temporary accommodation duties and providing effective support. The Council will seek to ensure that the provision of temporary accommodation meets local needs.

#### **4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 4.1 The guiding principles of this Policy mirrors the Homeless Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023-2026, which underpins the Council's approach to both the delivery and development of temporary accommodation.
- 4.2 The guiding principles are:
  - Partnership Working
  - Person-centered
  - Solution Focused
  - Responsive
- 4.3 The Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Service will recognise the negative impact experiencing homelessness can have on individuals and families and that everyone will have their own story to tell. The Service will create an inclusive and supportive approach that will cultivate empathy and compassion in every interaction with homeless individuals and take meaningful actions to support them that are responsive, person-centered and solution focused.

#### **5. AIMS OF THE POLICY**

- 5.1 To set out the Council's approach to placing homeless households in emergency and temporary accommodation.
- 5.2 Ensure the Council is compliant with legislation, guidance, case law, and good practice relating to the provision of temporary accommodation.

- 5.3 To set out the factors that will be considered to make sure that the temporary accommodation being offered is suitable and allocated fairly.
- 5.4 Keep households that are homeless safe and supported, including those who are homeless because of domestic abuse.
- 5.5 To set out how the Council will provide a good quality temporary accommodation service.
- 5.6 Ensure the effective management of temporary accommodation premises.
- 5.7 To outline how the Council supports households who approach the Council in need of temporary accommodation, to ensure they are treated in a consistent manner and with empathy and respect.
- 5.8 To improve customer satisfaction and overall customer experience with the temporary accommodation service.
- 5.9 Keep the cost of the Council's temporary accommodation to a minimum by reducing the use of hotels, bed and breakfast.

## **6. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PORTFOLIO**

- 6.1 Temporary housing can include various types of accommodation, such as Council-managed self-contained properties, group living and accommodation that is managed through local charities, or a private property owner. Temporary accommodation can also include bed and breakfast or hotels.
- 6.2 A key difference between temporary accommodation and other types of accommodation offered to households is that it is not offered as a stable or permanent home.
- 6.3 The Council makes efforts to ensure that the temporary accommodation portfolio meets demand. The Council reviews needs and demand regularly to seek to ensure that there is sufficient and suitable temporary accommodation available to meet the expected need. When calculating the expected need, previous year's data and trends are considered along with any known external factors and anecdotal evidence such as the difficulties faced in securing suitable temporary accommodation.
- 6.4 The Council will use all opportunities that become available to increase the number of temporary accommodation units in Rotherham that are of suitable quality and are affordable. This will improve the Council's offer in meeting its statutory duties and help to minimise out of area placements and the use of hotel or bed and breakfast placements.

### **Dispersed self-contained properties**

- 6.5 These properties are mainly owned and managed by the Council. The size of accommodation ranges from one-bedrooms to larger family-sized housing and can be bedsits, flats, or houses. The locations of the properties are dispersed across the Rotherham area. There may be occasions where the Council uses properties owned

and managed by a private property owner and this may include properties located outside of Rotherham.

- 6.6 There is no statutory duty to provide furnished accommodation; however, Council owned temporary accommodation properties are furnished and have everything a household will need to live in (see section on Service Standards).

#### **Hotels/Bed and Breakfast**

- 6.7 The Council utilises hotel/bed and breakfast establishments, although availability can be very limited. Some placements are made in other local authority areas.
- 6.8 The Council will use this type of temporary accommodation where emergency accommodation is required at very short notice or where there is no alternative accommodation available.
- 6.9 Whenever a household is accommodated into a hotel or bed and breakfast, attempts will be made to identify alternative temporary accommodation as soon as possible.

#### **Food and Cooking Facilities**

- 6.10 The Council has no statutory obligation to provide or pay for the provision of food or to provide cooking facilities, although breakfast may be included as part of a hotel or bed and breakfast booking where this provision is available. There are no cooking facilities provided at hotels or bed and breakfast accommodation. Some hotels or bed and breakfasts will provide access to a microwave at their own discretion. As a minimum, a kettle will be provided in each room. The Council work in partnership with a number of local charities and agencies. When placements are made information on these services, including local shops, emergency food services, food banks and any other assistance available in accessing food will be provided.

#### **Other Types of Temporary Accommodation**

- 6.11 The Council commissions supported housing, which includes specialist young people's assessment units, shared supported housing for individuals who have been found to be rough sleeping, and refuges for victims of domestic abuse. This category of temporary accommodation includes provision that is commonly referred to as hostels. As the Council develops its temporary accommodation portfolio, other types and models of temporary accommodation will be considered.

#### **Accessible Temporary Accommodation**

- 6.12 The Council will provide temporary accommodation units within the Council's in-house temporary accommodation portfolio that are wheelchair accessible. The accommodation will aim to provide external arrangements for the entrance, internal circulation space, door and corridor widths, and usable living spaces including the kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom space(s) where this is possible.
- 6.13 The Council will identify accessible accommodation where it is needed when making a placement in hotels or bed and breakfast.



## **Temporary Accommodation for Council Tenants**

- 6.14 There are circumstances in which a council tenant may require a temporary decant, for example, as a result of planned major works, improvement works which are required to a household's home, safeguarding reasons, or an emergency such as fire and flood. As a responsible landlord the Council will arrange alternative accommodation in line with the Council's Decant Procedures for existing council tenants.
- 6.15 For some urgent moves a homelessness application will be taken under the Council's statutory homelessness duties and temporary accommodation will be provided until a suitable decant property can be sought. Temporary accommodation could be a hotel, bed and breakfast or council furnished temporary accommodation. The Housing Allocation Policy has provision to identify a suitable vacant property, as a managed move in preference to the use of emergency homelessness temporary accommodation.

## **7. OFFICE OPERATING HOURS**

- 7.1 Households who require emergency temporary accommodation on the day will need to approach the Council's office, at Riverside House, during normal working opening times, Monday – Fridays, 08:30 – 17:00 (with the exclusion of Bank Holidays and the Christmas closedown) Households are encouraged to approach as early as possible in the day to allow sufficient time for an assessment of their eligibility for temporary accommodation and for the Council to make necessary arrangements. Households will need to provide proof of identification wherever possible. However, the Council recognises that in some cases, such as households fleeing domestic abuse this may not be possible straight away.
- 7.2 The Council's homelessness service recognises that reasonable adjustments may need to be considered for households who may not be able to attend in person due to a disability, health condition, or where there is risk to a household's safety due to fleeing violence or harassment. Adjustment may include home visits, or telephone assessments.
- 7.3 The Council operates its homelessness service 24 hours a day and 365 days of the year.
- 7.4 The Homeless Service can be contacted by telephoning 01709 336009 at any time day or night. If a homeless household contacts the Council outside of normal office hours, the Homelessness duty officer will decide if a duty to provide temporary accommodation is owed; if so, the household will be placed in the available accommodation. The household will be asked to attend the Council office the next working day. (This does not include bank holiday, the Christmas closure or weekends).

## **8. SUITABILITY OF A TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENT**

- 8.1 If the Council accepts a duty to provide temporary accommodation, the Council will consider the needs of the household as part of their homelessness assessment. This will include factors in relation to the suitability of temporary accommodation and identify any risks to help determine a suitable temporary accommodation placement.
- 8.2 All offers of temporary accommodation will comply with legislation, including the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 and give regard to the Homeless Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. The Council should be mindful of:
- Relevant considerations for families with children and their duties under Section 11 of the Children's Act 2014 with regards to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
  - Safeguarding responsibilities to protect adult's right to live in safety and free from abuse and neglect and its duties under section 23 and 42 of the Care Act 2014.
  - Victims of domestic abuse and the Councils statutory duties under Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 where it states that the Council must ensure all victims of domestic abuse have access to the right support within safe accommodation when they need it.
- 8.3 In determining whether temporary accommodation is suitable for a household, the Council must take into account the location and other factors such as:
- Where the accommodation is situated, if outside of Rotherham and the distance to its own local authority area.
  - The significance of any disruption that would be caused by the location of the accommodation to the employment, caring responsibilities, or education of the person or members of the person's household.
  - The proximity and accessibility of the accommodation to medical facilities and other support that is currently used by or provided to the person or members of the person's household that are essential to the wellbeing of the person or members of the person's household.
  - The proximity and accessibility of the accommodation to local services, amenities, and transport.
  - In some circumstances, it is acknowledged by the Council that it may be more appropriate for a placement outside of the area to be arranged, for example, where a household may be at risk within Rotherham.
- 8.4 Hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation is not regarded as suitable for 16- and 17-year-olds.
- 8.5 While families can be placed in hotels or bed and breakfasts from time to time, many of these placements are usually as a result of emergency placement, whereby it hasn't been possible to prevent homelessness or secure any alternative accommodation. The Council will adhere to the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)

(England) Order 2003 and Homelessness Code of Guidance by ensuring that no household with children or who are pregnant stay in this type of temporary accommodation beyond 6 weeks for each single homeless application made.

- 8.6 If there are any safeguarding concerns about any households, the Council will request consent from the police, probation, Social Care or other relevant agency to disclose relevant risk information to the accommodation provider prior to the placement being made.
- 8.7 The approval route of a temporary accommodation placement will be made by the senior duty officer for temporary accommodation placements on that day. Case records should evidence how decisions to place a household in or out of an area have been reached, considering the household's collective and individual needs and any impact of such a decision in accordance with its statutory duties.
- 8.8 The Practice Guidance for Temporary Accommodation Placements document **(Appendix 1- Part A)** expands upon the approach that should be taken by officers when determining the suitability of a placement, including any associated risks, and timely reviews. The Practice Guidance may be updated from time to time in line with operational demands and changes in national guidance and legislation.
- 8.9 The suitability of temporary accommodation will need to remain under review once a placement has been made. The Council will respond to any relevant change in circumstances that may affect suitability until such time as the accommodation duty is brought to an end.
- 8.10 When making hotel and bed and breakfast placements, the Temporary Accommodation Service will give consideration specifically in relation to the impact of placing multiple vulnerable households in one location and the potential impact this may have on individuals and the surrounding community, alongside the necessity of fulfilling statutory homelessness duties, the overall availability of suitable accommodation, and the overarching priority to avoid out-of-borough placements wherever feasible.
- 8.11 The Practice Guidance, Risk Assessing and Managing the Impact of Hotel and Bed and Breakfast Placements document **(Appendix 1- Part B)** expands upon the approach that will be taken by officers in the effective management of hotel and bed and breakfast placements.
- 8.12 The Temporary Accommodation Service will ensure operational systems are effective to ensure mechanisms are in place to alert themselves to those cases that will require more regular reviews because the household's needs and or risks are likely to change. This will include close monitoring systems and reviewing households' needs as circumstances change. It should be noted that temporary accommodation that is suitable for a short period under Section 188, such as hotels/bed and breakfast for example, may not necessarily be suitable under the main duty under Section 193. The Council will endeavor to ensure households are placed into furnished temporary accommodation wherever it is practical and appropriate to do so.

**Households who have recently arrived in the country (within the last 2 years, and have not had settled accommodation in the 3 years prior to arrival)**

- 8.13 This assessment will comply with temporary legislation, which in 2022 made changes to the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 and gave local authorities greater flexibility in how they can fulfil their homelessness duties for households that have recently arrived in the country (within the last 2 years, and not having had settled accommodation in the 3 years prior to arrival). Where local authorities have to place households out of area, their assessment of the suitability of accommodation will not need to consider the distance from the authority and disruption to employment, education and the proximity to medical services.
- 8.14 However, the local housing authority, must consider the significance of any disruption which would be caused by the location of the accommodation and any caring responsibilities of the person or members of the person's household for persons with whom there are family associations. This means that the Council has greater flexibility when it is not possible to place households in the local area. It should be acknowledged that this is a temporary legislation change which will end on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2025.

**Young People – 16–17-year-olds**

- 8.15 Where a young person aged 16–17 is homeless, the Council's joint protocol between Children's Services and the Homelessness Service will ensure that through the appropriate assessment, the needs of homeless 16 and 17 year olds are appropriately met, whilst fulfilling statutory duties under the legal framework.
- 8.16 The joint protocol aims to provide young people with the support to address problems and to experience a timely and coordinated response to their needs so that, wherever possible, homelessness can be avoided and a planned approach to finding suitable accommodation is made. As far as it is reasonably practicable, the Council will secure accommodation in its own area. Where this is not possible, the Council will make all efforts to place homeless households as close as possible to Rotherham.

**Hospital Discharges**

- 8.17 The Homelessness Service will work in partnership with the Adult Care Integrated Discharge Team to help avoid delayed discharges from hospital and assist in preventing homelessness for patients, focusing on planned moves where the homelessness service has a statutory duty to assist under Housing Act 1996.

**Prison Leavers**

- 8.18 The Homelessness Service will work in partnership with Probation and HM Prisons to assess individuals prior to prison release and establish the Council statutory duties under the Housing Act 1996.

## **9. PRIORTISATION OF PLACEMENTS AND MOVING WITHIN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

- 9.1 Where there are more households requiring in-area placements than there is temporary accommodation available, and/or more households requiring placements than there is self-contained temporary accommodation available, the Council may use its discretion to decide how the placements are prioritised based on each individual household's case, factoring in the level of need and risks and the availability of different types of accommodation. This is detailed in The Practice Guidance for Temporary Accommodation Placements document (**Appendix 1- Part A**).
- 9.2 It may be necessary to move homeless households to another temporary accommodation to make the best use of available resources. The Council is committed to keeping moves from one temporary accommodation to another to a minimum wherever possible to avoid any unnecessary disruption. An example of why a household may be asked to move may include where an accessible or adapted temporary accommodation property is needed or where a more suitable temporary accommodation has become available.
- 9.3 Households will be required to move when requested. If the household refuses to move, this may result in the Council ending its duties.
- 9.4 Where the Council decides it has a statutory duty to provide a household with temporary accommodation, the Council will consider personal preference within the constraints of the availability of the temporary accommodation but ultimately will prioritise individual needs over personal preference.
- 9.5 As a general approach, temporary accommodation is allocated on the day that it is needed. However, the Council may reserve a number of in-area temporary accommodation units for planned moves or to ensure certain types of accommodation are always available to respond to specific needs as they arise.
- 9.6 Where the Council has to use temporary accommodation not owned by the Council, providers are at liberty to refuse any placement. Where an accommodation provider refuses to accept a household, the Council will try other providers, but there may be occasions when the risk presented by an individual household member means that no providers will accept them. In this situation, the Council will continue to seek temporary accommodation as required under legislation, but in doing so, it will also seek assistance from other agencies where it is considered appropriate.

## **10. OFFERS, REFUSALS AND RIGHT TO REVIEW**

- 10.1 The Council will make one suitable offer of temporary accommodation to meet the Section 188 duty owed to the household. (See Appendix 1 -Part A, Section 2, regarding the suitability assessments). If this is an interim offer made before the Council has made a decision on the household's homelessness application and the household refuses an offer of accommodation, they will need to make their own arrangements until a final decision is made on the household's homeless application. If the Council subsequently accepts that a Section 193 duty is owed the Council will

make a second and final offer of temporary accommodation where it is needed. If the household refuses the offer, the Council has no duty to make any further offer of accommodation.

- 10.2 Upon the household accepting the temporary accommodation offer, they will be expected to agree to the rules set in place for the placement.
- 10.3 If the lead household member(s) refuses an offer of temporary accommodation or fails to take up occupation of the property under any duty (which may include out of area placements), they will be asked to provide reasons for their refusal on a refusal form which will be reviewed by a senior manager.
- 10.4 The Council aims to offer suitable accommodation at the first offer. Households who have any reservations about the suitability of the accommodation being offered should initially discuss the matter with the Homelessness Service.
- 10.5 The lead household member(s) will be notified in writing of the possible consequences of refusal and be advised of what their rights are for a statutory review.
- 10.6 Households will be encouraged to accept the offer that has been made but can pursue where there is a right to review whilst they are in occupation of the temporary accommodation or where a household may decide not to take the offer. Further details on when a right to review can be considered are detailed in the section below. The continuation of the temporary accommodation placement will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the overall merits of the review request and any new information or evidence that may affect the original decision.
- 10.7 If for any reason a household is not satisfied with the service that has been provided, they can also make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy (See Section 21).

### **Rights to a Statutory Review**

- 10.8 **Interim duty** (under Section 188) - There is no statutory right to review the suitability of accommodation provided under the relief duty (although judicial review can be applied for). If the offer of a suitable offer of temporary accommodation is refused, the Council may not offer any further temporary accommodation as there is no duty owed.
- 10.9 **Main duty** (under Section 193) - The suitability of accommodation provided in the undertaking of the main housing duty is subject to a statutory right to review. Households owed such a duty will be advised in writing of this right and how to exercise it. Under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996, a review request should be made within 21 days of being notified that the offer is suitable. After this time, the only remedy is through judicial review.
- 10.10 If the temporary accommodation is refused and, upon review, the Council is satisfied that the accommodation is suitable, the Council will notify the lead household

member(s) in writing that they are no longer owed a main duty and no further offer of temporary accommodation will be made, therefore, the Council will discharge its duty under the Housing Act 1996 (Refer to Section 16, Ending Temporary Accommodation Placements).

- 10.11 If the Council accepts the reasons for a refusal and agrees the offer was unsuitable, a further final offer will be made.

## **11. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AGREEMENTS**

- 11.1 At the start of a temporary accommodation placement, the lead household member(s) will be asked to sign an agreement in person, setting out the rules and conditions laid down by the Council. The lead household member(s) will be notified about the consequences of breaching the terms of their placement.
- 11.2 Depending on the type of accommodation being offered, households will be required to sign to confirm their agreement to the following:
- Hotel occupancy agreement - Specific rules relating to the hotel accommodation.
  - A license agreement – used for the occupation of accommodation in pursuance of the council's functions under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996.
- 11.3 In the event of a breach of the terms of placement provided by the Council (including hotel placements), if this is the first breach and not of the most serious nature, then the placement may not be ended. However, the Council will issue a verbal warning and ensure this is recorded in the case notes. If a second breach occurs, a written warning will be given, explaining that if there is a further breach, they will receive a final written warning. If a further breach is committed, it is likely it will result in the relevant notice being issued to terminate the placement.
- 11.4 Any reasonable adjustments in terms of the suitability of the temporary accommodation or where it is identified additional support would benefit the household will be considered. The aim will be to support the household to understand their rights and responsibilities and the consequences if they do not comply with the accommodation agreement.
- 11.5 If the lead household member(s) behaviour or that of a member of their household is extreme, for example, physical violence or significant damage, a Notice to Quit may be served without prior warnings and the placement may be ended.
- 11.6 For households under main duty (Section 193), if the loss of temporary accommodation is caused by a deliberate act or omission, they may be found intentionally homeless. This means the Council would have no duty to offer a long-term home.

- 11.7 The Council reserves the right to use its discretion in what constitutes a less or more serious breach and the actions taken to manage this, as long as it complies with legislation, is fair and consistent in the approach.
- 11.8 The Council may recharge the lead household member(s) where the Council has to recovery incurred costs in relation to (but not limited to):
- Where the lead household, member of the household or visitors has caused damage to the temporary accommodation.
  - Where fittings and furniture provided by the Council or a third-party provider are lost, sold or otherwise disposed of.
  - Where fines are incurred and charged to the Council due to the behaviour of the household, members of the household or visitors.
- 11.9 Local procedures will set out how the temporary accommodation service will manage temporary accommodation breaches; this will include accountable senior officers for authorising warnings and issuing a Notice to Quit. Officer will also refer to Appendix 1, (Part B) - Practice Guide, Risk Assessing and Managing the Impact of Hotel and Bed and Breakfast Placements.

#### **Households absent from temporary accommodation**

- 11.10 Officers will be observant in looking for signs where households are not using their temporary accommodation, subletting, or for serious breaches of the agreement.
- 11.11 Where there is reason to believe that the household is not using their temporary accommodation, all efforts to contact the household will be made. There may be valid reasons, for example where an individual has been admitted into hospital etc. Appropriate notice will be served where there are reasons to believe the temporary accommodation is not being used. If the placement is in a hotel the household will be booked out. Where there are safeguarding concerns relating to not being able to contact the household, for example a suspected missing person, appropriate action will be taken in line with safeguarding policies and local procedures.
- 11.12 Local procedures will set out how the temporary accommodation service will respond to concerns where a person cannot be contacted and there may be concerns relating to their safety and welfare; this will include, for example, liaising with other agencies, if and when a missing person report should be made, appropriate safeguarding referrals and ensuring the appropriate records of decision-making when the Council make a decision to end a temporary accommodation placement in accordance with legislation.

## **12. SUPPORT AND RESETTLEMENT**

- 12.1 The Council will ensure that support is available to households in temporary accommodation throughout their stay. This will help households achieve a prompt and successful move into a more permanent home. Each lead household member(s) will be allocated a named Council Resettlement and Support Officer, or similar role



through a commissioned support service, who will work with them to ensure their temporary accommodation agreement conditions are met and support them with their individual Personal Housing Move on Plan.

- 12.2 The Council may commission additional support for households in temporary accommodation to assist with the sustainment of occupancy and faster move on. Availability of this support would be subject to budget.
- 12.3 The Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Service will aim to adopt a person centered, strength-based approach ensuring that individuals lead in identifying their own goals and support needs and have shared accountability to achieve the desired outcome of settled housing. The Service will aim to empower individuals, draw on their strengths and capabilities, promote and improve their quality of life by facilitating timely access to necessary support, thus reducing the risk of repeat homelessness, and enhancing housing stability.
- 12.4 Support will be delivered with compassion and empathy, without judgement. Practical support can include (but not limited to):
  - Support in understanding rights and responsibilities whilst in temporary accommodation.
  - Help in maximising benefits that the household may be entitled to.
  - School admissions being addressed, to get children into school swiftly, minimising educational disruption.
  - Instigate early help assessment being completed in a timely fashion for households with children, where appropriate.
  - Former council rent payment plans being established at outset of the placement.
  - Links established with the Income Team regarding Housing Benefit claims for occupancy charges.
  - Links established with other agencies where needed e.g., Social Care, Children's Services, Domestic Abuse Services, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol support.
  - Support to register with Health Care, which includes linking in with Gateway Primary Care, which specialises with helping hard to reach and vulnerable groups.
  - Support to register on the Council's Housing Register (where eligible) and provide necessary documents required.
  - Earlier conversations regarding private rented sector or direct applications to Housing Associations to help moving on from temporary accommodation.
  - Discuss any changes in circumstances in the suitability of the temporary accommodation placement.
- 12.5 Regular visits by the Resettlement and Support Officers, or similar commissioned support roles to all temporary accommodation will also assist with:
  - Identifying any potential 'hidden' support needs or issues a household may be facing, which would not necessarily be picked up over phone contact.
  - Discovery of temporary accommodation property abandonments.
  - Quicker identification and action on property issues, e.g., disrepairs, damp, mould or intentional damage.

- Addressing any issues relating to the use of the temporary accommodation property or hotel/bed and breakfast placement.

### **13. ACCOMMODATION SERVICE STANDARDS**

- 13.1 The Council is committed to providing a high-quality service. The Council promotes a safe, secure, and supportive environment for all temporary housed households.
- 13.2 The Temporary Accommodation Service Standards are set out in **(Appendix 1- Part C)** of this Policy and details of what our customers should expect from the service.
- 13.3 There may be rare occasions when a temporary accommodation property is let urgently to avoid the use of hotel/bed and breakfast, where there are outstanding minor repairs, replacement furniture etc. This will be noted on the property inventory with an indication of when the repair or replacement will be carried out during their occupancy. This will also be explained by the officer carrying out the sign up of the property. No properties will be let where it compromises health and safety.

### **14. HOUSEHOLDS WITH PETS**

- 14.1 The legal position is pets are not considered part of the household, and the Council does not have a duty to accommodate pets in temporary accommodation. Households are encouraged to make alternative arrangements for all pets while they are in temporary accommodation, which the Council can support with.
- 14.2 However, the Council recognises that households may have no alternative options available for their pets and understands that pets can play an important emotional and supportive role in the household. Although it is not always possible to make provisions in temporary accommodation for pets, the Council will be sensitive to this matter and give careful consideration to individual household circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
- 14.3 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council will consider any reasonable adjustments required for households with an assistance dog.
- 14.4 The Households with Pets Practice Guidance **(Appendix 1 Part D)** expands upon the approach that the Council will take when a household with a pet(s) needs temporary accommodation. The Guidance may be updated from time to time in line with operational demands and changes in national guidance and legislation.

### **15. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION COSTS**

- 15.1 Temporary Accommodation must be affordable to be considered suitable. The household should be able to afford the costs of accommodation from their income after essential expenses, such as reasonable living costs and child support payments.
- 15.2 The Temporary Accommodation Service will keep up-to-date local procedures on the management of income revenue to ensure effective income management and

support for households to ensure they understand their responsibilities and income revenue is maximised.

- 15.3 The Council will advise the household of the charges that apply to the type of accommodation being offered at the sign-up. The charge is calculated as a daily charge for all council temporary accommodation properties, hotel/bed and breakfast and nightly charged private temporary accommodation. This will be explained when the placement is being made.
- 15.4 The occupancy charge is eligible for housing benefit assistance, depending on the household's income. Assistance will be given by the Temporary Accommodation Service and the Council's Income Team, in making housing benefit claims in a timely manner.
- 15.5 In situations where a homeless household does not receive full housing benefit due to eligibility, the lead household member will be responsible for paying the difference between their maximum benefit entitlement and the cost of the accommodation charge. Where a household is not entitled to housing benefit, they will be responsible for the full charge.
- 15.6 Households residing in Council temporary accommodation will be informed that they are responsible for the payment of their personal gas and electricity utility use, and how to pay for this for the duration of their placement. Information will be provided at sign-up.
- 15.7 Households will be responsible for obtaining and paying for their own television license.

## **16. ENDING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS AND DISCHARGING DUTIES**

- 16.1 When the Council makes a decision to end its duty to provide temporary accommodation, the Council will notify the lead household member(s) as detailed below:
- 16.2 The Council may discharge its duties to continue to provide temporary accommodation under Section 188 Housing Act 1996, by serving reasonable notice. Reasons why the Council may discharge its duty under Section 188 include where a household has breached the terms and conditions of any type of temporary accommodation, or where they have found not to be in priority need following a homelessness investigation (not an exhaustive list).
- 16.3 The notice is excluded from the requirement to issue 4 week's Notice to Quit (NTQ). The Council will use its discretionary powers to decide on what reasonable notice will be given, on a case by case basis.
- 16.4 The Council may discharge its duties to provide temporary accommodation under Section 193 Housing Act 1996 under the following circumstances:

- Accepts an offer of suitable accommodation, and the Council gives notification in writing of the possible consequences of refusal or acceptance.
- Refuses an offer of suitable accommodation, and the Council gives notification in writing of the reasons for the offer, the possible consequences of refusal, and the right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation.
- Is homeless intentionally from the temporary accommodation provided by the Council, and the Council gives notification in writing of the reasons for the decision, the possible consequences of the decision, and the right to request a review of the decision.
- Ceases to be eligible for assistance, and the Council notifies them in writing of the reasons for the decision, the possible consequences of the decision, and the right to request a review of the decision.
- Withdraws the application for assistance, and the Council notifies them in writing of the possible consequences of withdrawal.

- 16.5 Under section 193A the main housing duty can be discharged with the acceptance of an offer of a private rented sector offer which is a form of accommodation that is available for at least 12 months, meets the relevant standards, and is affordable for them. The Council must also give notification in writing of the possible consequences of refusal or acceptance, and the right to request a review of the suitability of the accommodation.
- 16.6 Where the Council discharges its duty by using the private rented sector as a suitable settled offer of accommodation, the same regard to making a suitable temporary accommodation offer must be considered as set out in the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.
- 16.7 Where the main duty is discharged by a suitable offer of accommodation being refused a minimum of 28 days' notice will be given by serving a Notice to Quit. The same notice period will be given for households staying in a hotel or bed and breakfast.
- 16.8 On expiry of the Notice to Quit served, the Council is required to obtain a possession order and eviction notice from the court before taking any action to evict the household.
- 16.9 If a household is in a hotel/bed and breakfast and has been asked to leave by the establishment due to a breach of the rules, the Council will consider placing the household in alternative suitable temporary accommodation, whilst thoroughly investigating the rule break. Following this, the Council will conclude if the rule break constitutes a finding of intentionality. If so, the lead household member(s) will be notified of the intentionality decision, and a minimum 28 day's Notice to Quit will be served.
- 16.10 Where the Council discharges its duty due to the household refusing a suitable offer or when deemed to be intentionally homeless and there are children in the household, the service will notify the Council's Children's Services for assistance under Section 17 Children Act 1989 subject to consent from the household. A referral to Children's Services may also be made without the household's consent where there are safeguarding concerns.

- 16.11 Where the Council discharges its homelessness duty, set out in Section 16 of this Policy, support will continue whilst households are within the notice period of the temporary accommodation. Where alternative accommodation has not been secured, support will continue to focus on any alternative housing options available. Officers will give regard to individuals' vulnerabilities and continue to identify any additional support, liaise with any agencies involved and make appropriate referrals to support services subject to the individual household member's consent.
- 16.12 Where there is a vulnerable adult in the household subject to consent, the service will liaise with Adult Social Care and make a referral where appropriate, in order for social care to determine if there is a duty under the Care Act 2014. A referral to Adult Care may also be made without the consent of household members where there are safeguarding concerns.
- 16.13 All referrals should be made at the earliest opportunity to ensure there is an effective multi-agency approach.

## **17. STORAGE AND PROTECTION OF PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

- 17.1 A household is unlikely to be able to take all their belongings into temporary accommodation. For example, no furniture or large items are allowed, unless they are required to meet a specific medical or health need, in which case permission must be granted by the Council.
- 17.2 Under Section 211 of the Housing Act 1996, if someone is placed in temporary accommodation and there is a likelihood (not just that it is a possibility) of loss or damage to their personal property and they are unable to protect their belongings or make other arrangements to do so, the Council may have a duty to make reasonable steps to protect those possessions. The personal property of the household includes personal property of any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with them. There are two ways in which the Council can perform its duty to protect property:
- Moving it to a particular location requested by the lead household member(s)
  - Dealing with personal property, by arranging its storage.
- 17.3 Household income and affordability should determine if households are able to pay or make a contribution for their own removals and storage.
- 17.4 The Council can make reasonable charges, including a charge for disposing of property in particular circumstances.
- 17.5 The Council's responsibility ends when it considers that the belongings are no longer at risk because the household can protect them. This will normally be where the household has been offered or found accommodation where they can receive their possessions.

### **Personal belongings when no forwarding address**

- 17.6 Due to limited storage and cost implications, the Council is not able to store household's personal belongings indefinitely. The Council's license agreement used for Council temporary accommodation properties provides a statement referring to protection of belongings, which includes if the household discontinues with their homelessness application or ceases to be eligible for assistance with their housing need, leaving their personal property either in storage or accommodation provided by the Council, and they leave no forwarding address, their personal property will be stored or allowed to remain in the accommodation provided by the Council for 28 days. At the end of this period, their personal property will be disposed of if no contact is made.
- 17.7 Therefore, the Council is in effect giving notice at the start of the placement regarding what will happen if there is no forwarding address or contact.
- 17.8 The Council will make reasonable steps to contact the household, where possible.
- 17.9 The Council may use its discretionary powers to store personal belongings beyond the 28-day notice date when considering any special circumstances.

## **18. SAFEGUARDING**

- 18.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. This Policy makes an explicit link between homeless households in all temporary accommodation and safeguarding in respect of children, young people and vulnerable adults placed into temporary accommodation. In particular, the factors the Council must take into account when determining the suitability of accommodation secured under the Housing Act 1996 as set out in the Homeless Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).
- 18.2 The Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Service will take full ownership of their safeguarding responsibilities for children, young-people and adults. Appropriate action will be taken when required to ensure children, young people and adults are helped and protected. This will be achieved by:
  - Ensuring appropriate officers are trained in child and adult safeguarding, domestic abuse and trauma informed practices.
  - Ensuring that the workplace culture enables effective practice in safeguarding, and that everyone understands the Council's corporate children and adults safeguarding policies.
  - Officers are encouraged to practice concerned curiosity.
  - Regular staff supervisions, and reflective learning sessions and workforce development opportunities.
  - Comprehensive record-keeping of practice and decision-making.
  - Management oversight of decision-making.
  - Making appropriate referrals to agencies and services that clearly state what is being requested.

- Having due regard to any equality matters, including the need to take steps to take account of household members who may have a disability.

18.3 The Service will also identify household's areas of need and any associated risks, which includes safeguarding, before making a suitable placement. Factors considered include (not limited to):

- Risks to the applicant or members of the household.
- Risk to other residents living in the same location/establishment, e.g., hotel, bed and breakfast.
- Risk to staff.
- Risk to community safety and any safeguarding implications.

18.4 The Service will:

- Practice effective multi-agency working, working together with partners, for example, attending multi-agency meetings which include, social services, domestic abuse service, area housing, community safety and South Yorkshire Police, which focuses on managing risks in the community, linking in with suitable temporary accommodation placements.
- Work closely with non-Council owned temporary accommodation establishments/private owners to ensure that there are effective communication channels in place to enable a two-way discussion at the earliest opportunity. Council officers will respond appropriately where there are risks and safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure that there are regular visits/ keeping in touch with households living in temporary accommodation, including hotel/bed and breakfast establishments/private owned temporary accommodation, both in and out of Rotherham. Providing effective, person centered support to households to assist with their Personal Housing Plan, including support to link into health services, schools and support to help with swift move on from temporary accommodation to more settled housing.
- Ensure where a household has been placed out of area, the Council will notify the host local authority as soon as possible of the placement through a Section 208 notification and at the latest 14 days of the accommodation being made available to the household.

18.5 The Housing Assistant Director or their nominated deputy will attend the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board (RSAB) as a full member. RSAB is a multi-agency strategic partnership made up of senior/ lead officers within adult social services, criminal justice, health, housing, community safety and voluntary organisations. It coordinates the strategic development of adult safeguarding across Rotherham and ensures the effectiveness of the work undertaken by Partner Agencies in the area. RSAB aims to achieve those objectives whilst supporting individuals in maintaining control over their lives and in making informed choices without coercion.

## **19. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

19.1 The Council wants to improve the lives and well-being of everyone in the Borough.

- 19.2 The Council aims to ensure its policies and procedures are fair and transparent. The Council will apply this Policy fairly and give equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, transgender status/or gender reassignment, race and religion or belief. All members, employees, and agents of the Council must seek to eliminate discrimination and promote equality, diversity, inclusion, and good relations between all groups.
- 19.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of this Policy and recognises that this Policy does set out consideration for households with certain protected characteristics in relation to the suitability of a temporary accommodation placement. This includes households with children or who are pregnant should not be in a hotel/bed and breakfast placement longer than 6 weeks. Consideration includes households that have health factors and that have care and support provided by other statutory agencies or the need to access any specialist medical services that are only available in Rotherham.
- 19.4 This Policy recognises the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive service that will cultivate empathy and compassion and understand individual's needs.
- 19.5 The Council recognises that the likelihood of becoming homeless and the experience of homelessness can vary disproportionately depending on factors like ethnicity, disabilities and sexual orientation. The Council will record and monitor data to gain insights on the impact of this Policy on diverse household(s) and contribute towards the needs analysis of future temporary accommodation needs.

## **20. DATA PROTECTION AND INFORMATION SHARING**

- 20.1 All data will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).
- 20.2 The Council may investigate or formally verify any of the information provided in connection with the assistance of temporary accommodation. In order to progress with the placement of temporary accommodation and ongoing support, it may be necessary to share information provided internally with other services or other organisations' that may assist with the provision of temporary accommodation. These may include, but is not limited to
  - Rotherham Council – Adult Social Care or Children's Services.
  - Rotherham Council – Housing Benefits, Income Team.
  - Relevant Agencies appointed by the homeless household.
- 20.3 The Council is under a duty to protect public funds and may use the information provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds solely for these purposes. The above information will need to be communicated with the associated household at the time their personal information is obtained in the form of a Privacy Notice. This is necessary to comply with an individual's 'Right to be Informed' in accordance with GDPR.



- 20.4 Safeguards will ensure the security of the data and will comply with Article (1) (f) of GDPR.

## **21. COMPLAINTS**

- 21.1 If for any reason a household is not satisfied with the service that has been provided, they can make a complaint in accordance with the Council's Complaints Policy. Information on how to make a complaint will be provided on request or when it is considered that this information will be of assistance.
- 21.2 Information can also be found on the Council's webpage:  
[www.rotherham.gov.uk/council/complain-council-services/1](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/council/complain-council-services/1)
- 21.3 Details of how to make a complaint will also be included in any correspondence setting out decisions made under this Policy.
- 21.4 The Council recognises that vulnerable people may need additional support when raising concerns informally or when making a complaint under this Policy and will also signpost people to the support available locally through groups such as Citizens Advice.
- 21.5 Once the Council's formal complaints process has been exhausted, the Local Government can be approached to review and investigate complaints about this Policy.
- 21.6 Any such complaint will be treated seriously and will (if necessary) be reflected in subsequent reviews of this Policy or in amendments to the way that services are delivered.

## **22. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MONITORING PERFORMANCE**

- 22.1 The Service is committed to continuous improvement and will ensure quality assurance practice is in place, which will focus on a range of areas. This will include ensuring that customers' housing requirements in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Housing Act 1996 (as amended), Equality Act 2010, Homelessness Suitability of Accommodation (England) Order 2012), and all other relevant legislation, are being correctly assessed. This will make sure effective and robust practice is in place to secure positive outcomes. Quality assurance will include but not limited to:
- Continuous cycle of case audits, both open and closed and draw upon evidence regarding decision making, quality of case management/support and customer service.
  - Quality checks on the temporary accommodation physical standards.
  - Evaluation of customer feedback and complaints, members enquiries and Ombudsman investigations.
  - Evaluation of customer satisfaction surveys.

- 22.2 Identified areas for improvement and shared learning will be taken forward to help develop and deliver bespoke internal training, targeted at the appropriate officers within the Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation teams, with the intention of improving the service delivery.
- 22.3 The Council will use performance reports and data to proactively understand demand, effectiveness and the outcomes achieved by the temporary accommodation service. Performance measures include:
- Where hotel/bed and breakfast is the only option, the Council ensures that families with children, or a person who is pregnant is accommodated for no more than 6 weeks and are moved to more appropriate accommodation.
  - Minimising the length of time of any households accommodated in a hotel/bed and breakfast.
  - Understanding the demand of temporary accommodation and ensuring that the range of temporary accommodation provisions meet local need.
  - Maximising the occupancy rate of RMBC temporary accommodation properties to ensure best value and improve homeless household's experience.
  - Use effective budgetary monitoring to ensure best value and maximisation of resources with the financial budget.
- 22.4 The Homelessness Manager and Temporary Accommodation Manager will maintain oversight of day-to-day delivery of the service and will be responsible for reporting to the Head of Housing Options on performance and quality. Performance reports will be shared and discussed with the Housing Senior Management Team and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for homelessness.
- 22.5 The Council is required to report on its bed and breakfast or hotel usage to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and to work towards a plan to minimise the use of hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation.

## **23. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY**

- 23.1 This Policy will be implemented from 18<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and will be reviewed every three years or more frequently as changes in legislation or regulation dictate.
- 23.2 For any operational changes to the Policy, authority is delegated to the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.

## **APPENDIX 1 – (PART A) - PRACTICE GUIDANCE TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE**

- 1.2 This guidance sets out the Council's approach to the placement of households in temporary accommodation, both in and out of the Rotherham area.
- 1.3 This guidance expands upon the approach detailed in main body of the Temporary Accommodation Policy document (Section 11), specifically in relation to what factors should be considered by the Council's Homeless and Temporary Accommodation Service as part of the needs assessment to determine the suitability of a temporary accommodation placement in or out of the Rotherham area.
- 1.4 This ensures that:
  - The Homelessness Service take a consistent approach to evaluating the risks, needs, assets, and support requirements of households,
  - Decisions are in alignment with the homeless applicant's Personal Housing Plan (PHP), and
  - A strength-based approach is taken to assessing suitability of the accommodation, so that decisions take account of what a person or household can do for themselves.
- 1.5 This Practice Guidance is underpinned by the Homeless and Temporary Accommodation Operational Procedures. All procedures are aligned with the Temporary Accommodation Policy.
- 1.6 A detailed homelessness assessment which will consider any associated risks will be undertaken by the Homeless Officer. This will ensure a consistent and high-quality decision-making on the suitability of a placement is made.
- 1.7 This assessment will take into consideration the suitability factors when making a suitable offer of accommodation, including a temporary accommodation placement and any associated risks.
- 1.8 As far as reasonably practicable, the Council will secure accommodation in its own area. Where this is not possible, the Council will make all efforts to place households as close as possible to Rotherham.
- 1.9 In some circumstances, it is acknowledged by the Council that it may be more appropriate for a placement outside of the area to be arranged, for example, where a household may be at risk within Rotherham.
- 1.10 Where domestic abuse is apparent, consideration will be given as part of the safety planning. Where domestic abuse services are involved, this will be done in consultation with the domestic abuse service involved and the applicant. Options may include in area safe temporary accommodation and/or a managed transfer out of the area.

- 1.11 The Council have a number of units of specialist temporary accommodation for households affected by domestic abuse. These should be considered in the first instance if an in-area placement is considered appropriate.
- 1.12 We want to ensure that the location of temporary accommodation placements is suitable for households, so as to minimise disruption to:
- Employment,
  - Caring responsibilities,
  - Education of the person or members of the person's household,
  - Access to medical facilities,
  - Access to services that are essential to the well-being of the person or members of the person's household, and
  - Access to local services, amenities and transport.

## **2. Suitability Factors**

### **Affordability**

- 2.1 The Council will ensure that accommodation is affordable and will consider each household's income and reach a conclusion as to what will be affordable by carrying out a household financial assessment.
- 2.2 The Council will take affordability into account by (but not limited to):
- Financial resources available to the household (i.e. all forms of income), including, but not limited to:
  - Salary, fees and other remuneration (from such sources as investments, grants, pensions, tax credits etc.).
  - Welfare benefits or entitlements.
  - Payments due under a court order for the making of periodical payments to a spouse or a former spouse, or to, or for, the benefit of a child.
  - Payments of child support maintenance due under the Child Support Act 1991.
  - Contributions to the costs in respect of the accommodation which are or were made or which might reasonably be expected to be, or have been, made by other members of their household (most members can be assumed to contribute, but the amount depends on various factors including their age and income).
  - Also, the costs in respect of the accommodation, e.g. occupancy charges and other reasonable living expenses.
- 2.3 The Council will need to consider whether the household can afford the housing costs without being deprived of basic essentials such as food, clothing, heating, transport and other essentials specific to their circumstances. Housing costs should not be regarded as affordable if the household is left with a residual income that is insufficient to meet these essential needs.

### **Size of Temporary Accommodation**

- 2.4 The Council must consider whether adequate space and room standards exist for the household to be fit to inhabit, containing no category 1 hazards within the meaning of the Housing Act 2004 Housing Health and Safety Rating System.
- 2.5 Households will often be placed in accommodation that have fewer bedrooms than a household would be entitled to have on a permanent basis, when the placement is for temporary accommodation as is it isn't necessary for the size criteria calculated for social housing purposes to reflect the criteria for temporary accommodation. However, the Council will be mindful of the rules of overcrowding.
- 2.6 Reasons for refusing a property, for example, due to no provision of parking or the lack of access to a garden will not normally be considered as reasons for refusing an offer.
- 2.7 In all types of temporary accommodation provided to households with children under the age of 2, there should be adequate space for cots to ensure safe sleeping arrangements.
- 2.8 The Council is committed to promoting safe sleeping for children under 2 years of age whilst they are living in temporary accommodation. Wherever feasible the Council will provide travel cots to households who need them, including placements provided by a third-party supplier. Where placements are made at a very short notice there may be occasions where this may not always be possible. The Council will ensure a travel cot is in place at the earliest opportunity.

### **Education**

- 2.9 The Council understands that disruption to education can be detrimental to a child's development. Temporary accommodation will normally be considered suitable where it is no more than a 60-minute journey by public transport, of the child's or children's current school, unless other factors supersede this.

Consideration will be given to the following (but not limited to):

- 2.10 Households containing a child with special educational needs who is receiving education or educational support in the Rotherham area, where change would be detrimental to their wellbeing.
- 2.11 Where a child is experiencing transition points in their education, e.g., from nursery to juniors, from juniors to secondary school.
- 2.12 The level of need for all children as, there may be various levels within the household.

- 2.13 Consideration of a child's vulnerability if they are travelling from out of area into Rotherham, consider level of interchange, combined with age and distance of travel.
- 2.14 Households who have as part of their household a child or children who are enrolled in GCSE, or A Levels in the Rotherham area, with exams being taken within the academic year and are in years 11,12 or 13.
- 2.15 Where there may be the likelihood of any disruption to a child's education the Council will support the parent and liaise with the school, through sensitive conversations, with the consent of the parent to help support any reasonable adjustments whilst in living in temporary accommodation. Where an Early Help referral is appropriate this will be discussed with the parent.
- 2.16 Where out of area placements are made, the Homeless and Temporary Accommodation Service is unable to help with the cost of getting children to school.

The [Councils Home to School Transport Policy](#) sets out a range of transport assistance and eligibility criteria.

Households should be supported by the service to understand the support available. The Councils school transport webpage can be found online:

[www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/download/213/schooltransport](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/download/213/schooltransport)

### **Health and Wellbeing**

- 2.17 Consideration will be given to the following factors (but not limited to):
- 2.18 A household with severe and enduring health conditions, including mobility and mental health related conditions requiring intensive and specialist medical treatment or support that is only available in the Rotherham area.
- 2.19 Storage requirements for specialist medical equipment and disabilities requiring separate sleeping quarters for members of the household will be taken into account.
- 2.20 All decisions made will take account of the welfare and safety of children (Children's Act 2004) that are part of the household.
- 2.21 Households with children where Children's Services are involved and have an open case, where an out of area placement would be detrimental to their wellbeing. Or families who have high social needs and where it is confirmed that a transfer to another area would significantly impact their welfare.
- 2.22 Households who are in receipt of a care package and range of health care options will be prioritised for placements inside of the Rotherham area.
- 2.23 Households where the female is pregnant and requires continuation of midwifery services in-area.
- 2.24 Households with a severe and enduring mental health problem who are receiving psychiatric treatment and aftercare provided by community mental health service

and have an established support network where a transfer of care would severely impact on their wellbeing.

### **Employment**

- 2.25 Consideration will be given to the following factors (but not limited to):
- 2.26 Where households who are in paid employment and they are required to commute to reach their normal workplace from the accommodation that is being provided.
- 2.27 Where practicable, any member of the household who is in employment will not be placed more than a 20-mile radius from their place of employment if employment is located in Rotherham.
- 2.28 Consideration will also be given to the affordability of the travel arrangements needed to reach the place of employment. The Council is not able to help with the cost of travel.
- 2.29 Employment includes higher or adult education, vocational or professional training, a recognised apprenticeship, or self-employment with a business registered within the Rotherham area. This will also include women who are on maternity leave from employment. It also includes any household members who have a confirmed start date to commence employment in the Rotherham area.

### **Caring Arrangements**

- 2.30 Consideration will be given to households that have a long-standing arrangement to provide care and support to another family member in-area where the person cared for would likely require statutory health and social care.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

- 2.31 Any other special circumstances that may impact on the suitability of the offer of temporary accommodation will be taken into consideration.
- 2.32 It should be noted that the above categories and priorities are for guidance only, and the individual circumstances of each household, including the time likely to be spent in the accommodation, must always be taken into account when determining the suitability of an offer of temporary accommodation.
- 2.33 Where there are more households requiring in-area placements than there is temporary accommodation available, it will be necessary to make decisions about the suitability of out of borough placements and how households are prioritised based on suitability factors.
- 2.34 Each household will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The Homeless and Temporary Accommodation Service will need to balance their decision against the type, location of temporary accommodation and level of any identified risks.

### **3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

#### **Completing the risk assessment.**

- 3.1 An individual risk assessment will be completed by the Homelessness Service where there are concerns that the household might pose a serious risk of harm to themselves or others. Where there are identified risks, steps will be made to mitigate the risk(s), consideration will be given to the location and type of temporary accommodation.
- 3.2 Competent trained officers should complete the risk assessment where appropriate. A list of competent officers is maintained by the Homelessness Service. Training is provided consistently to implement this practice guidance along with local operational procedures relating to placements of temporary accommodation.

#### **Making the Temporary Accommodation Placement**

- 3.3 The approval route for agreeing a temporary accommodation placement will be made by a Homeless Senior Officer.
- 3.4 The Homeless Officer will provide all necessary information based on the household's need assessment and any identified risks, detailing what type of temporary accommodation is required and any specific temporary accommodation needs and restrictions to the Temporary Accommodation Placement Officer who will make the placement.

#### **Monitoring the Temporary Accommodation Placements**

- 3.5 The Temporary Accommodation Service will be responsible for monitoring placements, having regard to suitability, risk, community impact, out of area placements and move on.
- 3.6 The monitoring of placements will include the planning and coordination of moving any out of area placements back into Rotherham where practical to do so and moving households occupying hotels/bed and breakfast into furnished temporary accommodation, subject to suitability and availability.
- 3.7 The Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Service will ensure that they have a set of comprehensive local procedures, that sets out roles and responsibilities on needs and risk assessment, approval of placements, prioritising out of area placements back into area, escalating risk, monitoring processes and reporting.



## **APPENDIX 1 - (PART B) - PRACTICE GUIDE - RISK ASSESSING AND MANAGING THE IMPACT OF HOTEL AND BED AND BREAKFAST PLACEMENTS**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE**

- 1.2 This guidance sets out the Council's approach to the placement of households in hotel and bed and breakfast temporary accommodation and will work in conjunction with the individuals needs and risk assessment.
- 1.3 This guidance expands upon the approach detailed in the main body of the Temporary Accommodation Policy document, Section 8.11 and is specifically in relation to what risk and impact factors will be considered by the Council's Temporary Accommodation Service before making a placement, to ensure that there is an effective approach to managing these placements , ensuring that all households placed and local residents are safe, healthy and live well.

### **2. MANAGING PLACEMENTS**

- 2.1 The Council is committed to effectively managing all hotel and bed and breakfast placements.
- 2.2 The Temporary Accommodation Service will manage hotel/bed and breakfast placements and refer to the household's individual homeless needs and suitability assessment, which will include any identified risks, before making the placement. Refer to Appendix 1, Part A – Practice Guidance of Temporary Accommodation Placements, Section 3.
- 2.3 When a hotel placement is the only option it is important officers consider the following:
  - The impact of placing multiple vulnerable households in one location and considering the potential impact this may have on individuals and the surrounding community.
  - Whether other local authorities or agencies are also placing vulnerable households in the same establishment or location.
  - The potential impact of the dynamics of different cohort(s) with different characteristics and vulnerabilities placed at one location at one given time.
- 2.4 The above factors always need to be considered alongside the necessity of fulfilling statutory homelessness duties, the overall availability of suitable accommodation, and the overarching priority to avoid out-of-borough placements wherever feasible.

**Who is responsible for undertaking a hotel/bed and breakfast risk and impact assessment?**

- 2.5 A senior temporary accommodation officer will be responsible in assessing if a hotel/bed and breakfast risk and impact assessment is needed for each hotel/bed and breakfast establishment that is in use for placing households who need emergency temporary accommodation.
- 2.6 Where it is required, a central hotel/bed and breakfast risk impact placement assessment will be recorded and accessible to all officers. Effective communication of such assessments and outcome should be shared within the Head of Housing Options who will counter sign the risk and impact assessment.

**When should a hotel/bed and breakfast risk and impact assessment be undertaken?**

- 2.7 A range of factors will be considered, these include:
- Where there is or is likely to be a high volume of households occupying a single establishment at one given time, particularly in cases where households with complex needs are placed.
  - Where there are known incidents relating to households placed, where their actions may have a potential impact on others, including residents and the local community.
  - The above is not an exhaustive list. An officer may consider that other factors trigger the need to undertake a risk and impact assessment, or an assessment may be requested by the Head of Housing Options.

**What should be included in hotel/bed and breakfast risk and impact assessment record?**

- 2.8 A range of factors will be considered, these include (but not limited to):
- The hotel/bed and breakfast profile, including location, capacity, and any relevant community and geographical information, e.g., neighbouring buildings, local amenities, residential area etc.
  - Whether there is a mix of private and homeless residents at the establishment.
  - The recommended maximum number of households that should be accommodated by the Council per establishment at one given time (always subject to service need in response to demand).
  - The proportion / number of households with multiple, complex needs occupying the establishment at one given time at the time of the assessment.
  - The predicted number of placements in the up-and-coming week.
  - Identified risks and impacts.
  - Details of existing and or new risk control measures to help mitigate any risks/impact.
  - The decision and any actions taken following the risk and impact assessment.

- The accountable officer for making the decision and date.
- The review date, which should be a minimum of a monthly review. However, dynamics of an establishment can change significantly for example an escalation of incidents, an isolated incident or an increase or decrease of placements may trigger an earlier review.

### **What control measures should be considered to help mitigate risk?**

#### **Temporary Accommodation team**

2.9 The Temporary Accommodation Service will be responsive to any concerns or issues at the earliest opportunity and consider the following factors in mitigating identified risks (but not limited to):

- Consider if placements need to be paused until control measures are effective, reduce the number of households placed by moving households to alternative temporary accommodation, review the type of cohort being placed.

Other control measures may include (but not limited to):

- Room checks are carried out at least once per week, by the Temporary Accommodation Visiting Officers. This is to check for usage and any health and safety or safeguarding concerns.
- Carry out safe and well visits to individuals and support visits where appropriate to meet their need.
- Increasing drop-in sessions where its practical to do so in the establishment, increase presence in the establishment.
- Effective coordination of move on where appropriate.
- Thoroughly explain the responsibilities of the occupancy agreement, focus on behaviour where there are concerns relating to individual households, reinforce this by issuing and explaining the Code of Conduct letter to all new placements and reiterate where needed.
- Where a household is found to have breached the hotel/bed and breakfast occupancy agreement, appropriate action will be taken as detailed in the main body of the Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy, (Section 11, Temporary Accommodation Agreements.
- Ensure there are weekly reviews until the risk is controlled or removed.

#### **Partnership Working**

- Effective partnership working, for example partnership working with Council's Community Protection Unit and SY Police and local area housing offices.
- Ensuring that there are early discussions where there are indications of community impact issues, escalating these concerns where appropriate to senior management at the earliest opportunity to ensure that that there is senior management oversight.

- Housing Options staff attending multi partnership meetings, such as the Rotherham North, South and Central Area Tasking & Co-ordinating Meeting. A key role of the meetings is to ensure effective two-way connectivity and information sharing with their respective Area, Community MARAC and the Locality Management meeting. They should not replace everyday effective inter-agency working.
- Senior managers responsible for temporary accommodation hotel placements will ensure that they play a key role in any specific actions agreed in any action plans through the Area Tasking & Co-ordinating meeting which may directly or indirectly link to placements. Relevant intelligence gained from such multi agency meetings should be used to help inform the risk and impact assessment and mitigate any risks at the earliest opportunity.

**When should there be a review of the risk and impact assessment?**

- 2.10 As a minimum a monthly review of the risk and impact assessment should be undertaken by the Senior Temporary Accommodation Officer. This should be recorded and dated adding any further actions, or recording the decision that no further actions are required, and placements are resumed as normal.

**3. MANAGEMENT CONTROLS FOR NEW USE OF HOTELS/BED AND BREAKFAST PLACEMENTS**

- 3.1 When a new hotel / bed and breakfast establishment is considered for use, this must be approved by the Head of Housing Options. If use without approval is unavoidable (e.g., due to an overnight placement) then retrospective authorisation must be sought on the next working day.
- 3.2 When a new hotel/bed and breakfast establishment is considered and where it is proposed that usage would account for more than 25% occupancy at the establishment this must be approved by the Assistant Director of Housing.
- 3.3 Before the Council uses a hotel establishment the Council will have direct conversations with hotel management to fully explain the implications of the acceptance of homeless household placements from all sources into a commercial hotel environment and how the proportion of this cohort may change the nature and their legal responsibilities of their business. This may include the business becoming a House in Multiple Occupation under the Housing Act 2004, invalidating their public liability / property insurance, changes to their fire risk assessment and their wider responsibilities under the Health and Safety at work Act 1974.
- 3.4 The Council will only work with hotel establishments who will agree to have regular communication with the Council and notify the Council of the proportion of homeless household resident. The Council's Temporary Accommodation Service will monitor this on a monthly basis and ensure that appropriate records are in place.

**4. MONITORING OF THE OVERALL LOCAL IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

- 4.1 Data will be collated and monitored by the Area Tasking & Co-ordinating Group in relation to the number of incidents linked to hotel/bed and breakfast household and establishments. Data will inform any local trends in community impact and help to inform appropriate actions.

## **APPENDIX 1 - (PART C) TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION SERVICE STANDARDS**

- 1.1 The Council is committed to providing good quality temporary accommodation. The Council will ensure that everyone has fair access to housing services and will:
- 1.2 Be sensitive to each household's individual needs and circumstances and ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- 1.3 Work effectively and jointly with other services provided by Rotherham Council and other public bodies, private and third-sector organisations.
- 1.4 Provide opportunities for households to have their views heard and taken into account.
- 1.5 Create a Psychologically Informed Environment, and ensure staff are trained in trauma-informed care to ensure a person-centred approach.
- 1.6 Follow the Council's Customer Service Standards
- 1.7 Satisfy any public sector equality duty owed under Equality Act 2010.
- 1.8 Satisfy any safeguarding or welfare duty owed under Children Act 2004.

### **Physical Standards**

- 1.9 The Council will use hotels or bed and breakfast for the following reasons:
  - (a) emergency accommodation is required at very short notice (for example to discharge an interim duty to accommodate); or,
  - (b) there is simply no better alternative accommodation available, and the use of bed and breakfast/hotel accommodation is necessary as a last resort.
- 1.10 Temporary accommodation will:**
- 1.11 Comply with relevant housing quality standards including health and safety, hygiene and fire legislation and regulations.
- 1.12 Meet the physical requirements of all members of the household.
- 1.13 Have accessible accommodation that is able to meet the needs of any disabled person within a household.
- 1.14 Have sufficient space to meet the needs of the household, in accordance with the Temporary Accommodation Policy.
- 1.15 Have adequate toilet and personal washing facilities.
- 1.16 Have a suitable standard and level of furniture to meet the households needs, where relevant to the type of temporary accommodation provided.

- 1.17 Have adequate cooking facilities, where relevant (excluding bed and breakfast/hotels).
- 1.18 Have an acceptable standard of cleanliness and decoration.
- 1.19 Have a sufficient heating system.
- 1.20 If the temporary accommodation is a property owned by the Council and has a garden, then this will be maintained on a planned scheme of work throughout the period of April to October (Access will be required to the garden for this works).
- 1.21 There may be rare occasions when a temporary accommodation property is let urgently to avoid the use of hotel/bed and breakfast, where there are outstanding minor repairs, replacement furniture etc. This will be noted on the property inventory at sign up and households will be provided with an indication of when the repair or replacement will be carried out during their occupancy. No properties will be let where it compromises to health and safety.

### **Service Management and Support**

- 1.22 The Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Service will ensure:
- 1.23 When households are placed into temporary accommodation, whatever the type of temporary accommodation, a written agreement will be provided.
- 1.24 The written information will provide clear details of when and how the nightly occupancy charge should be paid. Households will be aware of their rights and responsibilities during their stay in temporary accommodation. Where relevant to the type of temporary accommodation, households will be provided with their accommodation agreement.
- 1.25 Where households are placed into a Council owned temporary accommodation property, they will be provided with an inventory, which can verify the condition of the property when a household moves in. The inventory will confirm specific health and safety checks that have been undertaken on the property, including the legionella flush and checks on the smoke, carbon monoxide detectors and a list of household items provided.
- 1.26 Information will be provided to the household from the offset, which will include access to support, local community information, fire safety information, information on how to report a repair and emergency contact numbers.
- 1.27 Should a household wish to make a complaint, there will be information provided on how to make a complaint, which will be made available in different formats. Where a household wishing to make a complaint requires support to do so, support and advice will be provided.
- 1.28 Households will be provided with a named Council Officer, who can support households living in temporary accommodation, which includes support to move on into more settled accommodation.

- 1.29 Households will be given at least 24 hours' notice before an officer visits the household in temporary accommodation. Notice can be given verbally, either via a phone call or in person, or in writing via text, email, or letter. If the proposed visit is inconvenient, the aim will be to agree a more suitable date and time.

**Where visits relate to visiting council owned temporary accommodation**

- 1.30 There will be regular visits to the property in relation to support, discuss move on plans, property health and safety checks.
- 1.31 The Council Officer will make reasonable attempts to contact the household and make prearranged visits. However, there may be times where a Council Officer exercises their right to access the property without notice under the license agreement. Examples for this may include, where there is an immediate health and safety or safeguarding concern or where the household has failed to respond to the officer's request to make contact, where there are reasons to believe the household has not been staying at the property as agreed in the license agreement or where there are reasons to believe the property is being used for illegal purposes.



## **APPENDIX 1 (PART D) – HOUSEHOLDS WITH PETS PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

- 1.1 The Council's legal position regarding the homelessness legislation does not consider pets to be part of the household and the Council do not have a duty to accommodate pets into temporary accommodation. Households are encouraged to make alternative arrangements for any pets whilst they are in temporary accommodation. The Council will discuss these options and can provide information for dog kennels and catteries.
- 1.2 However, the Council recognises that homeless households may have no alternative options available for their pets, as well as their pets playing an important, supportive and emotional role to the household. Where possible, the Council will be sensitive in this matter and give careful consideration to individual household circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
- 1.3 Under the Equality Act 2010 officers should be mindful of the Council's duty to consider any reasonable adjustments for households with an assistance dog.
- 1.4 The lead household member(s) will be required to ask the Council for permission for their pet/s to live in the temporary accommodation placement, this will be dependent on the type and size of the temporary accommodation available, and if the property has direct access. Pets are not usually considered for non-Council owned temporary accommodation, hotels or bed and breakfasts and accepting pets in these circumstances would always ultimately be at the discretion of the accommodation management.
- 1.5 The lead household member(s) will need to initially complete a Pet's in Temporary Accommodation Questionnaire as part of the assessment and provide details on what alternative interim rehoming options the household has explored giving the reasons why they feel that they need to have their pet living with them in temporary accommodation. The following factors will be taken into consideration (but are not limited to):
  - Length of time household has had the pet.
  - The type, breed and number of household pet(s).
  - The pet is not listed in the schedule of the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976.
  - Dogs are not listed under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.
  - Historic and current behaviour of the pet, this includes control of a dog in relation to the owner's responsibility under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.  
Examples: if there have been any issues relating to the control of the dog, including, has the dog ever bitten anyone and if there has been any anti-social behaviour.
  - If the owner feels their dog needs to be muzzled.

- The owner's commitment as a responsible pet owner, for the care and wellbeing of their pet whilst living in temporary accommodation, including access to veterinary care.
  - Cats and dogs are microchipped and up to date with flea treatment.
  - Pets are not used for breeding or offered for sale from the temporary accommodation.
  - Appropriate arrangements if a pet needs to be left alone for longer periods in the temporary accommodation property.
  - Previous damage to a property or furniture, caused by the owner's pet(s).
- 1.6 There is no provision for accommodating non-domestic pets, but support will be provided to access appropriate re-homing options.
- 1.7 Where permission is granted by the Council, the lead household member(s) will be asked to sign a contract of expectations for pets in temporary accommodation, alongside their licence agreement. Any breaches of their licence agreement can result in the pet(s) having to leave the temporary accommodation, or the loss of the temporary accommodation placement.
- 1.8 Any damages or additional cleaning caused by having a pet in temporary accommodation can result in the lead household member(s) being recharged.
- 1.9 Where permission is granted at one temporary accommodation address and then later the household has to move to a different temporary accommodation address, it should be noted that there is not an automatic right for the permission to be extended to the new address. A review will be required, and a new contract of expectations will need to be signed, along with a new licence agreement, where permission is granted.
- 1.10 If there are no temporary accommodation properties available with direct access where a pet is allowed to reside, then the pet may not be taken into consideration when making a suitable offer of temporary accommodation, unless it is an assistance dog.

## **2. Definition of a Domestic Pet**

- 2.1 For the purpose of this Policy, a domestic pet is defined as: -
- Dog (excluding any dogs highlighted by the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991)
  - Cat
  - Bird (such as a budgie and cockatoo)
  - Fish
  - Small, caged rodent
  - Small non-poisonous caged reptile
  - Non-poisonous contained insect or amphibian
  - Guinea pig
  - Rabbit

## PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
<b>Title:</b> Temporary Accommodation Policy	
<b>Directorate:</b> Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	<b>Service area:</b> Housing Options
<b>Lead person:</b> Helen Caulfield-Browne	<b>Contact:</b> <a href="mailto:Helen.caulfield-browne@rotherham.gov.uk">Helen.caulfield-browne@rotherham.gov.uk</a> 01709 807831
Is this a:	
<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy / Policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service / Function</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>	
<b>If other, please specify</b>	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
<p><u>Development of a new Temporary Accommodation Policy</u></p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Policy will provide a framework on how temporary accommodation will be allocated and managed, as well as providing the information on the Councils responsibilities, including its statutory legal duties on providing temporary accommodation to those that are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.</p> <p>The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, published by MHCLG states (at paras 17.48 -17.62) that housing authorities are advised to develop policies for the procurement and allocation of accommodation which will help ensure that suitability requirements, including the location of the accommodation, are met. The Policy will take</p>

the statutory guidance into account when making decisions about out of borough temporary accommodation placements.

The development of the Policy will take into consideration relevant health and safety regulations, The Homelessness Suitability Order 2003, including the recent amendments which came into force in 2023. The Policy will have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, as required by section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

No formal consultation is required. However, the voice of households with lived experience of temporary accommodation will play an important role in influencing and shaping the Policy. A range of engagement and consultation activities have commenced with customers and stakeholders.

### 3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?	X	
Could the proposal affect service users?	X	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?	X	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?	X	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		X
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		X
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		
N/A		

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

#### 4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

##### **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

The Policy aims in achieving well-balanced fair decisions to households in crisis who have to go into temporary accommodation.

The Policy will seek to ensure that all placements are made on the basis of a balanced assessment of the needs of all households requiring temporary accommodation set against consideration of the type and location of accommodation that is available to be allocated at any given point.

The Policy will demonstrate a consistent approach with temporary accommodation placements and support tenancy sustainment to those vulnerable households in need of support by providing support so that the household can move on into permanent accommodation.

It is key whilst developing the Policy that there is fair access and outcomes across for all of those needing temporary accommodation whilst ensuring that no protected equalities group is being unintentionally disadvantaged or excluded. It is also paramount to prioritise equality and diversity to ensure fair and inclusive access for all individuals in need. By considering this, the Policy can address the diverse needs and circumstances of a wide range of people, including those from marginalised or underrepresented groups. Embracing equality and diversity within the Policy will also enhance the suitability of the accommodation services provided.

To ensure that the development of the Policy identifies any barriers, there will be a thorough data analysis on temporary accommodation stock, usage and current service design/processes in place, as well as a comprehensive consultation undertaken to capture the views of those with lived experience of temporary accommodation, and views from partners and stakeholders. The outcomes of the consultation will be used to 4 Part A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment Form support in shaping a service which will offer equality and diversity for Rotherham residents who require support with substance misuse.

The data analysis being undertaken will look at the following sources of data:

- HCLIC data (government reported data including homelessness approaches and cases data)
- RMBC Housing Register
- Temporary Accommodation data (including stock, utilisation, throughput and

- household makeup)
- Local population demographic data

### Key findings

It is not anticipated that this Policy will address any differences that may be encountered in the nine protected characteristics. The Policy will give consideration for households that have health factors and that have care and support provided by other statutory agencies or the need to access any specialist medical services that are only available in Rotherham.

The Policy is there to support those who have been assessed as being in a priority need of needing temporary accommodation to elevate their current homelessness whilst suitable and permanent accommodation is sought. As such, no group or individual across Borough should be adversely affected or disadvantaged as a result of this Policy.

The Policy will have a positive impact by ensuring that the type of accommodation allocated to those in need is suitable for the household.

An analysis on of those already accessing the service will help ensure that the Policy has a positive impact across all communities and protected characteristics.

The Policy will actively recognise the difficulties faced by those facing homelessness and rough sleepers in accessing temporary accommodation.

The Policy will align with other key strategies and frameworks across the Council as part of the “One Council” approach. Such as the following:

- Council Plan and Year Ahead Plan
- Housing Service Plan
- Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Housing Allocation Policy
- Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy

### Actions

A full Equality Analysis will need to be completed once all consultation has been completed. The data gathered will be used to shape the Policy to ensure it is reflective of local demographics.

It will be important to engage with a diverse range of customers and stakeholders as part of the development of the Temporary Accommodation Policy.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	May 2024
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	June 2024

Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Helen Caulfield-Browne Housing Options Operational Manager
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## 5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Sandra Tolley	Head of Housing Options	18 March 2024

## 6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to [equality@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk) For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

<b>Date screening completed</b>	18/03/2024
<b>Report title and date</b>	Temporary Accommodation Policy
<b>If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication</b>	September 2024
<b>Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2024  Approved 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2024 Steve Eling Policy and Equalities Manager



## PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
<b>Equality Analysis title: Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy</b>	
<b>Date of Equality Analysis (EA):</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	
<b>Directorate:</b> Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	<b>Service area:</b> Housing Options
<b>Lead Manager:</b> Helen Caulfield-Browne	<b>Contact number:</b> <a href="mailto:Helen.caulfield-browne@rotherham.gov.uk">Helen.caulfield-browne@rotherham.gov.uk</a> 01709 807831



## 2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Helen Caulfield-Browne	RMBC – Housing Options	Housing Options Operational Manager
Daisy Wardle	RMBC – Housing Options	Development Officer
Sandra Tolley	RMBC – Housing Options	Head of Housing Options

## 3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

### **Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)**

This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy will be a new Policy.

Temporary accommodation is a form of housing assistance that local authorities may provide to homeless households who are eligible for assistance, in priority need, and not intentionally homeless. The provision of temporary accommodation is governed by Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The aims and objectives of the Policy are:

- To set out the Council's approach to placing homeless households in emergency and temporary accommodation.
- Ensure the Council is compliant with legislation, guidance, case law, and good practice relating to the provision of temporary accommodation.
- To set out the factors that will be considered to make sure that the temporary accommodation being offered is suitable and allocated fairly.
- Keeping households that are homeless because of domestic abuse safe and supported.
- Ensure the effective management of temporary accommodation premises.
- To outline how the Council supports households who approach the Council in need of temporary accommodation, to ensure they are treated in a consistent manner and with empathy and respect.
- Keeping the cost of the Council's temporary accommodation to a minimum by reducing the use of hotel, bed and breakfast and third-party supplier managed temporary accommodation.

The Policy is to help ensure that the Council's duties to provide suitable temporary accommodation for homeless households are met. This Policy can be shared with stakeholders, partners, employees and members of the public to raise awareness of the Council's Policy and to inform operational practice.

**What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)****What we know: households placed into temporary accommodation**

The following data, gathered between financial year April 2022 and March 2023.

All of this data has been collated from individual homeless households who have approached the Council assistance and provided with temporary accommodation.

1409 people have approached and presented themselves either at risk of homelessness or homeless and a case was opened. 80% of those that approached us had a duty accepted. 868 temporary accommodation placements were made within this year.

The main reason for homelessness is family or friends no longer willing to accommodate, which affected 20% of those households placed into temporary accommodation. The second most common reason was domestic abuse, which affected 12% of those that approached us. The other main reasons were eviction from private rented sector (8%) and fleeing violence (non-domestic abuse) (4%).

**Support Needs**

36% of those placed into temporary accommodation stated that they had support needs. 65% of those with a support need stated that they had 2 or more support needs.

The most common support need was mental health, which 23% stated they had. The second was physical ill health which affects 13% and history/at risk of domestic abuse is the third highest support need, 11% stating that this affected them.

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Evaluation/analysis:</b>
Age	<p>54% of the main applicants were between the ages of 25 and 40. This figure is higher than the overall population of Rotherham, where 25- to 40-year-olds makes up 19% of the population. 14% of those that needed temporary accommodation were 16- to 24-year-olds. This figure is higher than the overall population of Rotherham, where 16 to 24 year olds makes up 10% of the population. 30% of those that needed temporary accommodation were 41 to 64 years old, this number is lower than the overall population of Rotherham, where 41- to 64-year-olds make up 32%. 3% of those that needed temporary accommodation were 65+. This figure is lower than the overall population of Rotherham, where 65+ year olds make up 20% of the population.</p> <p>This Policy does set out consideration for households age, in terms of 16- and 17-year-olds, as set out in legislation for suitability of temporary accommodation. The Policy does not exclude individuals due to this protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates</p>

	no actual or likely negative impact.
Sexual orientation	<p>The data tells us that 63% of main applicants identify as Heterosexual or straight. 4% identify as part of the LGBT community. A large percentage of 33% either stated that they would prefer not to say, or the data was unknown. Because of this, the data may not reflect a true picture the analysis has been reliant on data available.</p> <p>There is a recommendation and need to focus on quality data input and service data analysis, so that there is fewer missing data.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Race	<p>The main ethnicity of the main applicant is predominantly White British, at 65% and 16% were from the BME communities, this is slightly lower for White British in comparison to Rotherham's population, which is 88.26% and higher for those within the BME community within Rotherham which is 9%.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Sex	<p>50.3% of main applicants stated that they were male, and 49.7% stated that they were female. This is very similar to local population data where 51.7% are male and 49.7% are female.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>In the financial year 2022/23, 27% of temporary accommodation placements had children and in the financial year 2023/24 26.7% of temporary accommodation had children.</p> <p>3% of those that were placed into temporary accommodation declared that they were pregnant. However, 34% of those asked did not provide us with an answer, so this figure could be higher. This is likely due to the fact that this question in our housing data base system was not a required question, it is not a required question so figures will be higher in the future.</p> <p>This Policy does set out consideration for individuals who are pregnant, in terms of as legislation for suitability of temporary accommodation. Households with children or who are</p>

	<p>pregnant should not be in a hotel/bed and breakfast placement longer than 6 weeks. The Policy does not exclude individuals due to this protected characteristic.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Married and civil partnership	<p>The data tells us that 45% of main applicants stated that they were single, 9% stated that they were married, 1% stated that they were divorced and 4% stated that they were co-habiting. A large percentage of 41% either stated that they would prefer not to say, or the data was unknown. Because of this, the data may not reflect a true picture, the analysis has been reliant on data available.</p> <p>There is a recommendation and need to focus on quality data input and service data analysis, so that there is fewer missing data.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Disability	<p>In total, 36% of those that approached us stated that they had a disability. 23% stated that they had a history of mental health illness, 13% stated that they had a physical disability. Although the percentage is low in presentations, there are individuals who may not have considered themselves to have a disability and have not disclosed it to us.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p> <p>This Policy does set out consideration for households that have health factors and that have care and support provided by other statutory agencies or the need to access any specialist medical services that are only available in Rotherham.</p> <p>The Policy also states that the temporary accommodation portfolio should aim to provide 3% of the temporary accommodation stock as accessible for disabled individuals who are also wheelchair users.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>Data is limited; therefore, it has not been possible for us to complete a full evaluation. It is recommended that there is a review on data collation and input of this protected characteristic.</p>

	<p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>50% stated that they did not follow any religion or belief, 12% stated that they would prefer not to say, 13% stated that they followed Christianity (all denomination), 4% stated that they were Muslim and 1% stated that they followed any other religion. 21% did not state a religion or the information was not inputted by the officer. In comparison to local population data, 49% stated that they were Christian, 40% stated that they did not follow any religion, 5% stated that they were Muslim and 0.3% stated that they followed another religion.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Complex Needs	<p>65% of applicants were considered to have complex needs. Complex needs are defined by the homeless service as a lead applicant having 2 or more areas of vulnerability, such as substance misuse, offending behaviour, mental, physical ill health and domestic abuse.</p> <p>The data for disabilities has been captured separately.</p> <p>This Policy does set out consideration for households that have health factors and that have care and support provided by other statutory agencies or the need to access any specialist medical services that are only available in Rotherham.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
Domestic Abuse	<p>13% of those that needed temporary accommodation were at risk or had experienced domestic abuse. 79% of households were missing this data, and 8% stated that they had not experienced domestic abuse and were not at risk.</p> <p>This Policy does set out consideration for households that who effected by domestic abuse. Specialist temporary accommodation is provided with support.</p> <p>When considering the suitability factors of a placement location is a key factor to ensure safety.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>

Economic Status	<p>16% of those that needed temporary accommodation were employed, either full time or part time. 84% were unemployed.</p> <p>This Policy does set out consideration in terms of affordability when providing a suitable temporary accommodation placement.</p> <p>The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy indicates no actual or likely negative impact.</p>
<p><b>Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?</b></p> <p>When analysing the local data available specifically from homeless households it demonstrated some gaps in local data reporting. <b>(Please refer to the table above)</b>. This is due to the functions in the housing data management system IT combined with the quality of data inputs.</p> <p>This is currently being addressed at has been identified as at Directorate level as a priority and has been added to the risk register to ensure that the data issues are resolved.</p>	
<p><b>What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the Policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?</b></p> <p>Any actions derived from this Policy will be monitored and reported on internally through the internal Homelessness Strategic Board and the Homelessness Improvement Board.</p> <p>The service manager/s responsible for operational delivery of homelessness and temporary accommodation are responsible for the quality assurance of data input and will report to the Head of Housing Options on all performance, including equality analysis and against the aims and objectives of the Policy.</p> <p>The equality data source NEC is taken from 2023-24 where the fields were not mandatory, this has since been addressed, therefore this should improve but will require oversight to ensure quality assurance and identify and staff training and development.</p> <p>Analysis of equality and diversity data will be frequently undertaken by the homelessness manager to identify if any protected characteristic groups are under-represented, so these are discussed and help identify any changing trends and the need to respond differently. It is proposed that consideration should be given to undertake the analysis annually as a minimum to help inform local needs when considering future procurement of temporary accommodation units.</p>	
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b></p>	<p>Between February 2024 and April 2024, there was various co-design and engagement activities. We received feedback from 76 customers in total.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone surveys for those with lived experience of</li> </ul>

	<p>temporary accommodation as well as home visits to households living in temporary accommodation, homeless supported providers also gathered customer feedback on the Councils behalf.</p> <p>Groups of people who we engaged with included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who have complex needs who reside at vulnerable adult commissioned services and had previously lived in temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• Families with young children, couples and singles who are living in temporary accommodation, various support needs including domestic abuse</li> <li>• Customers that visit Shiloh (Rotherham Homeless charity) and RMBC, Riverside House, homelessness service, (We asked customers to participate in a visual poll which enable them to engage and express what were the most important areas to them that we needed consider in terms of the service delivery and standards within the Policy)</li> <li>• We also consulted with the Councils Housing Involvement Panel (HIP)</li> </ul> <p>Key areas of the Policy are led by legislation, however opportunities to influence best practice have been influenced by customer engagement. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the service standards specifically for temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• Providing a more flexible approach to homeless households with pets, acknowledging that pets provide households with many benefits, one being support with their emotional/mental health.</li> </ul> <p>As part of engagement activities, we captured equality data through customer surveys.</p> <p>The analysis of homelessness provisions by different groups have helped to ensure there is a diverse representation across all communities and protected characteristics when consulting and codesigning the Policy with our customer's.</p>
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<b>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b>	<p>Between February 2024 and May 2024, there was various co-design and engagement activities. They were either round table discussions, face to face meetings or an online internal staff survey. We received feedback from 125 people. These were done with the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Options, officers</li> <li>• RMBC Income Team</li> <li>• Workgroup, Housing options Seniors, involved working exercises and co-design.</li> <li>• Homelessness Forum, round the table working exercises.</li> <li>• RMBC - Homelessness Improvement Board</li> <li>• RMBC - Homeless Strategic Board</li> <li>• Adult Care, including Domestic Abuse</li> <li>• Rotherham Safeguarding Board</li> <li>• Childrens Services</li> <li>• Gate Way Primary Health</li> </ul>
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#### 4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

**How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups?** (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy is inclusive of all customer groups who are eligible for assistance of temporary accommodation under the Housing Act 1996.

As such, no group or individual across the Borough should be adversely affected or disadvantaged as a result of the Policy. The Policy actively recognises the difficulties faced by those experiencing homelessness and the statutory obligations the Council must consider set out in the Policy around the assessment of the suitability of a temporary accommodation placement and promotes inclusion.

The Policy recognises that the temporary accommodation portfolio must include accessible accommodation for those individuals who have a disability, including customers who need wheelchair accessibility.

The Policy recognises people experiencing homelessness can have multiple support need's and promotes the service standards all customers should receive from the service.

The Policy emphasises the importance in working with colleagues in Adult Social Care and Children Services and specialist agencies, adopting multi-disciplinary approaches which are focussed on the best interests of the person.



**Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?**

No there are no identified problems or barriers.

Failure to deliver the Policy may, however, have negative consequences for some protected groups and in that sense the Policy has been designed to meet identified needs.

**Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?**

The Policy is designed to support all households to thrive and have a positive impact by accessing suitable temporary accommodation and receiving the right level of support to help people live independently and move on to more settled housing. The policy is intended to minimise any negative effects of the groups of people who are or experiencing homelessness.

The aim will be to develop a leaflet once the Policy is approved, which will be customer friendly and pull out the main key objectives of the Policy to ensure that customers understand the temporary accommodation placement offer in line with the Policy.

**What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations?** (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

**Future procurement of temporary accommodation considerations to local area and residents:**

Location will be a key consideration for future procurement of temporary accommodation, consideration to ensure that temporary accommodation is dispersed and to avoid a high volume of units in the same location will be pivotal when making decisions.

The Policy states that a risk assessment must help information the suitability of a placement, consideration on individuals' safety will also be a factor for consideration.

**Flexible approach to pets in temporary accommodation**

The development of the Policy identified homeless households with pets who need temporary accommodation will be considered if the request permission for their pets to live with them. In the development of the Policy there has been discussion with Housing Estates Services in relation to responsible pets' owners and the Housing Councils procedures including abandoned pets has been explored and will link to the proposed Policy. The Policy reiterates that households who are given permission will be expected to comply with terms and conditions in relation to their temporary accommodation placement agreement to ensure that all residents in the community are not negatively affected.

Support will be available to all households to ensure they understand their tights and responsibilities.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

## **5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan**

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the Policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

<b>Title of analysis: Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy</b>
<b>Directorate and service area:</b> Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
<b>Lead Manager: Head of Housing Options</b>
<b>Summary of findings:</b>
<p>Data management system collected equality data; however, the performance of the data input is limited and the quality and capabilities of the data reporting system will need to be addressed to enable a more accurate equality analysis.</p> <p>Local procedures will need to be produced aligned with the Policy to ensure that there is an effective operational practice for all households with protected characteristics.</p> <p>There have been no negative impacts identified. The Policy is reaching all demographic eligible for temporary accommodation under the Housing Act 1996. The Policy supports the most marginalised people in Rotherham who may have protected characteristics and who are homeless.</p>

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Robust performance and quality assurance monitoring on equality data	All	Nov 2024 onwards
Analyse homeless statistics relating to the protected characteristics to ensure there is understanding of housing needs for those who have protected characteristics	All	Annually

Develop local procedures aligned with the Policy to ensure that there is an effective operational practice for all households with protected characteristics, considering suitability and actions which may result in discharging the Council's duties under the Housing Act 1996.	All	Following the approval of the Policy and forms part of the implementation plan
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\*A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups

#### 6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Ian Spicer	Assistant Chief Executive/ Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	05/08/2024
Cllr Allen	Cabinet Member for Housing	18/07/2024

#### 7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy should also be sent to [equality@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk) For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date Equality Analysis completed	
Report title and date	Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	

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## APPENDIX 3 – Carbon Impact Assessment

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
<b>Emissions from non-domestic buildings?</b>	N/A				
<b>Emissions from transport?</b>	Impact Unknown  Potential Impact.	The potential increase of temporary accommodation is likely to increase the need for an increase in staff travel through the use of a vehicle, travelling throughout the Borough when delivering services.		To alleviate any impact on emissions through transport the following considerations will be given:  Staff travel - Effective planning, and geographical casework to minimise unnecessary travel.  Use of digital/ customers services where appropriate to reduce the need for staff and customers having to use transport to travel into the council office where it can be avoided and considered unnecessary.	Review of the service delivery and working practices  Officer travel is included with the Council's Net Zero 2030 greenhouse gas emissions accounting and is monitored by the council's Climate Change team.
<b>Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?</b>	Impact Unknown  Potential Impact.		The potential increase of temporary accommodation may increase the use of furniture and whitegoods that the Council use to furnish the accommodation.	Ensure the use of recycling to minimise waste sent to landfills.  Regular checks, e.g. PAT testing on electrical goods to ensure safe and meet health and safety standards for the next resident rather than	Monitoring of Health and Safety Checks to ensure temporary accommodation meets H & S regulations.  Budgetary monitoring of white goods and other electrical items.

			<p>The potential increase of temporary accommodation to meet demand may increase the number of resident's waste.</p>	<p>disposing and replacing items.</p> <p>Supply chain will be considered when using external suppliers, using local suppliers.</p> <p>Procurement of services and goods - Contractors will reduce emissions and environmental impact where possible.</p> <p>Although more households may have access to temporary accommodation this may not necessarily mean more people living in the Borough, they are likely to create a small increase in the overall volume of waste created.</p> <p>Residents will be supported to understand their responsibility to dispose of waste appropriately including the use of recycling bins.</p>	<p>This will be monitored through the procurement process.</p> <p>Resident welcome pack will provide support and information</p>
<b>Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?</b>	<p>Impact Unknown</p> <p>Potential Impact.</p>		<p>Increasing the temporary accommodation portfolio may increase the use of emissions from the heating, lighting and powering of the properties, this would be dependant if building/properties have been in use prior to being used for residential temporary housing.</p>	<p>Increase of temporary accommodation may not necessarily mean more people heating, lighting and powering of the properties used for temporary accommodation, as this will be dependant on the previous use of the properties which may have</p>	<p>It is not possible to monitor emissions from temporary accommodation.</p> <p>The council monitor's EPC ratings of its own housing stock. Temporary accommodation units</p>

				<p>been occupied by residents prior to being used for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Service standards for council stock will meet the decent Homes Standards and provide effective heating systems. Temporary accommodation, council owned are included within the council's goal to have all council homes at EPC band C by 2030.</p> <p>Residents will be given information relating to making emergency efficiencies.</p>	under HRA are included within the overall monitoring of EPC
<b>Emissions from construction and/or development?</b>	<p>Impact Unknown</p> <p>Potential Impact.</p>		<p>Increasing the temporary accommodation portfolio may utilise the opportunity for new developments.</p> <p>The emissions produced in the short term through construction and materials used will impact on Borough wide emissions.</p>	<p>The use of modern methods of construction will be considered for all new schemes, where value for money can be demonstrated as well as carbon reduction.</p> <p>For refurbishment / retrofit schemes, emissions from the construction and refurbishment of properties could be offset by the reduction in carbon emissions from newly installed components having lower or zero carbon emissions.</p>	<p>Housing Strategy for 2022- 2025 agreed by Cabinet in July 2022 includes the Green Housing Strategy to reduce energy costs and improve efficiency of homes.</p> <p>Outcomes of the strategies are monitored and reported through internal governance.</p>
<b>Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?</b>	N/A				

Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:

None

Please provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:

The Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy will have a limited impact on carbon emissions. However, where there is a need to increase temporary accommodation, either through the Housings Acquisition Policy or new development opportunities there is a potential but unknown at this stage on the likely impact on emissions. The increase of temporary accommodation will be evidence led, through data and trends considered along with any known external factors and anecdotal evidence such as the difficulties faced in securing suitable temporary accommodation. Mitigations on energy efficiency includes:

- Staff travel - Effective planning, and geographical casework to minimise unnecessary travel. Use of digital/ customers services where appropriate to reduce unnecessary travel.
- Temporary accommodation, council owned stock is included within the council's goal to have all council homes at EPC band C by 2030, the Council will invest in properties to ensure they meet energy efficiency standards.
- Residents will be supported to understand their responsibility to dispose of waste appropriately including the use of recycling bins and making energy efficiencies in the home.
- Any new temporary accommodation developments will ensure the use of modern methods of construction will be considered for all new schemes, where value for money can be demonstrated as well as carbon reduction.

In addition to the mitigations detailed above there will be a focus on employee engagement in regard engaging with staff teams on sustainability practices and encouraging them to contribute towards reducing emissions in the workplace.

**Supporting information:**

<b>Completed by:</b> <b>(Name, title, and service area/directorate).</b>	Helen Caulfield-Browne Housing Options Operational Manager Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
<b>Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].</b>	
<b>If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.</b>	
<b>Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]</b>	Tracking reference: CIA304 Katie Rockett, Climate Change Officer



**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 18 November 2024

**Report Title**

Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policies

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

**Report Author(s)**

Wendy G Foster, Improvement Manager, Housing Property Services  
01709 255047 or [wendy-regen.foster@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:wendy-regen.foster@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The Council is committed to the delivery of a high quality, value for money repairs and maintenance service, which is customer focused, efficient, and accessible. The revised Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy sets out the Council's approach to delivering a responsive repairs and maintenance service which meets the needs of tenants and leaseholders, and enables the Council to meet its statutory, regulatory, and contractual obligations.

The Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy and the Gas and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Policy set out the Council's approach to managing its responsibilities for gas safety, electrical safety, smoke alarms and CO alarms in housing assets in line with legislation and best practice.

A delegation is sought to enable the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make further changes to key housing compliance policies in line with service needs and the evolving regulatory and legislative context.

This report also provides an update on the work which has begun to consider the future of the repairs and maintenance service in the context of new consumer regulations and a break clause in the Council's existing contracts.

## Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1).
2. Approve the increase in decoration allowance from £25 to £50 per room, up to a maximum of £350 per property, as proposed in the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1).
3. Note the ongoing work to scope the future repairs and maintenance delivery model for Rotherham and agrees to receive a further update on this work in 2025.
4. Approve the Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy (Appendix 2).
5. Approve the Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy (Appendix 3).
6. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make amendments to the following housing policies in line with operational, regulatory and legislative demands:
  - Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy
  - Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy
  - Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy
  - Housing Services Fire Safety Policy
  - Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy as it relates to housing assets.

## List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy  
Appendix 2 Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Policy  
Appendix 3 Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy  
Appendix 4 Equalities Analysis Part A  
Appendix 5 Equalities Analysis Part B  
Appendix 6 Carbon Impact Assessment

## Background Papers

[The Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards](#)  
[The Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act, 2023](#)  
[Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#)  
[Awaab's Law Consultation](#)  
[Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy](#)  
[Housing Fire Safety Policy](#)

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**  
Improving Places Select Commission – 22 October 2024

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policies

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), in the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, specifies the outcomes landlords must deliver in relation to being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account. The Safety and Quality Standard specifies that all landlords must deliver an effective and value for money repairs and maintenance service and comply with all relevant health and safety legislation.
- 1.2 To comply with these standards, landlords need to have clear and accessible policies in place for key areas of housing service delivery which set out the approach to service delivery and enable tenants to hold the Council as 'landlord' to account.
- 1.3 The repair and maintenance of Council homes is a key area where a policy is required to outline how the Council meets its legal and regulatory responsibilities as a landlord and deliver the repairs service to tenants.
- 1.4 Policies are also required on each area of health and safety compliance. Currently, there are policies in place for Damp, Mould and Condensation, and Fire Safety. The Corporate Property Service is developing policies on Lifts and Water Safety which will incorporate responsibilities within Council owned housing assets. Policies have been developed for the remaining areas of compliance which set out the Council's approach to managing Electrical, Gas and Carbon Monoxide compliance in housing assets.
- 1.5 The introduction of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, 2023, prompted the Council, and social housing landlords nationally, to examine all aspects of housing service activity. This self-assessment enabled the Council to gauge how well it is meeting the expectations of the Regulator's consumer standards, to identify gaps in delivery, and focus on areas for improvement. Increasing the number of published policies was identified as an area of improvement.
- 1.6 The Council is separately considering the future delivery of its repairs and maintenance activities, considering increased demands on the service, new regulatory requirements, and an upcoming break clause in the current contracts. The contracts commenced on 1 April 2020 and have recently been extended until 31 March 2027, with an option to extend up to a further three financial years.

### 2. Key Issues

#### Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy

- 2.1 The Housing Property Service is responsible for the repairs, maintenance, and investment in the Council's housing revenue account assets. This includes:

- 19,879 residential properties
- 3,254 garages on 404 purpose-built garage sites
- 144 garage plot sites
- 37 boiler houses
- 45 neighbourhood centres
- 1 residential tower block over 18 metres

2.2 The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy sets out the Council's overall approach to delivering repairs and maintenance and how it meets its obligations, including the relevant consumer standards. The Policy applies to the repair of Council owned housing properties, including the assets listed above, as well as communal areas.

2.3 The current service delivery model, encapsulated within the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy, is subject to the terms of the existing contracts with the Council's current contract partners and allocated budgets, therefore there is limited scope for significant change at this stage.

2.4 The Policy includes:

- How repairs can be reported, appointment slots for work to be undertaken and the timescales for completion dependent upon level of urgency.
- The types of repairs the Council is responsible for and the responsibilities of tenants.
- How reports are dealt with including prioritisation based upon the type of the repair and the impact upon the tenants' personal circumstances.

2.5 The Council carries out over 6,000 responsive repairs each month, or around 200 repairs each day.

2.6 The table below shows the minimum numbers of repairs which the Council carries out annually. It excludes contracted capital works, lift repairs and servicing, damp and mould works, and cyclical compliance works, but gives an idea of the overall scale of the service.

2.7

YEAR	NUMBER OF REPAIRS
2023/2024	73,312
2022/2023	70,621
2021/2022	71,989
2020/2021	62,831
2019/2020	75,797

2.8 Repairs are prioritised based upon the urgency and if a tenant has a health condition which is being adversely impacted by the repair. There are three responsive repair categories. Non-urgent work is categorised as maintenance for completion within a future work programme.

2.9

- Emergency repairs are defined as repairs that require immediate and urgent action to prevent risk to people or property, as such, the Council

operates 24-hours a day, 365 days of the year to attend emergency repairs within a four-hour period. These repairs usually involve carrying out work to make the home safe and secure while further works are arranged for a later date.

- Urgent repairs include a total loss of heating and hot water. Urgent repairs are attended by 8pm on the day after a repair is reported.
- Standard, non-urgent repairs are allocated on a 28-day priority, and appointments are chosen by tenants or agreed at a mutually convenient time.

- 2.10 The Service is continuing its focus on strengthening data collection to assist the triaging of repairs in future.
- 2.11 It is important that tenants provide access to allow repairs, cyclical servicing and maintenance to be undertaken. The Policy sets out the approach to 'no access' where the tenant does not engage with the Council to allow access to their property.
- 2.12 The Council's approach to investment and stock improvement will be detailed in a future Housing Asset Management Strategy.

#### Decoration Allowance

- 2.13 The Council has a legal duty under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, to make good or compensate for damaged decorations as a result of works carried out to their homes. Examples of such repair work may include:
- Electrical re-wiring following an electrical fault,
  - Broken bathroom fittings and associated re-tiling,
  - Insecure external windows/doors,
  - Loose or detached banister/handrail,
  - Leaking roof,
  - Repairing a defective damp proof course.
- 2.14 The Council has no legal responsibility to provide decoration allowance following an improvement to a home. As a responsible landlord, the Council feels that it should help customers where decorations have been disturbed following programmed/improvement works. Not all improvement works will cause damage or require the full decoration of a room. Examples of programmed works can include:
- Kitchen replacement (if the Council does not redecorate following fitting).
  - Bathroom replacement (if the Council does not redecorate following fitting).
  - Damp proof course renewal.
  - Installing a damp proof course for the first time.
  - Plastering (see paragraph 2.13).
- 2.15 Most damage to plasterwork is discovered during routine redecoration by a customer. In such circumstances, compensation for damage to decoration is

not appropriate. If the Council must make good plasterwork as a result of damage caused during repair work, then the customer should be compensated by way of a decoration allowance.

- 2.16 The Council currently awards £25 per room to tenants following damage to tenants' décor. The Council has not revised its approach to Decoration Allowance, and the sums awarded to tenants, since 2005.
- 2.17 The Policy retains the allocation of decorating allowance 'by rooms damaged' and proposes the allocation of a fixed sum per room. This should apply to all rooms within the home, not just habitable rooms – the hall(s), stairs and landing should be viewed as one room.
- 2.18 Inflation since 2005 means the decoration allowance should be increased. Cabinet is asked to approve a new allocation of £50 per room, which compares favourably with neighbouring social housing landlords. A limit of £350 per property is also proposed. The sums awarded will be reviewed every three years under the delegations proposed in Recommendation 6.
- 2.19 It is proposed that there should be more than one method by which tenants can receive decoration allowance: payment to rent account, BACS payment or cheque issued in the tenant's name.

#### Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy

- 2.20 The Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy sets out the legal and regulatory framework for managing gas safety, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.
- 2.21 It covers assets within the responsibility of the Council's housing service, including residential properties, neighbourhood centres, garages and boiler houses but does not apply to managing gas and carbon monoxide safety within non-council owned dwellings or other council assets such as schools, care homes, offices, or commercial properties.
- 2.22 The Council has a range of measures in place to manage gas and carbon monoxide safety within its properties. The compliance management matrix details all compliance activity, frequency of testing, and how the Council meets its statutory and regulatory obligations. This includes:
  - Domestic Landlord Gas Safety Record.
  - Non- Domestic Landlord Gas Safety Record.
  - Solid Fuel Annual Service and Sweep.
  - Carbon Monoxide Detection.
  - Liquid Petroleum Gas Landlord Gas Safety Record.
  - Heating Pressure Vessels.
- 2.23 Unsafe gas appliances present risk to life from fire and carbon monoxide poisoning. A robust 'no access' process is in place for gas servicing which includes repeated attempts to contact the tenant. The Council will apply to court for a warrant for access if the tenant does not engage. Access is gained

to the property to undertake the gas safety check and, if necessary, to cap the meter.

- 2.24 The current performance for gas servicing is 99.93% as it is not possible to apply for the warrant until the gas servicing is overdue. It is therefore extremely difficult to achieve 100% compliance as access issues are encountered every month. Performance is monitored monthly, and data is published quarterly.
- 2.25 A pro-active installation programme of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms has been undertaken. Currently, 99.28% of properties have a carbon monoxide alarm and 99.72% have a smoke alarm. Performance is monitored quarterly.

#### Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy

- 2.26 The Electrical Safety Policy sets out the regulatory framework for managing electrical assets within the Council's housing assets.
- 2.27 The Council has a range of measures in place to manage electrical safety within its properties as detailed in the compliance matrix. This includes:
- Domestic electrical installation condition report
  - Non-domestic electrical installation condition report
  - Smoke detectors
  - Automatic doors
  - Automatic gates and barriers
  - Emergency lighting
  - Portable appliance testing
  - Lightning protection
- 2.28 Unsafe electrical appliances present risk to life from fire and electric shock. It is therefore imperative that tenants provide access to their properties to undertake frequent inspections and servicing. Currently electrical servicing is subject to contact from the Council's contract partner followed by letters and telephone calls from the Council to obtain access to undertake the servicing. The Legal Service will be trialling an electrical installation condition report to Court within the forthcoming months to gauge whether the court will provide a warrant for this work to be undertaken.
- 2.29 Current performance on properties with an Electrical Installation Condition Report is 96.2% Performance is monitored monthly, and data is published quarterly.

#### Delegation to amend housing services compliance policies

- 2.30 The legislation and regulatory framework associated with social housing is evolving with further imminent changes following the introduction of Awaab's Law. These are also largely operational matters, and the Council requires flexibility to amend some service standards in light of operational demands



and availability of staff and contractors. Therefore, Cabinet is asked to delegate authority to enable the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make further changes to key housing compliance policies in line with service needs and the evolving regulatory and legislative context. This would apply to the Housing Services' Gas and Carbon Monoxide, Electrical Safety, Fire Safety (agreed April 2024), and Damp, Mould and Condensation (agreed September 2023) policies.

#### Future of Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service Delivery

- 2.31 Demand on the repairs services is expected to continue to increase, and greater agility may be needed when responding to reports of damp and mould. In the future, other Category One hazards in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, may also have to be prioritised, depending on the outcome of the Government's consultation on Awaab's Law.
- 2.32 The regulatory context for the delivery of repairs and maintenance services is undergoing a period of change, including new consumer standards, Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), Awaab's Law, the professionalisation of the sector, and a review of the Decent Homes Standard. The Council needs to evaluate and review the current service model against this changing regulatory environment.
- 2.33 Currently most of the work is included within two large repairs and maintenance contracts which are split geographically and by work category. Specialist work, such as damp and mould, and lift servicing, is separately managed within smaller contracts.
- 2.34 A programme of engagement is underway which seeks to provide the Council with a better understanding of the views and priorities of tenants, elected members, officers and other stakeholders and to specify the outcomes the Council should prioritise in any future service delivery model.
- 2.35 An industry specialist will be engaged to overlay the Council's identified requirements against the service delivery options available to the Council.
- 2.36 The outcome of this exercise will support the development of informed recommendations regarding the future delivery of the Council's repairs and maintenance service, with decisions to be taken in 2025. Depending on the decision taken, the Repairs and Maintenance Policy may need to be reviewed.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 The three policies have been identified as key documents needed by social housing landlords to ensure tenants understand the Council's service delivery commitments and to be compliant with the Regulator of Social Housing's new consumer standards.
- 3.2 The Regulator of Social Housing will carry out in depth assessments of providers at least every four years. Not having these policies updated,

agreed and available to tenants would reflect negatively on the Council's Housing Service and the lack of policies would be reflected in the Regulator's grading.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 The current service delivery model is subject to the terms of the existing contracts with the Council's current delivery partners and the current allocated budgets therefore there is limited scope for significant change.
- 4.2 The Draft Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy was shared with Tenant Scrutiny Panel on Monday 15 July 2024 where constructive feedback was shared and included in the draft. The draft policy was also shared with Improving Places Select Commission on 22 October 2024 for feedback and discussion.
- 4.3 The main point of discussion with Tenant Scrutiny related to the section titled 'Tenants' Personal Circumstances'. This section addresses the requirement to consider residents' needs when assessing the urgency of a repair. It was originally titled 'Tenant Vulnerabilities', but tenants did not agree with characterising personal circumstances as vulnerabilities.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the future delivery of the repairs and maintenance service is subject to engagement with tenants prior to any proposals being put to Cabinet for agreement. Any significant change in service would be subject to consultation with tenants and residents.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 Implementation of the policies would follow Cabinet decision.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 For the financial year 2024/2025, there is a revenue budget of £24.5m and a capital budget of £29.2m in place to deliver the Council's housing repairs, maintenance and investment services across various contracts.
- 6.2 Any changes to how the service delivers and operates may change the cost profiles. The budgets are reviewed during the HRA Business Planning and budget setting process. Future requirements will be considered, and appropriate budgets set in place based on priority and affordability.
- 6.3 The current repairs and maintenance contracts have been extended until March 2027 with an option to extend for a further three years in one-year increments.
- 6.4 In the financial year 2023/2024, the Council awarded £11,931 Decoration Allowance.

6.5	Financial Year	Spend	Increase
	2024/2025	£15,750	24%
	2023/2024	£11,931	20%
	2022/2023	£9,907	69%
	2021/2022	£5,850	100%
	2020/2021	£2,918	

6.6 Increasing the level of Decoration Allowance and broadening the range of works activity after which decoration allowance will be offered, will impact the overall budget the Council has for repairing and maintaining its homes. It is difficult to accurately calculate but it is estimated that the current budget of £15,750 would need to be increased to £50,000.

6.7 There are no direct procurement implications associated with the approval of the policies that form the basis of this report. It must however be noted that the engagement of an industry specialist to inform the future of housing repairs and maintenance service delivery must be procured in compliance with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

## 7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are legal requirements for maintaining social housing, keeping it free from hazards and in a reasonable state of repair. The Regulator of Social Housing also provides for Consumer Standards which require social landlords to have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes. The Regulators' Tenant Satisfaction Measures are a core set of performance measures against which all social providers of housing must publish their performance.

7.2 The Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy incorporates the legal and regulatory requirements to ensure compliance with and understanding of the repair and maintenance obligations.

7.3 In addition to regulatory compliance that places duties on employers to ensure that all electrical installations and appliances within the workplace are safe, the Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy provides for recommended best practice measures that ensure *'A programme of electrical installation inspection and testing is carried out to all domestic, communal areas and neighbourhood centres at least once every 5 years (unless the competent person recommends the next test must be done sooner than this), upon commencement of a new tenancy or following planned component replacement works.'*

7.4 The Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policy, prepared in compliance with 'The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998' and the 'Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022', ensures the safe installation and maintenance of gas appliances and smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in Council properties.

- 7.5 In implementing the policies, the Council will be able to demonstrate adherence to the new Consumer Standards, whilst also minimising the risk of customer complaint and/or legal challenge and/or enforcement action by the Regulator. The Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance policy will likely require amendment to reflect specific timeframes for repairs to be carried out in the social rented sector once determined.
- 7.6 In due course the government will introduce Awaab's law which will require landlords to fix reported health hazards within specified timescales. The Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy may require amendment to reflect the criteria within the law.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no HR implications associated with the Policies. However, any changes to future service delivery may impact on staff within the Housing Service and contract partners.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 The Council will take into account whether a resident has any particular needs that give a specific repair more urgency than the designated timescales.
- 9.2 Depending on tenants' needs, and in particular circumstances, the Council will adjust the urgency of a repair if the risk to health, safety and security is increased due to tenants' personal circumstances.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 The Council supports equality of access for all its tenants, especially those who are at most risk due to their/their household members' needs, those who have difficulties managing their property, and those who struggle to sustain a tenancy. The Council recognises that some groups with protected characteristics are more likely to fall into one of these categories.
- 10.2 Where appropriate the Council will adapt working practices to ensure tenants do not face additional barriers when accessing services. This includes providing information to tenants in Braille, large print, audio, or alternative languages.
- 10.3 The Council will record and monitor data to gain insight on satisfaction levels and service outcomes for tenants with protected characteristics and use this information to help improve services.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 Refurbishment works undertaken by the service improve the thermal efficiency of properties which positively contributes to the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and climate change agenda.

**12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 Should the delivery model change in the future, there will be an impact on the contract partners.

**13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 The attached policies reflect the current arrangements which have been in place since 2020.
- 13.2 Social housing landlords are awaiting the outcome of the Government consultation on Awaab's Law and are keen to understand the range of hazards against which tenant's personal circumstances need to be taken into consideration when prioritising repair.
- 13.3 The Council has already put in place processes to deal with reports of damp and mould and is working to the timescales laid out in the Government consultation. This has resulted in an increase in reports of damp and mould, to which the Council must respond within 10 days.

**14. Accountable Officers**

James Clark, Assistant Director of Housing

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp OBE	04/11/24
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	29/10/24
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	30/10/24

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**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HOUSING SERVICES REPAIRS AND  
MAINTENANCE POLICY**

**NOVEMBER 2024**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Council is committed to delivering a high quality, value for money repairs service which is customer focused, efficient, and accessible to everyone. This policy sets out how the Council delivers a responsive repairs and maintenance service which meets the needs of tenants and leaseholders, and enables the Council to meet its statutory, regulatory, and contractual obligations.

## 2 PURPOSE

This policy sets out the Council's overall approach to repairs and maintenance and how it meets its obligations.

## 3 SCOPE

The policy applies to the responsive repair and maintenance of Council owned housing properties, including garages, district heating boiler houses, communal areas, neighbourhood centres, and some equipment such as lifts.

The policy includes the Council's and tenants' responsibility for the completion of repairs in the following areas:

- Emergency repairs
- Non-urgent repairs
- Non-standard (batched) repairs
- Cyclical maintenance
- Out of hours repairs
- Repairs which are the responsibility of tenants, and
- Rechargeable repairs.

It also sets out the approach to:

- Decoration allowance
- Right to compensation
- Right to repair
- Tenant recharges.

Separate policies exist for certain aspects of the Council's repairs and maintenance obligations. These are referred to in this policy. The key ones are:

- Housing Services Gas and Carbon Monoxide Policy
- Housing Services Electrical Safety Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Lift Safety Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy
- Asbestos Management Plan

## 4 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The Council has an obligation to keep its homes in a reasonable state of repair and to keep its tenants, their families, and visitors safe.

In April 2024, a new suite of consumer standards was introduced to bring greater transparency, and to monitor and improve, the quality of services delivered by social housing landlords. The repairs and maintenance of properties is covered by the Safety and Quality Consumer Standard.

In addition to repairs, the Council has compliance responsibilities relating to:

- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Legionella checks
- Servicing passenger lifts, medical lifts, and hoists
- Asbestos inspection
- Fire safety, and
- Maintenance of communal areas.

For more information, please refer to the separate policies which set out how the Council meets the obligations.

## 5 TREATING TENANTS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

The Council is committed to providing a high-quality customer service that is accessible to everyone, right first time, and keeps customers informed of progress.

The Council's responsive repairs and maintenance service aims to put tenants at the centre of its delivery. It is committed to being accessible to every tenant, and values tenant feedback – both complaints and compliments.

When attending tenants' homes to carry out repairs, the Council and its contractors must:

- Be respectful of tenants' homes, environment, and cultural factors,
- Aim to carry out the repair during the first visit,
- Minimise noise and disruption,
- Park works vehicles properly and not damage grass verges,
- Always wear their identification badge,
- Protect tenants' floorings by wearing shoe coverings when entering a tenant's home,
- Not use tenants' facilities without tenants' permission.

To support operatives carrying out repairs, the Council asks tenants to:

- Not use abusive or threatening language or act in a violent, aggressive or abusive manner towards the Council staff and contractors,
- Keep their pets in a room away from operatives carrying out the repair, and
- Not smoke/vape inside the property when Council staff or contractors are present.

## 6 DELIVERING RESPONSIVE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

### 6.1 Right First Time

The Council aims to complete a responsive repair on the first visit; this is called 'Right First Time'. The repair is 'Right First Time' if the operative attended the property, identified, diagnosed, and fixed the fault during the first visit/during the same day. If this is not possible, as additional materials or trades are needed, a second visit will be scheduled within a reasonable timescale.

### 6.2 Reporting repairs

Tenants can report repairs for their own properties. If nominated by the tenant, household members, carers, and friends, can also report repairs on behalf of the tenant.

Tenants, or their nominated advocates, can report most day-to-day repairs on the website, using 'Housing Online', or by telephoning the Council's customer contact centre on 01709 336009. Some repairs, such as damp and mould, can currently only be reported via the telephone, but the Council aims to implement online reporting functionality as soon as possible.

When reporting repairs, tenants, or their nominated representatives, need to tell the Service:

- Their name, full address, and daytime telephone number,
- As much as they can about the repair –where the problem is and what is wrong,
- Whether there are any particular circumstances, such as health conditions or other vulnerabilities, that need to be taken into account, and
- Convenient times when operatives will be able to access the property.

If a gas leak is suspected, tenants should contact the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

Day to day repairs do not include large installation work, such as new roofs or upgrade works, such as kitchen replacement. These works are completed on larger planned work schemes.

### 6.3 Appointments for responsive repairs

When repairs are requested, and the work is ordered, a mutually convenient appointment will be agreed. The appointment will be for either a morning, afternoon, midday, or weekend, on a mutually convenient date.

Appointments are available all-day, Monday to Friday for day-to-day repairs, and seven days a week for plumbing, joinery, and electrical repairs. Tenants can book the following time slots:

	Appointment slot	Monday to Friday	Saturday*	Sunday*	Bank holidays	
Morning	08:00 to 12:00	✓	✓	✓	Emergencies only	
Afternoon	12:00 to 16:00	✓	✓	✓		
Evening	16:00 to 20:00	✓				
Midday	10:00 to 14:00	✓				
All day	08:00 to 20:00	✓				

\*Plumbing, joinery and electrical work only.

**For reports of damp and mould**, the Council's Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy sets out the Council's timescales for responding and addressing damp and mould.

**For medical lifts and hoists, and for passenger lifts**, operatives attend within four hours. More details are contained in the Lift Safety Policy.

There may be circumstances beyond the Council's control when operatives will not be able to attend the scheduled appointment. On these rare occasions, the tenant will be contacted in advance of the appointment to reschedule.

#### 6.4 Timescales for responsive repairs

The Council allocates responsive repairs into categories and each category has set timescales for completion.

When a repair request is received, the Council will work with the tenant to determine the urgency of the repair, and:

- Complete emergency repairs within four hours (where there is risk to life or property)
- Complete some gas repairs before the end of the next working day (such as no heat and no hot water)
- Arrange a mutually convenient appointment with the tenant to complete non-urgent repairs within 28 days.

The Council has procured an external organisation to carry out stock condition surveys for all its HRA properties, over the next three years. Sample surveys will start in November 2024 with the surveyors working to capacity from January 2025.

A more detailed scope of repairs, and the quantity of repairs, will be developed from the stock condition surveys. As such, no decisions have yet been agreed regarding who will carry out the resulting repairs. Should the Council opt for its external contracting partners to carry out the work, there may be an impact on the 28-day timescale for carrying out non-urgent repairs.

**Emergency repairs** are defined as repairs that require immediate and urgent action to prevent risk to people or property, as such, the Council operates 24-hours a day, 365 days of the year to attend emergency repairs. These repairs usually involve carrying out work to make the home safe and secure while further works are arranged for a later date.

All reported emergencies are attended within a four-hour period. This includes emergencies that are reported after 16:00 which are passed to the emergency call out team. The call out team works between 16:00 and 08:00.

When reporting emergency repairs, tenants may be asked additional questions to understand the extent or severity of the repair. Depending on the specific details and the tenant's circumstances, some repairs may fall out of the four-hour priority and be allocated as non-urgent.

Please see Appendix A for the full list of emergency repairs.

Where an emergency repair has been completed, such as boarding broken glazing in a window, the Council will arrange a follow-up appointment for further works to be carried out, such as measuring-up and re-glazing the window. When there is a delay between the emergency repair and the follow-up works, the Council will:

- Write to the tenant to inform them that further works have been arranged, and
- Contact the tenant again to let them know when operatives will attend.

Unless materials or skills needed to carry out the repair are non-standard, in most cases follow-up repairs will be completed within four months.

**Urgent repairs** include a total loss of heating and hot water. Urgent repairs are attended by 20:00 on the day after a repair is reported. For example, if an urgent repair is reported on a Monday morning, an operative will attend either before 20:00 on Monday or between 08:00 and 20:00 on Tuesday, dependent upon availability.

**Routine Repairs** are standard, non-urgent repairs which are allocated within a 28-day priority, and appointments are chosen by tenants or agreed at a mutually convenient time (see 6.3).

Examples of non-urgent repairs include:

- A light not working,
- A dripping tap,
- A radiator not working,
- Leaking guttering,
- A repair to a roof tile.

The 'Tenants Personal Circumstances' section sets out how the Council may on occasion prioritise the delivery non-urgent repairs.

**Planned maintenance** works are repairs which do not require urgent attention and can be included in a future works programme. This includes replacing an external door, kitchen, roof or bathroom which cannot be repaired. Tenants receive confirmation that the work has been placed on a programme and they will be notified when the work will take place.



**Cyclical maintenance** covers the regular servicing of gas appliances, electrical wiring, and carbon monoxide/fire detectors, as well as the maintenance of communal water tanks, medical lifts and hoists, including stair lifts, and passenger lifts.

### **6.5 Repairs to medical lifts and hoists, and passenger lifts**

Please refer to the Lift Safety Policy.

### **6.6 Repairs to communal aerials**

Repairs to communal aerials should be attended within 5 working days.

### **6.7 The Council's repairs responsibilities**

The Council is responsible for the structure, exterior, services, and fixtures and fittings, and any communal areas in the building, excluding communal gardens. In all cases, repair is considered before renewal.

The Council is responsible for the following:

- a) Drains, gutters, and outside pipes,
- b) Roof, external walls, doors, and windows,
- c) Maintenance of pipework for water, and gas and electricity installations, within the boundary of the home,
- d) Outbuildings,
- e) Sewers which are not the responsibility of another person or body,
- f) Paths, steps, or other access routes that connect the front of the property to the front door, and the front door to the back door,
- g) Heating and hot water systems including central heating, gas fires, fireplaces, flues, ventilation and chimneys,
- h) Water, including baths, wash-hand basins, sinks, toilets, pipes, drains, and guttering,
- i) Fitted kitchens,
- j) Medical lifts and hoists, and passenger lifts fitted by the Council,
- k) Services to utilities including gas pipes, electrical wiring, and any fixed appliances provided by the Council, and
- l) Communal areas such as hallways, door entry systems, fire alarms, stairs, lifts, landings, and communal entrances.

The Council will not repair or replace items:

- a) Which are old but functional – if they are working well, they may not be repaired or replaced,
- b) For cosmetic reasons – such as a scratch on a windowpane, or a stain on a floor tile,
- c) Which could be a minor trip hazard such as a loose tile or a crack in the pavement (unless the tenant has mobility issues),
- d) Which do not match the rest of the kitchen or bathroom. (If an exact replacement cannot be found, the closest match possible will be fitted, but the entire kitchen or bathroom suite will not be replaced.)
- e) This includes unsafe fencing. Where fencing is broken or unsafe, the Council will remove the fencing and will only replace it by exception.

## 6.8 Tenants' repairs and responsibilities

To ensure tenants receive a fair and value for money service, tenants are responsible for carrying out some minor repairs. A full list of these can be found in the Tenants' Guide to Your Home and the tenancy agreement.

Unless provided by the Council's Furnished Homes service, tenants are responsible for the connection of washing machines, dishwashers, tumble dryers, cookers, and any other electrical appliances.

Any work to gas, electrical or water supplies must be carried out by a qualified and competent person. Failure to do so may constitute a breach of tenancy.

Examples of tenant responsibilities include:

- a) Tenant's own fixtures and fittings, eg. curtain rails,
- b) Internal decoration,
- c) Repairing small cracks and holes in walls and ceilings,
- d) Repairing tile grouting,
- e) Any lock changes as a result of lost or stolen keys,
- f) Clearing external grates,
- g) Clothesline hooks and clothes posts,
- h) Repairing and replacing boundary fences, gates, and associated hardware
- i) Internal door handles and latches,
- j) Floor covering, including vinyl and carpets (unless provided as part of the paid for Furnished Homes package),
- k) Very small areas of mould which can be easily wiped away, eg, on a windowsill or at the bottom of a window where condensation is sometimes found.

Plumbing repairs include:

- a) Refixing or renewing a toilet seat,
- b) Refixing or renewing the plug and chain for the bath, sink, or wash hand basin,
- c) Refixing or renewing cylinder jackets,
- d) Refixing or renewing high level toilet flush chains,
- e) Plunging minor blockages to sinks, baths and showers.

Electrical repairs include:

- a) All extension leads,
- b) Light bulbs, including outside lights,
- c) Tenants own non-standard light fittings, fluorescent tubes and starters,
- d) TV aerials, satellite dishes, or sockets other than communal sockets,
- e) Telephone cables and equipment, except door access control,
- f) Resetting timer controls to heating and hot water systems, including changing batteries.

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list.

The Council may carry out repairs caused through damage by the tenant and the costs will be recharged to the tenant.

To avoid further damage to the property or risk of injury, it is tenants' responsibility to report repairs promptly.

## **6.9 Tenants' Personal Circumstances**

The Council will take into account whether a tenant or household member has a health condition which is being adversely impacted by the repair which therefore requires more urgency than the designated timescales.

High priority is also given to repairs arising from harassment, domestic violence, or offensive graffiti.

Depending on tenants' needs, and in particular circumstances, the Council will endeavour to do the following:

- Adjust the urgency of a repair if the risk to health, safety and security is increased due to tenants' personal circumstances,
- Officers/operatives may make a safeguarding referral if vulnerabilities are identified, and if it is understood that the household could benefit from wider support,
- Offer additional support to tenants who may need reassurance regarding the nature of the repair and how it will be carried out.

The Council will aim to record tenants' relevant support needs and personal circumstances on IT systems and refer to this information when liaising with tenants. To do this, the Council will encourage all tenants to share information about their personal circumstances and vulnerabilities when engaging with services.

Due to limitations in the Council's IT systems, the Council may on occasion request that a tenant provides information about their circumstances at the point at which they report a repair. This is because information already held by the Council about the tenant's circumstances may not be available to Council officers logging repairs.

## **7 LEASEHOLDERS' RESPONSIVE REPAIRS**

The Council's obligations to leaseholders include keeping the building in which the leasehold property is sited, in a good state of repair. This includes the external fabric of the building, and any shared or communal areas.

In turn, leaseholders are obligated to pay a share of the costs for carrying out those repairs; the details of these repairs are set out in leaseholders' annual service charge invoices. The apportionment of these charges can be found in leaseholders' leases.

For more information, please refer to Leaseholders' Rights and Responsibilities on the Council's website.

## **8 REPAIRS TO NEW BUILD PROPERTIES**

New Council properties, whether built by the Council or acquired on the open market, are subject to a 12-month defects period.



For acquisitions of new build properties, or properties acquired on the open market, building contractors and housebuilders are responsible for dealing with any defects identified during the 12-month defects period. They are responsible for defects arising from faults in materials, manufacturing, and installation but any repairs needed as a result of tenant use, are dealt with in the same way as other responsive repairs.

Repairs requested during the defects period will be triaged before being passed onto the contractor/housebuilder. This is to ensure that the repair is needed due to a defect. Triageing the repair will reduce the likelihood of the Council being charged by the contractor for an incorrect call out.

Emergency repairs to new build or acquired properties align with the Council's timescales for emergency repairs to its other stock. If necessary, the Council will instruct its own repairs and maintenance operatives to carry out the repair and consider recharging the contractor/house builder afterwards.

## **9 NO ACCESS**

It is important that Tenants allow operatives access to carry out repairs, servicing, and maintenance, as stated in tenancy agreements and Guide to Your Home. In some cases, if tenants refuse to grant access to operatives, the Council will apply to court to gain access.

If operatives are unable to access the property to carry out a repair, a missed appointment card will be left at the address requesting that the tenant contacts the Council to arrange a new appointment.

If the appointment was initially made to carry-out a repair which is causing a risk to the tenant, their household members, and other residents, or is causing damage to the property, the Council will explore all available options to gain access, including legal action.

The Council is legally obligated to carry out certain maintenance and servicing works, such as annual gas servicing. The Council sends appointment letters to tenants with a date and time to carry out the work and, if operatives are unable to gain access to the home on the first occasion, a second appointment letter will be sent, and, if necessary, a third appointment letter. Tenants have the opportunity to contact the Council and rearrange the appointment at any time.

If, after three attempts, the Council still cannot access the property, legal proceedings may commence, and the Council may apply to court to gain access.

Council officers or agents may enter the property without giving notice if entry is necessary because of an emergency. If forced entry is needed, the local Police will be notified and, when appropriate, a request for assistance will be made.

## 10 COMPLIANCE

Legislation places a duty on landlords to service and maintain elements of tenants' homes regularly. In addition to repairs, the Council has specific responsibilities relating to:

- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Water hygiene checks
- Servicing passenger lifts, medical lifts, and hoists
- Asbestos inspection
- Damp and mould
- Fire safety, and
- Maintenance of communal areas.

For more information, please refer to the Council's Compliance Policies.

## 11 DAMP AND MOULD

The Council is taking a proactive approach to dealing with damp, mould, and condensation in Council properties and currently runs this aspect of the repairs and maintenance service to different timescales than other repairs. For more information, please refer to the Damp, Mould, and Condensation Policy.

## 12 TENANT ALTERATIONS

Tenants are entitled to make improvements and alterations to their home but must get written permission before carrying out any work.

A tenant alteration pack can be requested and must be completed, giving details of the type of work proposed and a basic drawing of the change. It is important that tenants do not start work without written permission. If permission is not provided, then tenants may have to return the property to how it was before or will be re-charged for the Council to carry out the repairs.

Tenants must get permission to carry out the following, or other similar work:

- Decorate the outside of the property,
- Any structural alteration, improvement, or addition to the building,
- Any change to the fixtures and fittings or additions to the fixtures and fittings.

This includes:

- Building a garage or shed or other large structure in the garden
- Laying a drive or car parking space
- Installing a shower, central heating or gas fire. (Please note, the installation of log burners or dual fuel fires is not allowed.)
- Artexing ceilings. (the Artexing of walls is not allowed)
- Removing walls
- Installing a new fitted kitchen
- Installing fitted wardrobes
- Laying laminate flooring
- Installing a new bathroom

- Building a porch
- Removing or replacing internal and external doors
- Constructing a door arch
- Putting up TV aerials or satellite dishes
- Installing CCTV cameras or other surveillance
- Altering the garden or boundary of the property

This list does not state every type of alteration which requires permission. In addition, building regulation approval or planning permission may be required dependent upon the type of work. It is the tenant's responsibility to obtain any relevant permissions.

The Council will not take responsibility for the repair or maintenance of installations fitted by the tenant unless this has been agreed in writing.

### 13 TENANT RECHARGES

Tenants will be recharged for any works required as a result of tenant damage or fault. For example, any deliberate or accidental damage that could have been prevented with reasonable care – such as doors being damaged, or keys lost, and a lock change required.

**At the end of a tenancy** the Council may take steps to recover reasonable costs incurred if:

- Missed or damaged items need to be replaced or repaired,
- Aids and adaptations are removed without the Council's permission,
- Any tenant alterations do not comply with relevant regulations and have to be replaced or repaired,
- Any tenant alterations were made without the Council's written consent (see the Tenants' Alterations Procedure),
- Items are left in the home and need to be removed and stored, after the termination date,
- Items are left in the home which need to be disposed of by the Council,
- The property needs to be cleaned.

The Council will charge tenants for any works which are listed above as tenants' responsibilities if the work is carried out by the Council or its contractors to return the property to its original condition.

### 14 DECORATION ALLOWANCE

Once properties are let, tenants take responsibility for decorating their homes as detailed in the tenancy agreement.

When delivering some works to properties, tenants' decoration to walls and ceilings can be damaged and compensation is paid to tenants to help towards the cost of redecorating; this compensation is called Decoration Allowance.

Decoration Allowance does not cover the full cost of re-decorating, rather it is a sum awarded to acknowledge the damage done to décor which can be used to contribute towards the cost of redecorating.

The Council has a legal duty to make good or compensate for damaged decorations as a result of works carried out to their homes. Examples of such repair work may include:

- Electrical re-wiring following an electrical fault,
- Broken bathroom fittings and associated re-tiling,
- Insecure external windows/doors,
- Loose or detached banister/handrail,
- Leaking roof,
- Repairing a defective damp proof course.

The Council has no legal responsibility to provide decoration allowance following an improvement to a home. As a good landlord the Council wishes to help tenants where decorations have been disturbed following programmed/ improvement works. Not all improvement works will cause damage or require the full decoration of a room. Examples of programmed works can include:

- Kitchen replacement (if the Council does not redecorate following fitting),
- Bathroom replacement (if the Council does not redecorate following fitting),
- Damp proof course renewal,
- Installing a Damp Proof Course for the first time,
- Plastering.\*

\* Most damage to plasterwork is discovered during routine redecoration by a customer. In such circumstances, compensation for damage to decoration is not appropriate. If the Council has to make good plasterwork as a result of damage caused during repair work, then the customer should be compensated by way of a decoration allowance.

From April 2025, the Council's sums and payment methods for decoration allowance will change:

CURRENTLY	FROM APRIL 2025
Payment of £25 per room damaged	Payment will increase to £50 per room damaged
Awarded per habitable room	Will be awarded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• per room, including halls, stairs and landing which will count as one room.</li> <li>• for any other rooms within the main envelope of the property and in which tenants carry out their daily lives – this does not include outhouses.</li> </ul>
Paid by cheque	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paid as a credit to the tenant's rent account, or</li> <li>• by cheque, issued in the tenant's name</li> </ul>

No limit

Limited to £350 per property.

The sums awarded will be reviewed every three years.

## 15 RIGHT TO REPAIR

If there are delays with works being carried out, and the work is not completed to the timescales specified in the service standards, the Right to Repair Scheme may offer tenants the chance to request that an alternative contractor carry out the work. If the repair is still not done, the tenant may be entitled to compensation.

The Right to Repair only applies to certain eligible repairs. Additional information on the scheme is available in The Guide to your Home.

## 16 AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

The Council is committed to helping tenants stay in their homes for as long as they choose. If tenants require adaptations to their homes, such as handrails to the entrance to doors, or a shower unit rather than a bath, an assessment can be requested. The Council may be able to assist with funding towards the cost of adapting homes to better meet a tenant's assessed care needs.

More information can be found in the Council's Aids and Adaptations Policy.

## 17 USING REPAIRS DATA TO INFORM INVESTMENT DECISIONS

The Council draws on multiple data sources to understand the expected lifespan of components of its housing stock. These data indicate the expected lifespans of roofs, kitchens, boilers, etc.

Examples of this include:

- Analysis of repairs data to inform capital programmes, eg, roofing programmes,
- Referrals from each areas' Technical Officers, drawing on their experiences and inspections in a locality,
- Tapping into the knowledge and data of contract partners,
- Referrals from Technical Officers regarding pathways, paving, etc, which are passed for possible inclusion in the Environmental Programme,
- Looking at data from proactive hot-spot areas for damp and mould.

## 18 DISREPAIR AND COMPENSATION

In some circumstances, the Council may need to offer a tenant compensation, including:

- If a tenant has completed agreed improvements to their home which qualify for compensation,
- Right to Repair (see section 15),
- If the Council or its contractors accidentally damage tenant property when carrying out a repair,



- If the Council's/contractor's service has been considerably below a reasonably expected standard and if the tenant has been substantially inconvenienced or incurred a financial loss.

Tenants are able to lodge a disrepair claim with the Council if the Council has been informed of a defect and been given reasonable opportunity to rectify it but has not done so. Please refer to the Council's website to find out more about Housing Disrepair Claims.

## 19 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Council supports equality of access for all its tenants, especially those who are at most risk due to their/their household members' needs, those who have difficulties managing their property, and those who struggle to sustain a tenancy. The Council recognises that some groups with protected characteristics are more likely to fall into one of these categories.

Where appropriate the Council will adapt working practices to ensure tenants do not face additional barriers when accessing services. This includes providing information to tenants in Braille, large print, audio, or alternative languages.

The Council will record and monitor data to gain insight on satisfaction levels and service outcomes for tenants with protected characteristics and use this information to help improve services.

The Council will take into account whether a resident has any particular needs that give a specific repair more urgency than the designated timescales.

Depending on tenants' needs, and in particular circumstances, the Council will adjust the urgency of a repair if the risk to health, safety and security is increased due to tenants' personal circumstances.

## 20 MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE

This policy and the repairs and maintenance service will be monitored through a variety of means, including:

- Regular performance reports, including a monthly performance scorecard and a quarterly compliance scorecard
- Contract monitoring meetings with contractors
- Tenant feedback, including the level and nature of complaints from tenants regarding repairs and maintenance, tenant perception measures results, and instant satisfaction survey results (tenants are sent a text message after each repair requesting feedback).

**Responsive repairs and Tenant Satisfaction Measures;** please see Appendix B for a full list of performance indicators for responsive repairs and Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

For more information regarding compliance monitoring and performance, please refer to the Compliance Policies.

## 21 COMPLAINTS

Anyone who feels that they have had a poor service from the Council, or one of its contractors, and has tried to get the problem solved by speaking to an officer from Housing Services, can make a complaint.

For more information about how to make a complaint, please refer to the Council's Complaints Procedure for Housing Services.

## 22 HOW TENANTS CAN GET INVOLVED

The Council is keen to involve tenants in shaping its services and ensuring the Council delivers on the issues which matter most to tenants.

By working together, the Council and tenants can develop and improve services for all customers. From how well Council policies are explained to where and how money is spent, tenants can have a say on what happens.

The Council convenes a Repairs sub-group of the Housing Involvement Panel which includes tenant representatives.

For more information, please see the Council's Tenant Engagement Framework or visit the Council's Tenant Involvement web pages

[www.rotherham.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement)

Email [customerinvolvement@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:customerinvolvement@rotherham.gov.uk), or

Phone 01709 822100

Tenants could also contact the local tenant federation.

Rotherham Federation of Communities

Web [www.rotherhamfederation.org](http://www.rotherhamfederation.org)

Email [info@rotherfed.org](mailto:info@rotherfed.org)

Phone 01709 368515

## APPENDIX 1

## COMPLETE LIST OF EMERGENCY REPAIRS

REPAIR	WHEN IS THIS REPAIR CLASSED AS URGENT?
Waste pump not working	If this is a wet room
WC pan blocked	If it is the only toilet in the property
Fire alarm triggered in neighbourhood centre	Always
Fire alarm triggered in block of flats	Always
Repair communal external door (Property Not Secure)	Always
Refix hip/ridge tiles – if roof leak or dangerous	If the tiles are hanging dangerously
Renew hip/ridge tiles – if roof leak or dangerous	If the tiles are hanging dangerously
Refix loose concrete coping	If the coping poses a significant risk to tenants or members of the public
Refix loose brick on edge coping	If the coping poses a significant risk to tenants or members of the public
Soil pipe leaking on joint	If the pipe is leaking raw sewage
Soil pipe cracked and leaking	If the pipe is leaking raw sewage
Refix soil pipe	If the pipe is at imminent risk of falling
Cooker control unit (switch and socket) damaged/not working	If there are bare wires showing or signs/smells of burning
Cooker outlet (plate behind cooker) damaged/not working	If there are bare wires showing or signs/smells of burning
No power or lights	If trip switches have been reset and there is still no power/lights
No power to property	If trip switches have been reset and there is still no power/lights
No lights to property	If trip switches have been reset and there are still no lights
Light switch damaged or not working	If there are bare wires showing or if there are signs of burning
Smoke alarm/beeping/sounding	If the alarm is sounding constantly
Socket/fused spur damaged/not working	If there are bare wires showing or signs/smell of burning
Water leaking on to electrics	Always
Boundary wall loose or crumbling	If the wall is at risk of falling
Cladding boards loose or damaged	If the cladding is at risk of falling
Coping loose/missing bricks	If the wall is at risk of falling
Coping loose/missing concrete	If the wall is at risk of falling
Repair concrete canopy over door	If the canopy is in a dangerous state
Repair timber canopy over door	If the canopy is in a dangerous state



REPAIR	WHEN IS THIS REPAIR CLASSED AS URGENT?
Repair PVC canopy over door	If the canopy is in a dangerous state
Gain entry to property/lock change	Always
Wall unit unsafe	If the unit is at risk of falling imminently
Supply and fit grab rail to shower/bath	If the tenant is ready to leave hospital and the works are needed as part of their discharge.
Supply and fit grab rail to toilet	If the tenant is ready to leave hospital and the works are needed as part of their discharge.
Supply and fit grab rail to external door	If the tenant is ready to leave hospital and the works are needed as part of their discharge.
Supply and fit key safe	If the tenant is ready to leave hospital and the works are needed as part of their discharge.
Leaking pipe work at roof level	If the leak is coming into the property and affecting the electrics
Leak from cold water tank	If the leak is affecting the electrics or if the leak cannot be contained
External water mains pipe burst/leaking	If the leak is within the boundary of the property
External water mains pipe frozen	If the pipework is within the boundary of the property
Soil pipe leaking	If the pipe is leaking raw sewage
Soil pipe loose	If the pipe is at imminent risk of falling
Pot loose or broken	If the chimney pot is at imminent risk of falling
Chimney stack loose or crumbling	If the stack is at imminent risk of falling
Barge boards missing, loose or rotten	If the loose boards pose an imminent danger of falling
Fascia boards missing, loose or rotten	If the loose fascia boards pose an imminent danger of falling
Soffit boards missing, loose or rotten	If the loose soffits pose an imminent danger of falling
Board up window	Always

## APPENDIX 2

**COMPLETE LIST OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR RESPONSIVE  
REPAIRS AND TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (TSMs)**

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS	TSMs
% of four-hour responsive repairs which are attended within timescales	Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
% of four-hour emergency gas responsive repairs which are attended within timescales	Number of responsive repairs raised during reporting year
% of responsive repairs completed "Right First Time"	Number of responsive repairs cancelled by landlord (the Council) or at the tenant's request, for any reason
% of gas responsive repairs completed "Right First Time"	Number of responsive repairs reclassified either by addition of extra time or change in status to another work category, eg Planned
Average number of days to complete a void (major works and minor works)	Number of responsive repairs completed in first year
% of 24-hour urgent gas responsive repairs which are attended within timescales	Number of responsive repairs which have not been completed (work in progress)
% of appointed responsive repairs which are completed within timescales	Asbestos safety checks
% of appointed gas responsive repairs which are completed within timescales	Lift safety checks
% of planned revenue works which are completed within timescales	Gas safety checks
% of aids and adaptations which are completed within timescales	Fire safety checks
% of voids uncap and tests Availability of Uncap & Test slots	
% of repairs where an appointment has been made and kept	

**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HOUSING SERVICES GAS & CARBON  
MONOXIDE SAFETY POLICY**

**NOVEMBER 2024**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The health and safety of tenants, residents, visitors, staff, and contract partners is of paramount importance to the Council. The risk of gas and carbon monoxide escape presents a significant hazard to the safety of buildings and their occupants, and it is imperative that there are robust management and early warning systems in place to significantly reduce risks.

The key objective of this policy is to ensure the Council, employees, partners, and tenants are clear on their legal and regulatory gas and carbon monoxide safety obligations in respect of housing assets. This policy provides the framework all key stakeholders will operate within to meet these obligations.

The delivery of this policy is an integral part of the Council's holistic management of gas and carbon monoxide safety across its portfolio of assets as detailed within the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

## 2 SCOPE

This Policy aims to demonstrate that the Council has relevant measures in place to comply with the Gas Safety (installation and use) Regulations 1998 as amended and the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022: This policy also operates within the context of additional legislation (see Appendix)

It covers assets within the responsibility of the Council's housing service, including residential properties, neighbourhood centres, garages and boiler houses but does not apply to managing gas and carbon monoxide safety within non-council owned dwellings or other council assets such as schools, care homes, offices, or commercial properties.

This policy applies to all employees who are involved with the management and maintenance of housing services including contractors or visitors to buildings for the purpose of performing their work duties, and is underpinned by the following principles:

- Ensuring compliance with legal and statutory requirements.
- Ensuring, as far as is reasonably possible that gas and carbon monoxide risks are minimised.
- Ensuring all gas and carbon monoxide equipment on the Council's estate is regularly maintained, and records kept in line with legal requirements. This includes cyclical servicing and inspections of gas installations.

### 2.1 Guidance and codes of practice

The principal guidance and codes of practice applicable to this policy are:

- Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) - The ACoP applicable to this policy is: ACoP L56 - 'Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances' (fifth edition 2018).

- The principal guidance applicable to this policy is: INDG285 - 'A guide to landlords' duties: Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 as amended Approved Code of Practice and guidance (3rd Edition 2018).

## 2.2 Regulatory standards

The Council will comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards for social housing in England.

The Gas Safety Regulations impose duties on the Council to protect customers in their homes. The main duties are set out in Regulation 36 and require landlords to:

- Ensure gas fittings and flues are maintained in a safe condition. Gas appliances should be serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If these are not available it is recommended that they are serviced annually, unless advised otherwise by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- Ensure the annual safety check is conducted on each gas appliance and flue within 12 months of the previous safety check.
- Have all installation, maintenance and safety checks conducted by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- Keep a record of each safety check for at least two years (until at least two further gas safety checks have been conducted).
- Issue a copy of the landlord gas safety record to tenants within 28 days of the check being completed, or upon sign up to any new tenancy.
- Display a copy of the latest safety check record in a common area of a building where the gas appliance serves a communal heating system to multiple homes.
- Ensure that gas fittings which contravene Regulation 30 (e.g. certain gas fires and instantaneous water heaters) are not fitted in any room to be occupied as sleeping accommodation. This includes any room converted into such accommodation.

The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations which came into effect 1st October 2022 require the Council to:

- Install a smoke alarm on every elevation with living accommodation.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in any rooms used as living accommodation with a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers).
- Repair or replace faulty smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors as soon as reasonably practicable.

### 3 THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO MANAGING GAS & CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY

The Council has a range of measures in place to manage gas and carbon monoxide safety within its properties. The compliance management matrix details all compliance activity, frequency of testing, and how the Council meets its statutory and regulatory obligations. This includes:

- Domestic Landlord Gas Safety Record.
- Non- Domestic Landlord Gas Safety Record.
- Solid Fuel Annual Service and Sweep.
- Carbon Monoxide Detection.
- Liquid Petroleum Gas Landlord Gas Safety Record.
- Heating Pressure Vessels.

#### 3.1 Annual Servicing

The Council will conduct an annual gas safety check to all properties with a gas supply, irrespective of whether the gas is connected or not.

The annual gas safety check will include any testing of tenant owned appliances (excluding tenant's own cookers). Where appliances are found to be faulty, they will be identified in accordance with the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure (IGEM/G/11 Edition 2) and isolated or disconnected dependent on the severity of the issue. A warning notice will be issued, and the relevant advice given to the tenant explaining why the appliance is considered unsafe.

The Council will conduct an annual gas safety check to all properties where the gas supply has been capped at the request of the tenant on a previous safety check, to ensure the supply has not been reconnected without the Council being notified. At the same time, the Council will check on tenant welfare and assess whether the lack of gas heating is adversely affecting the condition of the property.

Annual visual checks are completed to properties that do not have a gas meter but retain a live gas supply which has been capped at the emergency control valve (ECV).

#### 3.2 New Appliance

The Council will ensure a gas safety check is conducted following installation of a new gas boiler and obtain a landlord gas safety certificate (LGSR) to confirm the necessary checks have been completed. The safety check will include a gas tightness test of the carcass, full commissioning of the newly installed boiler in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and Regulation 26/9, a visual inspection of the meter installation, and an annual service/safety check in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, Regulation 26/9 and the Council's specification on all other gas appliances and associated flues within a property.



### **3.3 Void Properties and Mutual Exchange**

For safety reasons and best practice, the Council will cap off gas supplies to all properties when the property becomes empty. This will be completed by the end of the next working day following termination of tenancy. The Council will also cap off gas supplies to all new build properties upon receipt of keys at handover from the contractor/developer.

Uncapping and a gas safety check is conducted upon reletting a property at a date agreed with the tenant, and a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) is issued within 28 days of the inspection.

A gas safety check will be completed on the day of a mutual exchange.

### **3.4 Refurbishment Work**

A safety check will be conducted on completion of any repair and/or refurbishment works to occupied or void properties where works may have affected any gas fittings, appliances, or flues all in accordance with Regulation 8.

### **3.5 Gas Boiler Disconnections**

If a boiler cannot be repaired, and leaving it connected to the gas supply would pose a risk of gas or carbon monoxide escape, the boiler supply will be capped/disconnected from the gas supply. If this occurs, then temporary electric heaters will be offered and provided at the time of capping. New parts will be sourced and fitted, or if required, a new boiler supplied and fitted within 9 days of disconnection.

### **3.6 Carbon Monoxide Alarms and Smoke Detectors**

As part of the annual gas safety check (or at void stage) the Council will check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms are working correctly. A new detector and/or alarm will be fitted if faulty or missing.

### **3.7 Unsafe Appliances**

The Council will ensure that there is a robust process in place for the management of immediately dangerous and at-risk situations identified from the gas/heating safety check or heating repair works, in line with Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure. Any open flue gas appliances found in any rooms that are being used as bedrooms or for sleeping will be removed.

### **3.7 Solid Fuel Appliances**

A HETAS accredited contractor is in place to service existing solid fuel appliances and sweep flues on an annual basis. The contractor will also check and replace as necessary any carbon monoxide detecting device(s)

The Council will not permit installation of solid fuel or any open flued appliances. All existing appliances will be removed prior to any new tenancy.



### 3.8 Testing and servicing schedule

GAS ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY
Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) Domestic	Annually
Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) Non-Domestic	Annually
Solid fuel Appliances	Annually
Carbon Monoxide Detection	Annually
Heating Pressure Vessels	Annually

### 3.8 Risk assessment and key controls

- The Council operates effective contract management arrangements with contractors responsible for delivering the service, including ensuring contracts/service level agreements are in place, conducting client-led performance meetings, and ensuring that contractors' employee and public liability insurances are up to date on an annual basis.
- All replacement, modification and installation of gas appliances and heating systems within Council properties will comply with all elements of Building Regulations, Part J Combustion Appliances and Fuel Storage Systems.
- The Council maintains a risk assessment for gas and carbon monoxide safety management and operations, setting out key risks and appropriate mitigations.
- To comply with the requirements of the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002, the Council will consider the safety of its workspaces and plant/boiler rooms of residential blocks that fall within scope of the legislation.
- The Council investigates and manages all RIDDOR notifications submitted to the HSE in relation to gas and carbon monoxide safety and will take action to address any issues identified and make appropriate adjustments from lessons learned.
- A robust process is in place for dealing with reports of fumes and suspected gas escapes.

### 3.9 Procedures for access

An appointment letter for the annual gas safety check will be posted ten months after completion of the previous check. The appointment will be on or around two weeks from the date of the appointment letter and will provide details for rearranging the appointment if the auto generated appointment is inconvenient. A further appointment letter will be sent if the engineer is unable to access and complete the gas safety check.

The Council will operate a robust enforcement process following three consecutive failed access attempts. Legal remedies available within the terms of the tenancy agreement may be enforced to gain access to the property to carry out the work.

Where vulnerabilities are known or identified, the Council will ensure the wellbeing of the tenant is safeguarded and work with other agencies and Housing Officers to attempt to address the root cause of the access issue.

### **3.10 Data and records**

The Council will maintain a core asset register of all properties with component and attribute data against each property to show gas safety check requirements.

Copies of all landlord's gas safety records (LGSRs)/certificates will be provided to the tenants or displayed in a common area within 28 days of completion.

A core asset register will be maintained of all properties owned and/or managed by the Council, with component/attribute data against each property to show gas/heating safety check requirements.

A monthly data reconciliation process will be undertaken to manage all changes to stock, including property acquisitions and disposals.

Accurate records will be maintained against each property owned or managed by the Council.

All completed safety check records, warning notices and remedial work records will be retained for at least two years and will have robust processes and controls in place to maintain appropriate levels of security for all gas/heating safety related data and records.

### **3.11 Competent persons**

- Only suitably competent Gas Safe accredited contractors will undertake works to gas fittings, appliances, and flues.
- Only suitably competent HETAS accredited contractors will undertake works to solid fuel fittings, appliances, and flues.
- A check will be made to ensure contractors working on behalf of the Council hold the relevant qualifications and accreditations when procured, and thereafter on an annual basis; and will evidence these checks and each contractor's certification appropriately. The Gas, Electrical and Mechanical Supervisor will have copies of front and backs of all Gas Safe cards held by Service Providers and their sub-contractors.

### **3.12 Training**

The Council will deliver training on this policy and the procedures that support it, through appropriate methods including team briefings; basic gas and heating safety awareness training; and on the job training for those delivering the program of gas and heating safety checks, planned maintenance and repair works as part of their daily job. All training undertaken by staff will be formally recorded.

## 4 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The Council will ensure gas and carbon monoxide safety advice is provided to all tenants and is accessible including providing, if appropriate, the information in braille, large print, audio, or alternative languages. In addition:

- The Council will respond appropriately to meet the needs of tenants who share information regarding a disability or vulnerability and will ensure reasonable adjustments are made to complete electrical testing and maintenance.
- The Council considers excellent communication essential in the effective delivery of safety programmes and will establish a strategy to enhance communication to support tenants' understanding of gas and carbon monoxide safety. This will encourage and support tenants to report any safety concerns and help the Council to engage with vulnerable and hard to reach tenants.
- The Council will share information clearly and transparently and will ensure that information is available to tenants via regular publications and information on the Council's website.
- The Council acknowledges the impacts of energy poverty and will ensure a robust process is in place to support and/or direct tenants to bodies able to offer professional advice.

## 5 AUDIT, ASSURANCE, AND REVIEW

### 5.1 Quality Assurance

The Compliance Officer will regularly review process, performance and undertake quality assurance checks to monitor delivery against the policy with oversight by the Compliance Manager and Head of Housing Property Services, this includes monitoring the following:

- 5% random desktop sample of Landlord Gas Safety Records
- 100% certification checks by compliance management system.
- 2.5% field checks including works in progress audits.

### 5.2 Managing Performance

Performance and progress against key performance indicators will be reported regularly to the Senior Management Team and at least quarterly to senior management and the Cabinet Member via the housing compliance scorecard:

- Properties with a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (100%)
- Properties overdue at legal stage (0%)
- Valid certification for properties with other heating types (100%)
- Commercial Boilers and Pressure Vessels (100%)
- Properties with Carbon Monoxide detector(s) installed (100%)

### 5.3 Document Control/Revision History

This policy will be reviewed annually or before if changes in legislation or regulatory require an earlier review.

DATE APPROVED	18 November 2024
REVISION DATE	November 2027

Version no.	Date	Authorisation route	Summary of changes
	24/09/2024	DLT	Formatting, typos, aligning information with TSMs/KPIs
	07/10/2024	SLT	
	22/10/2024	IPSC	
	18/11/2024	Cabinet	

## APPENDIX

This policy also operates within the context of the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 (as amended)
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (inc. latest amendments)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006
- Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016
- Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- Building Regulations 2010 (England and Wales) approved document J.
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Defective Premises Act 1972

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**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HOUSING SERVICES ELECTRICAL  
SAFETY POLICY**

**NOVEMBER 2024**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The health and safety of tenants, residents, visitors, staff, and contractors is of paramount importance to the Council. The risk of electrical fire, shock and even electrocution presents a significant hazard to the safety of buildings and their occupants, and it is imperative that there are robust management and early warning systems in place to significantly reduce risks.

The key objective of this policy is to ensure that Council, employees, partners, and tenants are clear on the Council's legal and regulatory electrical safety obligations in respect of housing assets. This policy provides the framework all key stakeholders will operate within to meet these obligations.

The delivery of this policy is an integral part of the Council's holistic management of electrical safety across its portfolio of assets as detailed within the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

## 2 SCOPE

This policy aims to demonstrate that the Council has relevant measures in place to comply with the Housing Act 2004, Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016.

This policy also operates within the context of additional legislation (see Appendix A).

It covers assets within the responsibility of the Council's Housing Service, including residential properties, neighbourhood centres, garages and boiler houses but does not apply to managing electrical safety within non-Council owned dwellings or other Council assets such as schools, care homes, offices or commercial properties.

This policy applies to all employees who are involved with the management and maintenance of housing services including contractors or visits to buildings for the purpose of carrying out their work duties, and is underpinned by the following principles:

- Ensuring compliance with legal and statutory requirements.
- Ensuring, as far as it reasonably possible, that electrical risks are minimised.
- Ensuring all electrical and mechanical equipment on the Council's estate is regularly maintained, and records kept in line with legal requirements. This includes in respect of cyclical servicing and inspections of electrical installations.

### 2.1 Guidance and codes of practice

The principal guidance and codes of practice applicable to this policy are:

- Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment Wiring Regulations British Standard 767:2018 (18<sup>th</sup> edition amendment 3).
- Code of Practice for the Management of Electrotechnical Care in Social Housing (Electrical Safety Roundtable) January 2019.
- The code of Practice for In-Service Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment (IET) 2020 (5<sup>th</sup> edition).

## 2.2 Regulatory standards

The Council will comply with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards for social housing in England.

The Housing Act 2004 requires that properties are free from Category One Hazards, Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which includes electrical hazards.

The landlord and Tenant Action 1985 and the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 place duties on landlords to ensure that electrical installations in rented properties are:

- Safe when the tenancy begins
- Maintained in a safe condition throughout the tenancy so the property is fit for habitation.

To comply with these duties, electrical installations are required to be periodically inspected and tested. There is no legal requirement setting out how frequently we must carry out inspections and tests in domestic properties, however, the Government is consulting on introducing mandatory checks on electrical installations for social housing at least every five years.

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 places duties on employers that all electrical installations and appliances within the workplace are safe and that only competent persons work on the electrical installations, systems, and equipment.

## 3 THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO MANAGING ELECTRICAL SAFETY

The Council has a range of measures in place to manage electrical safety within its properties. The compliance management matrix details all compliance activity, frequency of testing, and how the Council meets its statutory and regulatory obligations. This includes:

- Domestic electrical installation condition report.
- Non-domestic electrical installation condition report.
- Smoke detectors.
- Automatic doors, gates and barriers.
- Emergency lighting.
- Portable appliance testing.
- Lightning protection.

### **3.1 Electrical installation condition reports (EICR)**

A programme of electrical installation inspection and testing is carried out to all domestic, communal areas and neighbourhood centres at least once every five years (unless the competent person recommends the next test must be done sooner than this), upon commencement of a new tenancy or following planned component replacement works.

### **3.2 Smoke detectors**

As part of the annual gas safety check, or at void stage, the engineer will check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms are working correctly. A new detector and/or alarm will be fitted if faulty or missing.

### **3.3 Automatic doors, barriers, and gates**

Automatic doors are checked and serviced every six months and a certificate of safety provided by the specialist contractor confirming the doors meet British Standard EN 12453.

### **3.4 Emergency lighting**

Emergency lighting is tested by accredited electricians every six months. Any defects are noted and actioned within appropriate priorities.

### **3.4 Portable appliance testing (PAT)**

Any portable equipment (electrical equipment which does not form part of the fixed system is considered to be an electrical appliance). PAT is undertaken by a competent person at intervals dependent upon level of risk. This includes items provided within furnished tenancies and in neighbourhood centres. It does not apply to tenants' own equipment.

### **3.5 Lightning protection**

Lightning protection is tested and certified annually by a specialist contractor and a certificate of compliance held.

### **3.6 Follow-up work**

- The Council will endeavour to repair all Code One (C1) and Code 2 (C2) defects and Further Investigations (FIs) identified by an electrical installation inspection and test at the time of the check, to produce a satisfactory EICR. Where this is not possible, we will make the installation safe and return to complete the required remediation works within 28 days where reasonably practicable to ensure a satisfactory EICR is produced.

- Where C2 defects have been repaired after the inspection date, they will be recorded on a Minor Works Certificate which will be appended to the unsatisfactory EICR deeming the installation satisfactory.
- The Council will review all Code 3 (C3) observations and determine the most appropriate course of action.

### 3.7 Testing and servicing schedule

ELECTRICAL ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY
Electric domestic EICR	5 years
Electric non-domestic EICR	5 years
Electric automatic doors	6 months
Electric automatic gates and barriers	6 months
Electric emergency lighting service	Annually
Lightning protection	Annually

### 3.8 Risk assessment and key controls

- The council operates effective contract management arrangements with the partnering contractors responsible for delivering the service, including ensuring contracts and service level agreements are in place, conducting client-led performance meetings and ensuring that contractor, employee, and public liability insurances are up to date on an annual basis.
- The council maintains a risk assessment for electrical safety management and operations, setting out its key electrical safety risks and appropriate mitigations.
- To comply with the requirements of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) a Construction Phase Plan will be in place for all repairs work to void and tenanted properties (at the start of the contract and reviewed annually thereafter), component replacement and refurbishment works.
- The Council addresses meter tampering when discovered during routine, cyclical or programmed electrical maintenance.
- The Council investigates and manages all Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) notifications submitted to the HSE in relation to electrical safety and will take action to address any issues identified and make appropriate adjustments from lessons learned.

### 3.9 Procedures for access

The Council will send an appointment letter for the domestic electrical safety test two months before the five-year anniversary of the previous test. The appointment will be on or around two weeks from the date of the appointment letter and will provide details for rearranging the appointment if the auto generated appointment is inconvenient. A further appointment letter will be sent if the engineer is unable to access and complete the electrical safety test.

The Council will operate a robust enforcement process. Following three consecutive failed access attempts, the Council will use the legal remedies available within the terms of the tenancy agreement, to gain access to the property to carry out the work.

Where vulnerabilities are known or identified, the Council will safeguard the wellbeing of the tenant.

### **3.10 Data and records**

- The Council will maintain a core asset register of all properties with component and attribute data against each property to show electrical safety check requirements.
- The Council will operate a monthly data reconciliation process to manage all changes to stock, including property acquisitions and disposals.
- The Council will maintain accurate records against each property;
  - Inspection dates
  - EICRs
  - Minor electrical works certificates
  - Electrical Installation Certificates and Building Regulation Part P notifications associated with remedial works

### **3.11 Competent persons**

- Only suitably competent NICEIC, or equivalent, electrical contractors and operatives will undertake electrical works on behalf of the Council.
- We will check that Council contractors hold the relevant qualifications and accreditations when procured, and thereafter, on an annual basis.

### **3.12 Training**

The Council will deliver training on this policy and the procedures that support it, through appropriate methods, including team briefings, basic electrical safety awareness training, and on the job training for those delivering the programme of electrical testing, planned maintenance and repair works as part of their daily job. All training undertaken by staff will be formally recorded.

## **4 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION**

The Council will ensure electrical safety advice is provided to all tenants and is accessible including providing, if appropriate, the information in braille, large print, audio, or alternative languages. In addition:

- The Council will respond appropriately to meet the needs of tenants who share information regarding a disability or vulnerability and will ensure reasonable adjustments are made to complete electrical testing and maintenance.
- The Council considers excellent communication essential in the effective delivery of electrical safety programmes and will establish a strategy to enhance communication to support tenants' understanding of electrical safety. This will encourage and support tenants to report any concerns about electrical safety and help the Council to engage with vulnerable and hard to reach tenants.



- The Council will share information clearly and transparently and will ensure that information is available to tenants via regular publications and information on the Council's website.
- The Council acknowledges the impacts of energy poverty and will ensure a robust process is in place to support and/or direct tenants to bodies able to offer professional advice.

## **5 AUDIT, COMPLIANCE, AND REVIEW**

### **5.1 Quality Assurance**

The Compliance Officer will regularly review process, performance and undertake quality assurance checks to monitor delivery against the policy with oversight by the Compliance Manager and Head of Housing Property Services, this includes monitoring the following:

- 10% random desktop sample of all electrical certification.
- 100% certification checks by compliance management system.
- 2.5% field checks of all categories of electrical compliance.
- 20% of all new installations.

### **5.2 Managing Performance**

Performance and progress against key performance indicators will be reported regularly to the Senior Management Team and at least quarterly to Senior Management Team and the Cabinet Member via the Housing Compliance Scorecard.

- Communal properties having a valid Electrical Installation condition Report (EICR) within the cycle (100%)
- Domestic properties having a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) within the cycle (100%)
- Properties with outstanding C1 actions (0%)
- Properties with outstanding C2 actions exceeding one calendar year since test date (0%)
- Automated doors checked/serviced (100%)
- Automated gates and barriers tested/serviced (100%)
- Lightning conductors tested (100%)
- Properties with a smoke detector (100%)
- Number of RIDDOR notifications to the HSE with regards to electrical safety (0%)

### 5.3 Document Control/Revision History

This policy will be reviewed annually or before if changes in legislation or regulatory require an earlier review.

DATE APPROVED	18 November 2024
REVISION DATE	November 2027

Version no.	Date	Authorisation route	Summary of changes
	24/09/2024	DLT	Formatting, typos, aligning information with TSMs/KPIs
	07/10/2024	SLT	
	22/10/2024	IPSC	
	18/11/2024	Cabinet	

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## APPENDIX

This policy also operates within the context of the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Occupiers' Liability Act 1984
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Act 2007
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Building Regulations 2010 (England and Wales) – Part P
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Defective Premises Act 1972



## Appendix 4

### PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

#### 1. Title

**Title:** Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy Report

**Directorate:** Adult Care, Housing & Public Health

**Service area:** Housing Property Services

**Lead person:** Wendy Foster

**Contact:** 01709 255047

Wendy-regen.foster@rotherham.gov.uk

Is this a:

☒ **Strategy / Policy**
☐ **Service / Function**
☐ **Other**

**If other, please specify Report**

#### 2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The report is seeking approval of the new Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance, Electrical Safety, and Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety Policies which set out the Council's approach to dealing with repairs and maintenance, and gas and electrical safety, in the Council's Housing Service asset portfolio.

### 3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?	x	
Could the proposal affect service users?	x	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?	x	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		x
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		x

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

N/A

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

### 4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

In 2023, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act was introduced. The Act was implemented to give tenants greater powers and improve access to quick and fair solutions to problems following the fire at Grenfell and the death of two-year old Awaab Ishak. Both tragedies highlighted failings in the governance and regulation of social housing.

There was a good deal of learning to be taken from the preventable death of Awaab, whose passing was directly linked to extensive damp and mould in the family home, in Rochdale. Awaab's family had limited English, so it was difficult for them to fully understand their rights and the standard of repairs and maintenance which they could expect from their landlord. Furthermore, the information available to the family was not easily accessible and, despite reporting the damp on several occasions, they struggled to make their voices heard.

Enabled by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing (RoSH) published four consumer standards on which the performance of social housing landlords is assessed. The most relevant standards for this assessment, and driving the work of Housing Property Services, is the Safety and Quality Consumer Standard and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

- **The Safety and Quality Standard** requires landlords to keep their homes safe and free from hazards. It covers repairs, maintenance and planned improvements, health and safety, decency, and stock quality.
- **The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** requires landlords to treat tenants with fairness and respect, engage with and make information available for tenants, and to consider the diverse needs of their tenants.

For the past year, the Council has been looking at its key documents, ensuring they are available to tenants online, and producing versions of more technical documents which are easier to read and understand. They must also be accessible and easy to translate into other languages.

Housing Services is sharing its legal and regulatory performance with tenants and letting them know the set timescales for carrying out urgent and standard repairs, so they can hold the service to account.

The Council is starting to build greater knowledge of its tenants through Housing Estates' tenancy verification visits, as well as inviting tenants to tell us about the personal circumstances. This is particularly important to Housing Property Services as medical conditions which impact a household, or other circumstances, such as having very young children in the home, may impact the priority level given to the repair they are reporting.

The publication of these policies seeks to deliver clarity and information to tenants so they can assess whether the Council is providing the level of service set out in these policies.

The majority of the Council's repairs are carried out by two contract partners, Mears and EQUANS. They currently collate feedback from the Council's tenants regarding repairs

and maintenance. The Council aims to move the collection and analysis of tenant feedback in-house, starting with damp and mould works.

Equalities information has been included in the Council's questionnaire sent to tenants who have recently received a survey/treatment following a report of damp and mould. Feedback will be analysed to assess the satisfaction level across all tenants, including those with protected characteristics. Appropriate action will be taken by the Council if feedback suggests a lack of satisfaction with a particular group of tenants or if there is little or no feedback from a group with protected characteristics.

- **Key findings**

Housing Services needs to grow its knowledge and understanding about its tenants and their personal circumstances. This will enable to the Council to tailor the delivery of its repairs and maintenance service to better meet its tenants' needs.

There is a need to ensure policies are easily accessible to tenants, easy to understand, and easily translated into other languages.

- **Actions**

Tenant feedback will be analysed monthly to ensure a consistency of service across all tenants.

Housing Property Services will continue to engage with, and seek the opinions of, tenants before publishing information and agreeing policies.

Complaints will be monitored in HQIP to identify trends in complaints, either from a specific group of tenants, regarding a specific type of repair or with a specific property type.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	27.09.24
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	03.10.24
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Wendy G Foster Improvement Manager

## 5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Lynsey Stephenson	Head of Housing Property Services	03.10.24

## 6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to [equality@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk) For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

<b>Date screening completed</b>	3 October 2024
<b>Report title and date</b>	Repairs and Maintenance Policy
<b>If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication</b>	Cabinet – 18 November 2024
<b>Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	01/10/24

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## Appendix 5

### PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
<b>Equality Analysis title:</b> Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Electrical Safety, and Gas and CO Safety Policies	
<b>Date of Equality Analysis (EA):</b> 01/10/24	
<b>Directorate:</b> Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	<b>Service area:</b> Housing Property Services, Housing Services
<b>Lead Manager:</b> Wendy G Foster	<b>Contact number:</b> (01709) 255047
<b>Is this a:</b> <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy / Policy</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service / Function</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>	
<b>If other, please specify</b>	

**2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance**

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Wendy G Foster	RMBC	Improvement Manager
John Oliver	Agency/RMBC	Compliance Manager
Lynsey Stephenson	RMBC	Head of Service

**3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance**
**Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)**

This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

These policies apply to all tenants living in the Council's HRA/residential properties, many of whom will have protected characteristics.

**What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)**

The Housing Service holds equalities information on Council housing tenants and on its employees. This information is considered when a report is submitted.

Tenants Scrutiny Panel were consulted on the draft Repairs and Maintenance Policy on 15 July 2024, SMT on 17 July 2024, and DLT on 23 July and 24 September. The policies will be presented to SLT on 7 October 2024, IPSC on 22 October 2024, and Cabinet on 18 November 2024.

**Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?**

The Council has only recently started to collate information regarding equality information on pregnancy.

**What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?**

- Customer feedback is received and monitored daily.
- KPI information and TSM data is collated monthly/quarterly through Performance, Intelligence and Improvement, and shared across Housing Services' Heads of Service and Assistant Director, at the monthly HQIP meetings.
- Complaints information relating to repairs and maintenance is also shared at HQIP.

**Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)**

Tenants Scrutiny Panel were consulted on the draft Repairs and Maintenance Policy on 15 July 2024.

Tenants were keen to remove/replace the term 'vulnerabilities/vulnerable tenants', as some individuals



	<p>may need repairs prioritising but would not consider themselves vulnerable. The Council's approach is that, in many cases, the repair/environment can impact tenants' vulnerability.</p> <p>This has been replaced with 'personal circumstances'.</p>
<b>Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b>	<p>SMT on 17 July 2024, and DLT on 23 July and 24 September.</p> <p>The policies will be presented to SLT on 7 October 2024, IPSC on 22 October 2024, and Cabinet on 18 November 2024.</p> <p>Amendments have been made to include a section on Leaseholders, append a list of emergency repairs, include new build properties/market acquisitions (12 month defects period), and replace the word 'vulnerable/vulnerabilities', with personal circumstances.</p>

#### 4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

**How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups?** (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

As well as the list of emergency repairs at Appendix 1 of the policy, there is scope to upgrade non-emergency repairs to emergency status. This results in repairs being carried out within 4 hours, rather than during a mutually convenient appointment, within 28 days of the repair being reported. For example, should a tenant have a shower over a bath in their home, and report a repair with their shower, it would ordinarily be repaired within 28 days as the bath provides a bathing facility. However, the Council understands that there are some medical conditions for which bathing is detrimental, in these instances the shower repair will be classed as an emergency and attended within 4 hours.

**Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?**

The policies largely reflect the status quo so it is likely that agreeing the policies will have a neutral or slightly positive impact on Rotherham's residents.

The Council is focussing on the accessibility of its repairs and maintenance policy and making it easier for tenants to report repairs and book an appointment which is convenient for them. This can be done either through calling the customer contact centre or online through Housing Online (HOL).

It is understood that HOL cannot currently be viewed in other languages. The cost to make this happen is considerable but is being considered as accessibility is key to delivering against the Transparency, Influence and Accountability consumer standard, as published by the Regulator of Social Housing and enforced through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

**Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?**

With agreement of the policies by Cabinet, HPS will increase the amount of decoration allowance awarded to tenants following works which damage the décor in their homes.

It is understood that the increase in decoration allowance will support all tenants who need to redecorate following works to their homes.

Within the policy, tenants are invited to share their personal circumstances when reporting repairs. The consideration of tenants' personal circumstances, and how those circumstances will be taken into account when determining the urgency of repairs, will have a positive impact and improve the lives of tenants as the Housing Service starts to tailor its services to meet tenants' needs.

**What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations?** (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

Tenants' personal circumstances may sometimes lead to a non-urgent repair being reclassified as urgent. If this occurs frequently, non-standard jobs appointed jobs, which on average are usually completed with 15 days, may take a little longer to complete but would still be carried out within the stated 28 days.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

## **5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan**

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

<b>Policy of analysis:</b>	Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Electrical Safety, and Gas and CO Safety Policies
<b>Directorate and service area:</b>	Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, Housing Services, Housing Property Services
<b>Lead Manager:</b>	Lynsey Stephenson, Head of Service
<b>Summary of findings:</b>	
<p>There is a need to ensure a robust performance management framework to ensure the service is being prioritised to individuals whose personal circumstances may lead to a non-urgent repair being reclassified as urgent.</p> <p>The Council needs to continue to collate and quality check the information held regarding its tenants equalities information.</p>	

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Building on the equalities information the Council holds regarding its tenants and their household members	<b>Age, disability pregnancy/maternity, ethnicity</b>	Ongoing

Continue to monitor performance and complaints	<b>Age, disability, pregnancy/maternity, ethnicity</b>	Ongoing
With the exception of damp and mould reports, tenant feedback is collated through the Council's repair partners, EQUANS and Mears. The Council will monitor responses received for damp and mould to ensure the respondents reflects the borough's demographic and amend the process if needed. It is envisaged that, in the longer term, the Council will directly collate feedback for all repairs and maintenance.	<b>Age, disability, pregnancy/maternity, ethnicity</b>	January 2025
The Council will roll out its direct collation of tenant feedback to tenants who receive capital works.  If successful, direct collation of tenants' feedback to repairs and maintenance, will be fully carried out in-house.	<b>Age, disability, pregnancy/maternity, ethnicity</b>	January 2025  July 2025

**\*A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups**

6. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.		
Name	Job title	Date
SLT	Chief Exec and Directors	7 October 2024
James Clark	Assistant Director, Housing Services	1 October 2024

## 7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy should also be sent to [equality@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk) For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

<b>Date Equality Analysis completed</b>	1 October 2024
<b>Report title and date</b>	Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy, Electrical Safety, and Gas and CO Safety Policies, Cabinet 18 November 2024
<b>Date report sent for publication</b>	1 December 2024
<b>Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	1 October 2024

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## Appendix 6 – Carbon Impact Assessment

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across Rotherham as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
<b>Emissions from non-domestic buildings?</b>	Increases	In 2019, both external contractor partners set up an office/works base within the Borough.	Housing Service's repairs contracts were previously delivered by two external contract partners. One of the two partners changed for the new contract in 2019.	The content of the contracts which mention environmental management are 3.3.10, 3.3.10.2, 3.3.10.7, and 3.3.17.(See below).	The Contract states, 'contractors must respond promptly to requests which the Client may make from time to time for emission-based information. This could include but is not limited to, CO <sub>2</sub> /NO <sub>x</sub> and PM10 emissions.'
<b>Emissions from transport?</b>	Increase	There will be a carbon impact from contractors visiting properties to carry out repairs and maintenance.		Where possible, Council Officers work within a given geographical area.  The repairs and maintenance contracts issued to the Council's two contract partners were split geographically and awarded for work in the south of the borough, and work in the north of the borough.  Both contract partners established a works-base within the borough.	Officer travel is included with the Council's Net Zero 2030 greenhouse gas emissions accounting.  For contractor transport, the council has the ability to request emissions data from contractors, including transport emissions.

<b>Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?</b>	Increase	Repairing and renewing items within Council housing will produce waste. The Council's and Contractor's approach is to repair where possible.		The Council and its contractors will ensure that all wastes arising from repairs and maintenance are treated according to the waste hierarchy i.e., with a preference for re-use [where this will not unduly increase fire safety hazards elsewhere], composting or recycling, with disposal to incineration and energy recovery a least favoured option.	The Council has a legal duty of care to ensure that waste it transfers is managed correctly, throughout its complete journey to disposal or recovery.
<b>Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?</b>	Decrease	Timely servicing of gas appliances, servicing and checks may reduce the energy needed to heat the home.			Not possible to monitor. The Council does monitor the energy performance of homes through EPCs which measure theoretical rather than actual energy use.
<b>Emissions from construction and/or development?</b>	None	Construction and development sit outside of these policies.			
<b>Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?</b>	None				

Identify any emission impacts associated with this decision that have not been covered by the above fields:

The Gas and Carbon Monoxide, and Electrical Safety Policies seek to prevent leaks and fires by regularly inspecting and servicing gas and electrical installations. Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in Council housing are tested during the gas servicing visit.



Fire is a significant potential source of greenhouse gas emissions, directly and through the damage it causes to buildings and their subsequent repair, demolition, or reconstruction. By seeking to mitigate fire safety risks, the Council's proposed Gas and CO, and Electrical Safety Policies may help to avoid these carbon impacts.

Below are excerpts from the Contracts with the Council's external repairs contractors.

### 3.0 Key Expectations

being aware of environmental considerations (and implications) in all areas of its activities and in particular, when maintaining and repairing the stock, minimising waste and reducing its carbon footprint;

### 3.3 Service Provider Obligations

#### 3.3.10 Corporate Social Responsibility

##### 3.3.10.2 Economic

demonstrate carbon reduction or offsetting.

employ Environmental policy and prevention strategies.

##### 3.3.10.7 Environmental management

The Service Provider shall consider the relevance of sustainability at all stages of the life cycle in the provision of services, including the consideration of commercial needs, the minimisation of negative impacts, and also the maximisation of positive impacts on society and the environment. The Client encourages the Service Provider to consider sustainability at all stages rather than as a one-off activity.

The Client will require the successful Service Provider to measure how management of environmental issues during service delivery will reduce or prevent significant environmental impacts. The Client Minimum Standards Charter (see appendix 15) insists that all charter signatories will commit to protecting the environment, minimising waste and energy consumption and using other resources efficiently. These commitments will also apply to their supply chain.

Mandatory for all:

- Eliminate unnecessary waste by adopting the “reduce, reuse, recycle” philosophy.
- Be a good neighbour, minimise negative local impacts (noise, air quality etc.), improve green areas (e.g. biodiversity, visual attractiveness etc.).
- Reduce carbon footprint – be aware of main impacts on carbon emissions including the indirect carbon used in manufacturing processes and the direct impact of operations and logistics.

Please provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:

The new policy does not represent a significant change to current practices or emissions produced by the existing service. Emissions are created through the following activities:

- Non-domestic emissions: increase in emissions from contractors' work bases.
- Transport: increase in emissions – this is mitigated by officers' and contractors' workloads being split by geographical area to minimise travel between homes.
- Waste: carrying out repairs may result in increases in emissions from waste – this is managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy, as required by law.
- Housing: likely decrease in emissions due to timely servicing of gas appliances, servicing and safety checks.

Emissions from transport and waste are likely to increase, due to the Policy's application: however, mitigations and monitoring actions are available as outlined in the table above.

Supporting information:	
Completed by: (Name, title, and service area/directorate).	Lynsey Skidmore, Head of Property Services, Adult Care, Housing & Public Health  Wendy G Foster, Improvement Manager, Housing Property Services, Adult Care, Housing & Public Health
Please outline any research, data, or information used to complete this [form].	<i>Defining and Aligning: Embodied carbon targets and net zero definitions</i> . LETI (May 2021). Available from: < <a href="https://www.leti.uk/carbonalignment">https://www.leti.uk/carbonalignment</a> >  <i>Waste duty of care code of practice</i> . Defra & the Environment Agency (November 2018). Available from: < <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-duty-of-care-code-of-practice">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-duty-of-care-code-of-practice</a> >
If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.	
Tracking [to be completed by Policy Support / Climate Champions]	Tracking reference: CIA344 Katie Rockett, Climate Change Officer

Public Report  
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 13 November 2024

**Report Title**

Annual Compliments and Complaints Report 2023-24

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

**Report Author(s)**

Stuart Purcell, Corporate Complaint Manager, Assistant Chief Executive Directorate,  
01709 822661 or [stuart.purcell@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.purcell@rotherham.gov.uk)

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Directorate, 01709 255233, [fiona.boden@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.boden@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Outline the complaints and compliments that the Council received in 2023/24 in line with statutory requirements.
- b) Identify key trends within complaints and compliments over a five-year period.

**Recommendations**

Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are asked to:

1. Note the Annual Compliments and Complaints Report for 2023/24.

**List of Appendices Included**

- Appendix One Annual Compliments and Complaints Report, 2023/24
- Appendix Two Ombudsman Annual Review letter 2023/24
- Appendix Three Complaint procedures overview

**Background Papers**

Corporate Complaint Policy

Rotherham Council Rotherham Council - Complaints Policy

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

N/A

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Annual Compliments and Complaints Report 2023-24

### 1. Background

- 1.1 All councils need to provide complaint procedures to respond to customer concerns in an open and transparent way within defined timescales and in accordance with legislation. The purpose of the annual complaint report is to outline the complaints and compliments that the Council received in the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023-31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, highlighting key themes and longer-term trends.
- 1.2 The report also explains how the Council has performed against the required standards and includes case studies demonstrating how services have learnt from complaints received.

### 2. Key Issues

- 2.1 **The performance headlines outlined within the report include:**
- 2.2 In 2023/24, the overall number of complaints received by the Council decreased by 13%, going from 1397 in 2022/23 to 1212. This is in contrast to the previous year when complaints had increased by 25% from 1117 in 2021/22 to 1397 2022/23. However, the overall number of complaints received in 2023/24 is the third highest number received in the last five years.
- 2.3 Based on the data from the first three months of 2024/25 this trend of a decreasing number of complaints has continued as 281 complaints were received, compared to 291 in the same period in 2023/24, which is a 4% decrease.
- 2.4 The largest absolute decrease in complaints was in Regeneration and Environment from 510 to 373, a percentage decrease of 27%. The second largest absolute decrease was in Children and Young People's Services from 116 to 64, a percentage decrease of 45%. Finance and Customer Services also decreased, from 105 to 91, a percentage decrease of 13%. Other departments saw a small increase, the largest was in Adult Care services from 55 to 64, a percentage increase of 16%. The second largest increase was in Housing from 607 to 615, a percentage increase of 1%. Assistant Chief Executive's also increased, from four to five and Public Health remained unchanged at zero complaints received.
- 2.5 The decrease in Regeneration and Environment services complaints was primarily as a result of a decrease in Waste Management service complaints, from 237 to 165. The other notable decrease in complaints was in Childrens and Young Peoples Services, where complaints in their Education Health and Care Assessment Team (EHCAT) reduced from 48 to 14.
- 2.6 Performance has decreased at 82% of complaint responses within the target's timescale. It is slightly below the five-year average of 85% and it has

not met the Council Plan target of 85% of complaints responded to within stated timescale (see Appendix Three). Four out of six service areas did not meet the target, these were Adult Care, Assistant Chief Executive's, Housing Services and Regeneration and Environment. There will be more effort made across all those council services who did not meet the target of performance to timescales, see sections five to nine for the details of the Service areas individual performance.

- 2.7 Fewer complaints were upheld in terms of the percentage of complaints responded to, when compared with 2022/23. This is where the Council has investigated and found a problem with the service provided, with 294 or 24% of all complaints upheld in 2023/24. To put this into context, 443 or 32% were upheld in 2022/23 and 268 or 24% were upheld in 2021/22.
- 2.8 The majority of complaints (94%) were resolved at stage 1, only 37, or 3% of all complaints, were escalated to stage 2. This compares with 24, or 2%, in 2022/23.
- 2.9 405 (equating to 33%) of all complaints were categorised as quality of service, making this the greatest proportion of types of complaints. Complaints within this category have decreased from 431 (equating to 31%) in 2022/23. Lack of service accounted for the second highest category of complaints, with 309 complaints (or 25% of complaints). Complaints within this category have decreased from 398 (equating to 28%) in 2022/23. The third highest was conduct / attitude of staff at 170 (14%) received. Complaints within this category have slightly increased from 168 in 2022/23.
- 2.10 Regarding the number of compliments received, this has increased by 14% overall, with 111 more received. Adult Care services saw the biggest absolute increase with 61 more received, followed by Children and Young People's Services, with 57 more received. Housing Services and Assistant Chief Executive's also saw a small increase. Regeneration and Environment, Finance and Customer Services and Public Health saw a small decrease in terms of numbers received.

## **2.11 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review letter**

- 2.11 The Annual Review letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) was received on 17th July 2024, setting out its records of referred complaint investigations. In 2023/24 less complaints were investigated and upheld by the LGSCO than in the previous year, with 6 complaints investigated compared to 7 investigated in the previous year (2022/23). The decrease can be considered as a return to average numbers and is the second lowest number recorded in the last five years.
- 2.12 4 complaints out of 6 investigations were upheld. This equates to an upheld rate of 67%, which is below the Ombudsman's figure of the average uphold rate of similar authorities at 80%. 3 upheld complaints were in CYPS and 1 was in Adult Care Services.

- 2.13 Appendix One in the main report outlines the LGSCO decisions for the Council for 2023/24 and how these compare with 16 statistical neighbour councils. In 2023/24, the Council's low number of complaints considered by the LGSCO means that it is in the top quartile of the numbers investigated and the numbers upheld, based on the totals received. It ranks as 4th out of 16 of total investigated, 4th out of 16 of upheld and 5th of percentage upheld.
- 2.14 In the previous year, 2022/23, the Council's low number of complaints considered by the LGSCO also benchmarked in the top quarter for numbers investigated, numbers upheld and the percentage upheld. This shows that the Council is comparing better to similar Local Authorities in 2023/24, with fewer complaints investigated and fewer complaints upheld overall.
- 2.15 It also shows that the majority of complaints that were brought to the LGSCO (46 decided) were deemed invalid or incomplete, referred back for local resolution or closed after initial enquiries. This, along with the relatively low number of investigations, reflects positively that the Council's complaints' procedures are working effectively to find fair and appropriate local resolutions.
- 2.16 In addition, four Housing Ombudsman complaint decisions were received, and they were all upheld in part (some complaint issues upheld, and some not upheld). This compares to two decisions that were not upheld in 2022/23.
- 2.17 Overall, the Annual Review letter presents a positive view of the Council's handling of formal complaints in 2023/24. The number of investigations decreased, and the upheld rate is below average. There were also no Public Interest Reports in the year.
- 2.18 The Ombudsman's annual letter 2023-24 did not offer any criticism of the Council in terms of its response to its enquiries. There was no specific reference to how the Council had engaged with its enquiries over the year.
- 2.19 The Council is recorded as being 100% compliant with the Ombudsman recommendations following investigation. However, the Council has been recorded as being unsuccessful in resolving any complaints when formal notification of investigation is initially received, from the Ombudsman. The Council has resolved 0% of cases at the point of notification that the Ombudsman intends to investigate, compared to a national average of 11%.
- 2.20 In response, the Complaints Team will continue to work with Services to check to see if there is anything more that can be done to resolve a complaint, after notification of investigation is received. There are often a few weeks between notification and the start of the investigation and therefore there is a small window to try and resolve a case. Services need to be encouraged to consider if there is anything else that can be offered in order to resolve the complaint.

**2.21 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's complaint handling code**

- 2.22 In addition, the Ombudsman has also provided an update in respect of its proposed Complaint Handling Code. It advised that currently, twenty councils have volunteered to take part in an implementation pilot over the next two years, which will support the development of further guidance and best practice.
- 2.23 It expects councils to begin considering it as part of their processes from April 2026.
- 2.24 The Council will need to consider any updates to its processes in light of any changes to the Complaints Handling Code.

**3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 3.1 The statistical analysis of the annual report and the departmental breakdowns should be considered and noted. In addition, consideration has been given as to how the Council can further improve its processes for dealing with complaints and compliments to drive improvements to the service for both residents and the Council.
- 3.2 Feedback from complainants regarding how the Council responds to complaints suggests that there should be strong emphasis on clear communications through the process, fairness and impartiality in investigation and decision making and assurance that outcome actions will take place and learning completed.
- 3.3 Building on the key developments in 2022/23, the Council will again apply particular focus to the following issues:
- 3.4 Introducing a programme of improvement actions in response to the outcome of our self-assessments that are being completed to ensure the Council's approach is in line with the Housing Ombudsman's and now the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's complaint handling code. This will include a review of all written communication, the Complaints Policy and response timescales.
- 3.5 Develop a new Housing Services' complaint web page to include better information for tenants, including learning from complaints case studies and satisfaction information.
- 3.6 Review all customer complaint literature, including website information, easy read guidance and information for children and young people, to improve access to the Complaint Procedures for all residents.
- 3.7 Continue to seek ways to deliver training to front line staff to allow them to understand the role and purpose of the complaint procedures.
- 3.8 Working to improve performance to complaint procedure timescales.



- 3.9 Ensuring remedy requests by the Ombudsman are completed within required timescales.
- 3.10 Increasing the number of compliments recorded, with the Complaints Team continuing to work with managers to ensure that the process for recording and reporting compliments is improved. Benchmarking with other Local Authorities has taken place and their best practice approaches will be used to further increase the numbers of compliments received.

#### **4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 The complaint information contained in this report has been previously reported to each Directorate Leadership Team to enable key areas for improvement to be identified.
- 4.2 There has been no further consultation on this report beyond the requirements of internal processes, alongside consultation with the Cabinet member.

#### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 A simple timetable to show the stages and deadlines for implementing the proposed improvements outlined in section 3 is to be actioned in 2024/25. Progress against these actions will be reported on as part of the annual report for 2024/25.
- 5.2 The Complaints Team will be accountable for leading on these improvements and for engaging with Directorates on how the approach to handling complaints can be improved. Each Directorate will be responsible for ensuring that the improvements identified are disseminated and implemented within each area of the organisation.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The provision of the compliments and complaints service is factored into the Council's budget. If a complaint about an error in a charge for a Council service is upheld, then an appropriate refund will be made in accordance with the Council's Finance and Procurement Procedure Rules.
- 6.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

#### **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 The Council's approach to handling complaints is informed by the following key pieces of legislation:
  - Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 (Making Experiences Count).
  - i. The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.

- ii. The Housing Ombudsman Scheme which is approved by the Secretary of State under section 51 of, and Schedule 2 to, the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, the Building Safety Act 2022, and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act).<sup>11</sup> (for Housing Services complaints)
- iii. The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. However, Human Resources will provide support on further developing the training offer on handling complaints for officers outside of the Complaints Team.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 The statutory complaints procedure for Children's and Adult Social Care provides an opportunity for children and young people and vulnerable adults to have their voices heard and to improve service delivery.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 Investigations through the complaint procedure consider all relevant policy and legislation, including those relating to equalities and human rights.
- 10.2 Improvements have been made to the way that complaints are recorded to ensure that information relating to equality and diversity are captured where the complainant is comfortable to disclose this information.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 There are no direct implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change arising from this report.
- 11.2 However, it is possible for complaints to be made relating the Council's approach to CO2 Emissions and Climate Change and these matters can be formally considered through the Complaint Procedures.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 As outlined in the annual report, improving the way that complaints are dealt with requires a whole-Council approach, with services committing to responding to complaints in a timely fashion and using the intelligence provided by the Complaints Team to make service improvements. It is the responsibility of every service to make responding to complaints and learning from customer feedback a priority.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 The Council faces pressures on services due to the ongoing impact of national economic conditions as well as a continued ambition to transform

services to deliver financial savings and improve customer experiences. It is vital that customer expectations around what is sustainable for the Council to deliver are properly managed.

- 13.2 To mitigate this, the Council is continuing to engage with the public as appropriate through regular communication, as well as where services are being proposed to be amended.

**Accountable Officer(s):**

Fiona Boden, Head of Policy, Performance, and Intelligence

*Report Author: Stuart Purcell, Corporate Complaint Manager, Assistant Chief Executive Directorate, 01709 822661 or [stuart.purcell@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.purcell@rotherham.gov.uk)*

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

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# ANNUAL REPORT COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024



[www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/complaints)

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Rotherham Council is committed to being open and accountable, listening to the views of residents and communities and placing them at the heart of its services. Customer feedback through formal complaints and the way that the Council responds to complaints are vital indicators of the overall performance of the organisation. When the Council cannot resolve a problem straight away, our residents have the safety net of a formal complaint procedure through which they can find a resolution.

The Council can then also use the information gathered from the record of formal complaints, to consider how it delivers services. The Council is able to analyse trends, identifying learning and service improvements. This can then be used to improve customer care and make changes where necessary to our policy and procedures.

In 2023/24, the number of complaints received was below the number received in the previous year (2022/23) and the third highest received in the last five years.

Overall, in terms of the complaints' procedure, the Council continued to maintain a high level of performance and improved the quality of service offered to residents via our learning from complaints process (see sections five to nine of the report). There is a continued commitment to providing high quality, timely responses to formal complaints and the Council continues to learn and improve, based on the feedback received. Performance was just below the Council Plan target, with 82 % of complaints being resolved in time.

The purpose of this report is to outline the complaints and compliments that the Council received between the 1st April 2023 and the 31st March 2024, highlighting key themes and trends. The report also explains how the Council has performed against the required standards and includes case studies demonstrating how services have learnt from complaints received. This is arguably the most important aspect of the complaints' process.

Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board continues to be considered as part of these reports and in respect of the Council's handling of complaints throughout the year. The questions and queries raised are noted and subject to consideration.

Although customer feedback provides a valuable insight into how the Council is performing, complaints and compliments figures do not reflect the full picture. This report should, therefore, be understood within the context of the number of customers interacting with each service and any changes to those services that occurred within 2023/24.

In addition to this annual report, the Council's complaints' data features throughout the Council's Performance Management Framework from the Council Plan through to frontline teams. Complaints' information is included within service-level performance reports and is considered alongside other key performance indicators, by performance officers, senior managers, and service leaders to inform service and process improvements. The Complaints Manager also attends Directorate Leadership teams to ensure there is strategic oversight and holds specific lessons learnt workshops, so staff understand and take preventative action to avoid further issues.

**Furthermore, building on the key developments in 2023/24, priority areas of focus in respect of the Council's response to formal complaints, for next year will include:**

- New Housing Services complaint web page to include better information for tenants, including learning from complaints' case studies and satisfaction information.
- Continuing to review all customer complaint literature, including website information, easy read guidance and information for children and young people, to improve access to the Complaint Procedures for all residents.
- Ensuring compliance against benchmarked standards ahead of expected inspections in Adult Care, CYPS and Housing Services.

- Continuing to seek ways to deliver training to front line staff to allow them to understand the role and purpose of the complaint procedures.
- Continuing to provide bespoke training for Investigating Managers to allow them to provide a better investigation and response to formal complaints.
- Work with management meetings in all departments to create a better 'learning from complaints' programme. This will ensure that all learning is reported and is considered so that the impact of service improvement is understood and recorded.
- The Complaints Team will work with Council departments to see if there is anything more that can be done to resolve a complaint after notification that an Ombudsman investigation has been received.
- Working to improve the performance of complaint procedure timescales, to make sure it meets Council Plan target of 85 %. This includes continued roll out of new reporting dashboards, so that managers have direct access to their complaints' information.
- Increasing the number of compliments recorded: the Complaints Team to continue to work with managers to ensure that the process for recording and reporting compliments is improved. Benchmarking with other Local Authorities has taken place and their best practice approaches will be used to further increase the number of compliments received.



## 2. KEY HEADLINES – 2023/24

**1,212**  
complaints  
received

**1,212 complaints were received.**  
(compared with 1,397 in 2022/23, this is a decrease of 13 %.)

**902 compliments were received.**  
(compared with 791 in 2022/23, this is a 14 % increase.)



**Fewer complaints were upheld.**  
(294 or 25 % were upheld in 2023/24 compared to 443 or 32 % in 2022/23.)

**Fewer complaints were responded to within timescales.**  
(82 % in 2023/24 compared with 85 % in 2022/23.)



**Six complaints were investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman.**  
This is a 14 % reduction from 2022/23 when seven were investigated.

**Fewer complaints were received regarding the quality of service.**  
(405 compared to 431 in 2022/23. This is a 6 % decrease.)



**A slight increase in complaints regarding the behaviour and attitude of staff.**  
**An increase of 1%.**  
(170 compared with 168 in 2022/23.)

**More complaints were responded to in time by:**  
**CYPS** up to 89 % from 64 %.  
**Finance and Customer Service** up to 91 % from 90 %.



**Fewer Complaints were responded to in time by:**  
**Adult Services** (75 % from 78 %).  
**Housing Services** (81 % from 87 %).  
**R+E** (84 % from 79 %).  
**Assistant Chief Executive** (60 % from 75 %.)

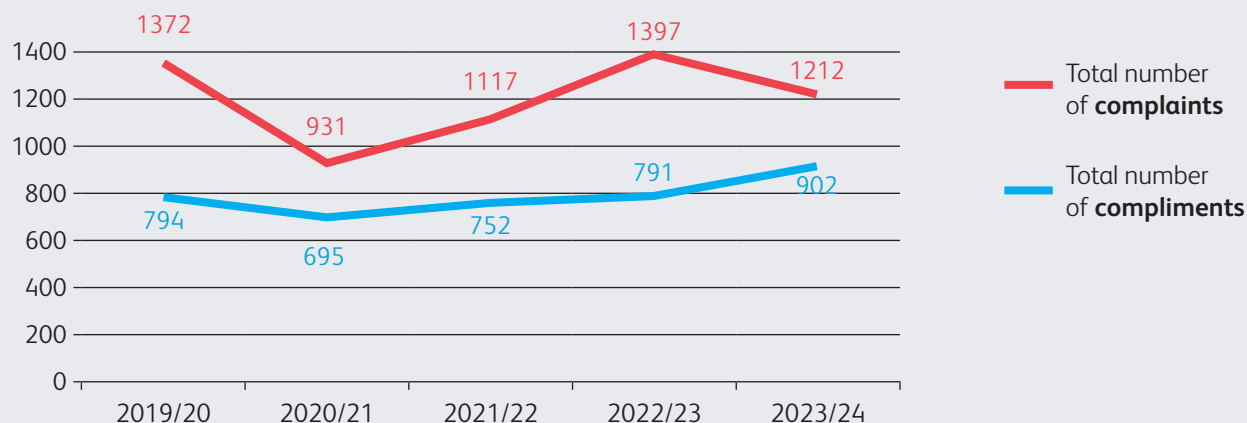
**More escalations through the complaint procedure.**  
(37 or 3 % were escalated to stage 2 compared to 24 or 2 % in 2022/23.)



## 3. OVERVIEW

### 3.1 Summary

**Figure 1: Total number of complaints and compliments by year**



In 2023/24, the overall number of complaints received by the Council decreased by 13%, going from 1397 in 2022/23 to 1212. This is in contrast to the previous year when complaints had increased by 25% from 1117 in 2021/22, to 1397 2022/23. However, the overall number of complaints received in 2023/24 is the third highest number received in the last five years. It also should be noted that in the first three months of 2024/25, 281 complaints were received compared to 291 in the same period in 2023/24, which is a 4% decrease. Therefore, this slight downward trend has continued into the current year.

The Council provides a wide variety of services to over 271,200 residents. In this context, 1212 complaints are only a fraction of the number of customer interactions occurring each year. For example, the Council received more than 1.1m new web visitors in 2023/24.

The number of compliments recorded by the Council increased, from 791 in 2022/23 to 902 (an increase of 14 percent), a year-on-year increase. Continued efforts by Council departments to capture more of the positive feedback of residents is reflected in this increase. There is clearly better engagement of staff in the process of recording the compliments they received, staff have responded to requests that they make sure that all the compliments they receive are recorded.

It is recognised that both compliments and complaints procedures need to be easy and accessible for customers to allow them to provide valuable feedback.

#### **A breakdown on the numbers of complaints received and how much they changed, by directorate or service is as follows:**

- The largest absolute decrease was in Regeneration and Environment from 510 to 373, a percentage decrease of 27%.
- The second largest decrease was in Children and Young Peoples Services from 116 to 64, a percentage decrease of 45%.
- Finance and Customer Services also decreased, from 105 to 91, a percentage decrease of 13%.
- Other departments saw a small increase, the largest was in Adult Care services from 55 to 64, a percentage increase of 16%.

- The second largest increase was in the Housing service from 607 to 615, a percentage increase of 1 %.
- Assistant Chief Executive's directorate also increased, from four to five.
- The Public Health service remained unchanged at zero complaints received

The following diagrams (Figure's 2 and 3) show the breakdown of complaints and compliments by Directorate in 2022/3 and 2023/24.

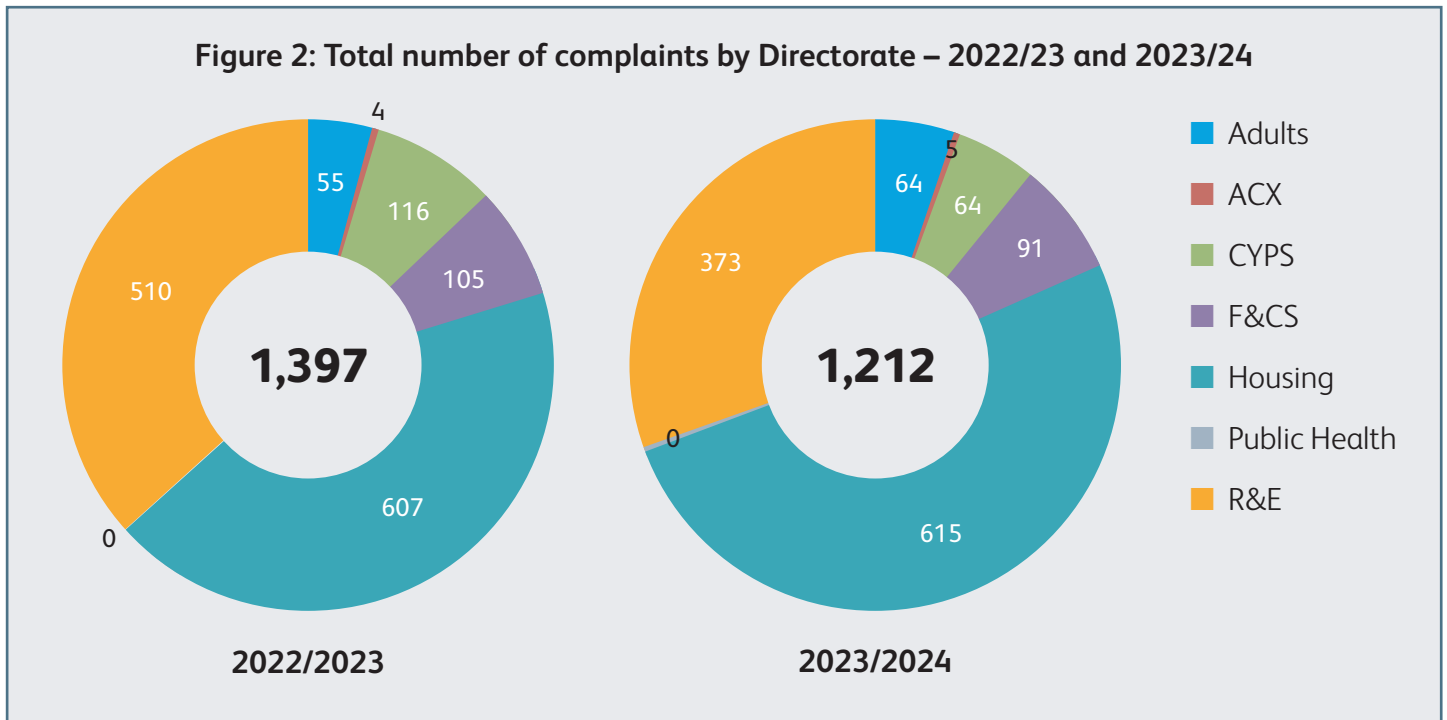


Figure 2 shows that the two highest areas for complaints were Housing Services and Regeneration and Environment. This is consistent with previous years' figures, as these areas typically receive the highest volume of complaints. They deal with the largest number of customers and are responsible for a high number of service transactions over the year.

The number of complaints received generally correlates with the number of residents that are served by the directorate. Therefore, a directorate receiving a higher volume of complaints is not necessarily reflective of poor performance and should be understood within the context of services provided.

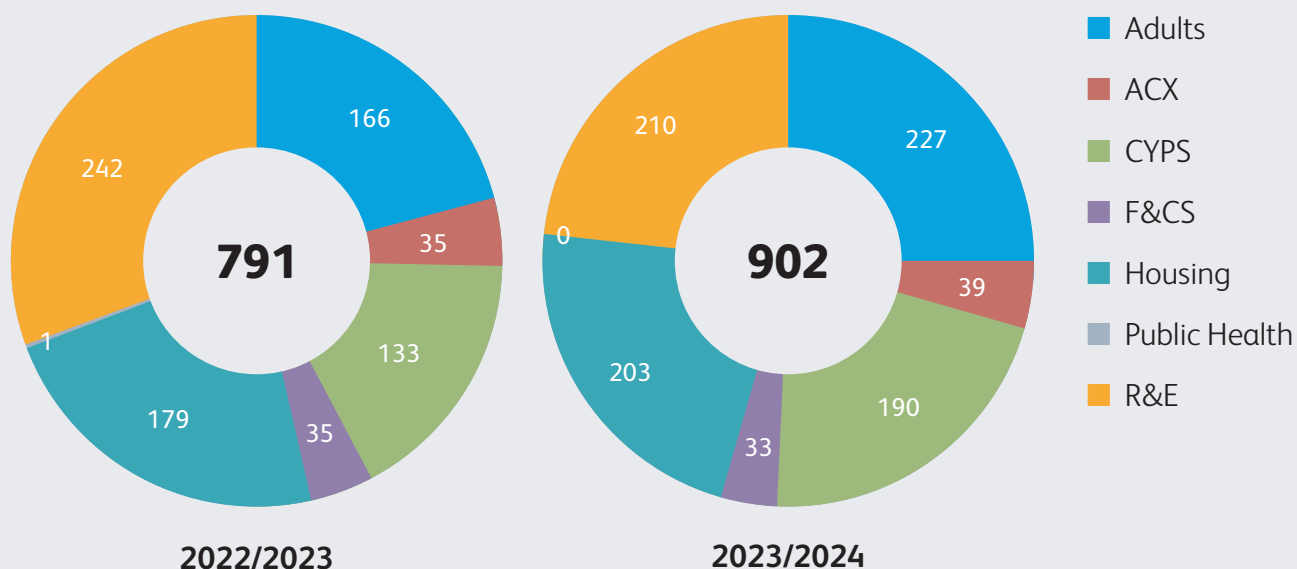
The decrease in Regeneration and Environment services complaints was primarily as a result of a decrease in Waste Management service complaints, from 237 to 165. The other notable decrease in complaints was in Childrens and Young People's Services, where complaints in their Education Health and Care Assessment Team (EHCAT) reduced from 48 to 14. Please see sections six and seven for further information.

Regarding the number of compliments received, Adult Care services saw the biggest absolute increase with 61 more received, followed by Children and Young People's service, with 57 more received. Housing services and Assistant Chief Executive's also saw a small increase.

Regeneration and Environment services, Finance and Customer Services and Public Health saw a small decrease in terms of the number of compliments received.

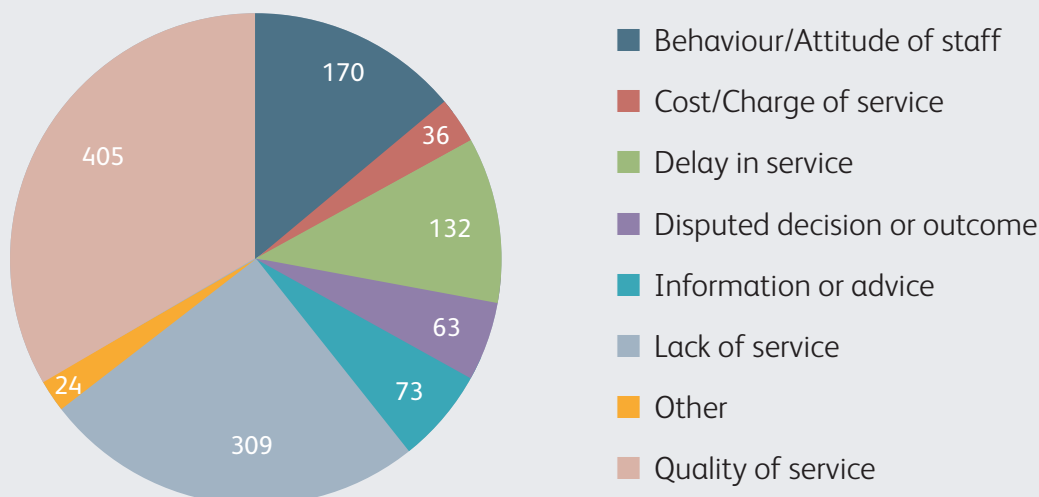
Although this overall increase is positive. The large changes in numbers received by some departments illustrates that there can be a better engagement in the compliment process by staff, to make sure that all positive feedback is captured including feedback from satisfaction surveys.

Figure 3: Total number of compliments by Directorate – 2022/23 and 2023/24



As part of the process of monitoring and handling customer feedback, the Complaints Team is responsible for categorising complaints based on the subject matter. The following diagram outlines the categories of complaints received in 2023/24:

Figure 4: Total number of complaints by category – 2023/24



The largest number of complaints received was in connection with the quality of service, with 405 (equating to 33 %) of all complaints in this category. Complaints within this category have decreased in absolute terms from the 431 (equating to 31 %) of all complaints received in 2022/23.

Lack of service accounted for the second highest category of complaints, with 309 of all complaints received (equating to 25 %). Complaints within this category have decreased from 398 (equating to 28 %) in 2022/23.

The third highest category of complaints was conduct / attitude of staff at 170 of all complaints received (equating to 14 % of all complaints). Complaints within this category have increased slightly from 168 in 2022/23.

The numbers of complaints in the categories of quality of service and lack of service were significant across all directorates. In terms of quality of service, the majority were received in Housing Services at 235, with 72 of these received in Housing Property Services (who are responsible for programmed works and repairs inspections) and 93 of these received by Council repair contractors, out of the 405 total complaints in this category (see section 5.2).

The majority of the complaints categorised as lack of service were within Regeneration and Environment, with 170 of the 309 total complaints in this category (see section 7). Of the number received this can be further broken down with 118 in the Street Scene department, of which 82 were in Waste and Recycling.

In addition to reporting against general subject areas there is a need to report complaints in more detail to directorate and service management teams. To assist with this level of reporting, additional complaint classifications were developed, reviewed at year end, and updated. These are service specific and more accurately reflect the types of complaints received for the various areas of the Council.

**Examples of the most common complaint types recorded by this classification are as follows:**

- Attitude / Conduct
- General Practice/Competence
- Dispute Over Liability or Debt
- Lack of bill or invoice
- Lack of Financial Support/Eligibility
- Appeal/Inappropriate Enforcement Action
- Application/Assessment Outcome or Decision
- Impact of Service
- Social Care Decision - Child Protection
- Delay in Application/Assessment
- Delay in Response to Enquiry
- Incorrect/Inaccurate written or verbal advice
- Lack of Information/Advice
- Lack of Communication
- Missed Appointment/Service
- Refusal to Provide Service/Take Action
- Accessibility of Service/Facilities
- Damage to Property
- Quality/Standard of Work
- Standard of Care

For further detail around directorate complaint trends please see sections 5 to 11 of the report.

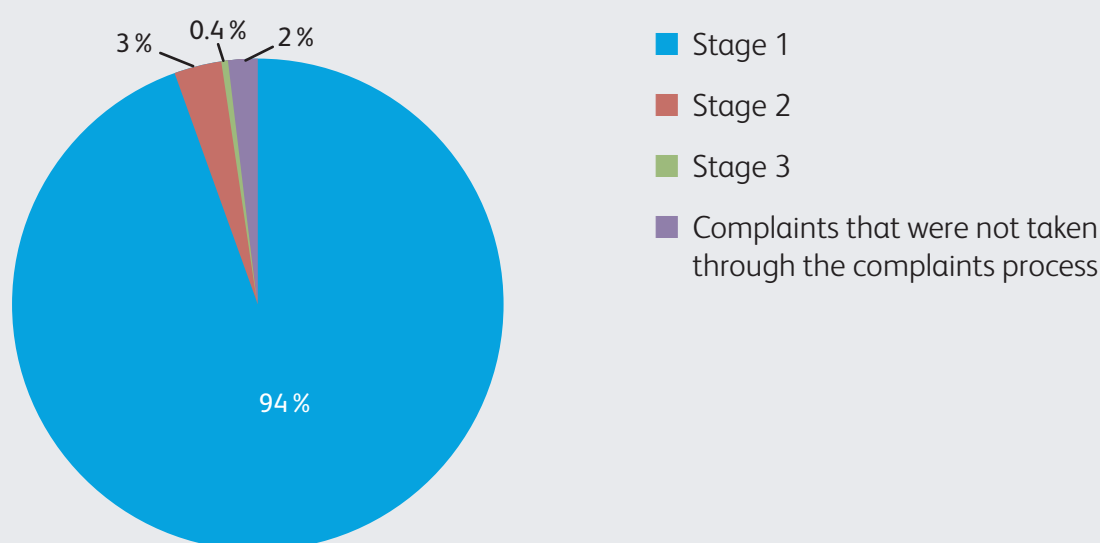
It should also be noted that fewer complaints were upheld in terms of the percentage of complaints responded to. This is where the Council has investigated and found a problem with the service provided, with 294 or 24 % of all complaints upheld. In contrast, 443 or 32 % of all complaints were upheld in 2022/23 and 268 or 24 % upheld in 2021/22. Sections 5 to 11 contain more detail of upheld complaints by directorate and how the Council has learnt from upheld complaints.

## 3.2 Dealing with Complaints

The Council follows three different complaints' procedures: children's social care, adult social care, and the corporate complaints' procedure. The social care complaints' procedures are legislative and have individual statutory requirements about how complaints are dealt with.

A relatively small proportion of complaints are not taken through the formal complaints' procedure (referred to as informal complaints). These are complaints that are in relation to council policy or decisions that have been formally approved in Cabinet. In these cases, the complaint is not taken through the formal procedure as it cannot be upheld, however all complainants receive a formal (written) response. This report includes these complaints in the overall total figures. In 2023/24, this amounted to only 26 (two percent) out of a total of 1212 complaints. This is a slight increase on 2022/23 when this was nine (one percent) out of a total of 1397 complaints.

**Figure 5: Percentage of complaints escalating through the complaints procedures**



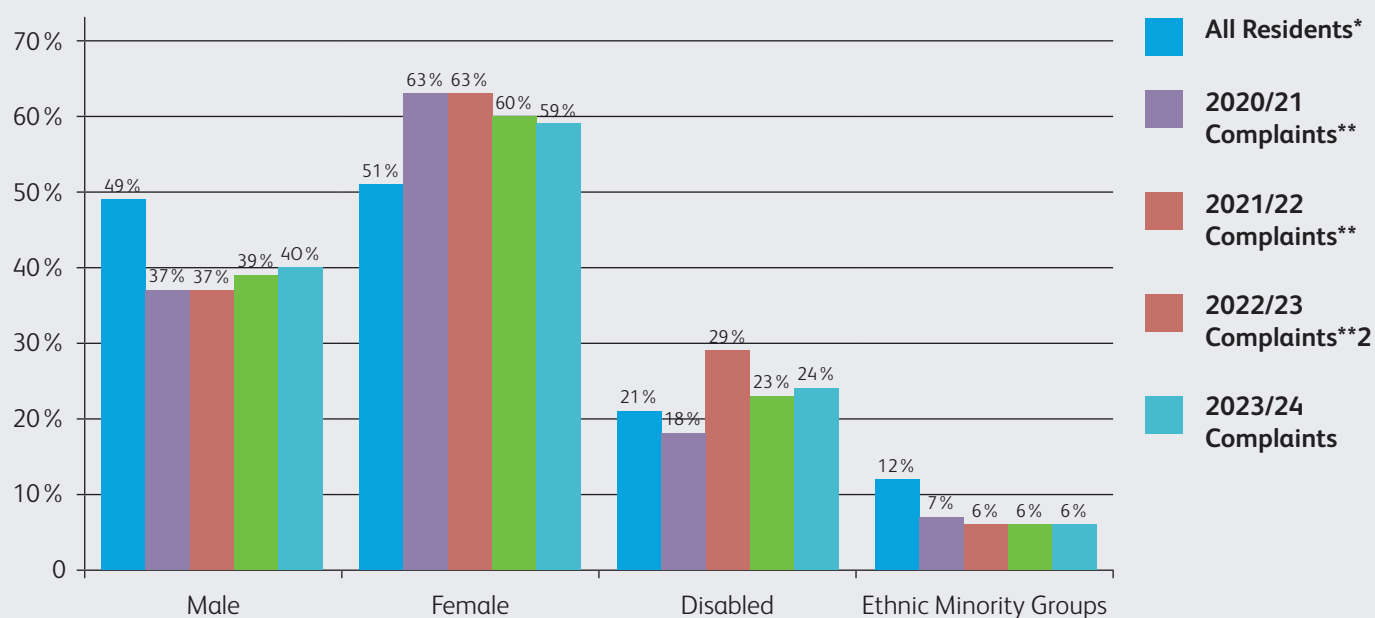
The diagram above outlines the number of complaints that reached the various stages of the complaint's procedures.

The extent to which complaints escalate through the complaints' procedure is an important measure, as it is preferable to find resolutions for customers at the earliest possible stage. As shown in figure 5, the majority of complaints (94 %) were resolved at stage 1, only 37 or three percent of all complaints, were escalated to stage 2, compared with 24, or two percent, in 2022/23.

### 3.3 Equalities Monitoring

The Council collects equalities information via its online complaints' webform. This entails collecting the demographics of customers making formal complaints, this information is used to ensure that the complaints' process is fair and accessible for all customers.

**Figure 6: Equalities Monitoring**



\*All resident data based on 2021 census and mid-year population estimates.

\*\*Complaints information was captured on the online complaints form.

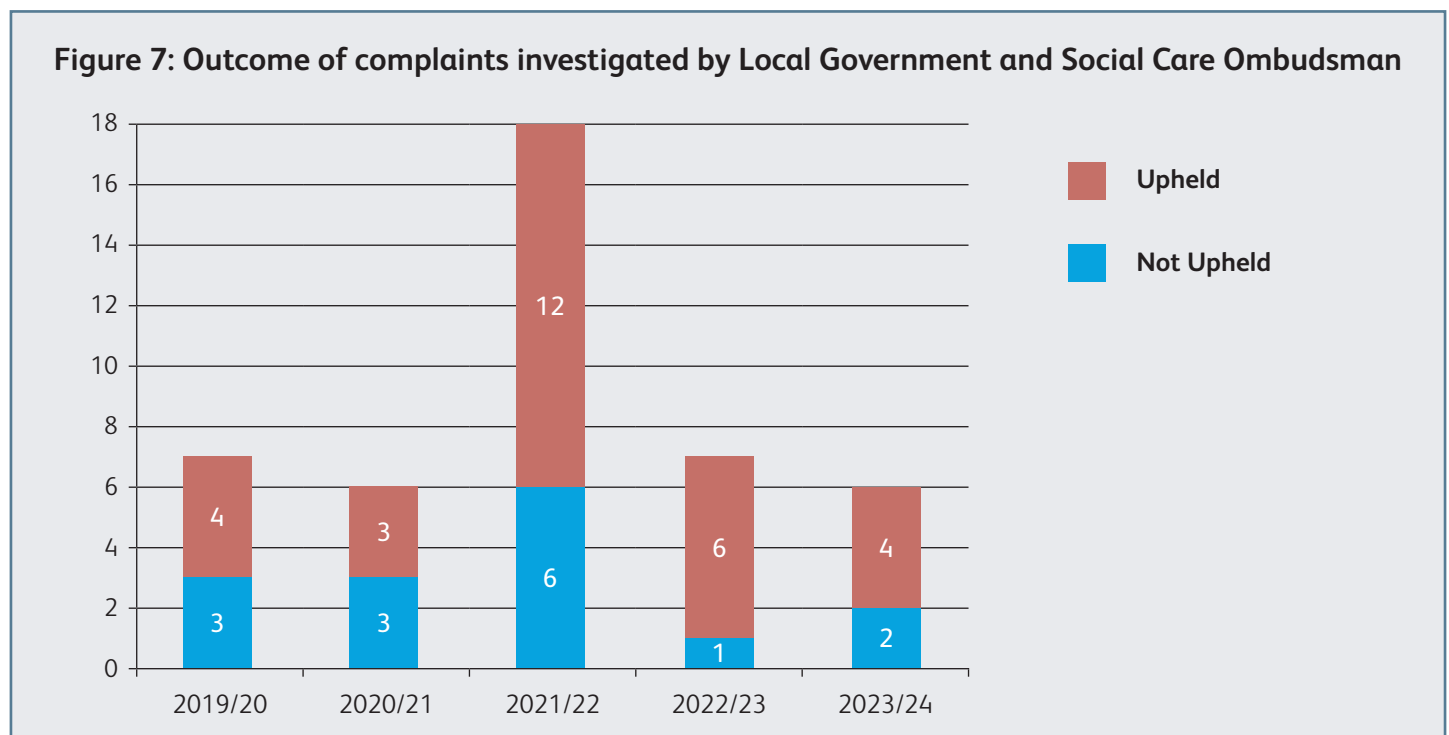
The information received indicates that significantly more female customers complained about Council services in 2023/24 and this is a consistent trend over the last three years. All directorates recorded a higher number of female complainants. For example, in Housing services the percentage of female complainants was 65 % and Regeneration and Environment it was 60 %.

It is also noted that numbers have increased for those customers who are disabled, but it is still only slightly above the average for all residents. In addition, the number of customers in ethnic minority groups who have made a complaint has remained the same and is still lower than the average all residents' figure.

### 3.4 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If complainants are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint as investigated through the Council's complaints' procedures, they can escalate their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). 46 complaints' enquiries were directed to the LGSCO in 2023/24 (45 received in 2022/23) and of these, the LGSCO investigated six (seven were investigated in 2022/23). This is within the range of average numbers escalating to the Ombudsman, following an unprecedented number investigated in 2021/22. This increase was mainly due to the Ombudsman working through a backlog of cases caused by their temporary closure during the pandemic.

Figure 7 (see below) illustrates the number of complaints considered by the Ombudsman over the last five years. It shows that there have been 44 complaints investigated by the LGSCO, between the financial years of 2019/20 and 2023/24 with a five-year average of 8.8 per year.



In 2023/24, fewer complaints were investigated, and fewer complaints were upheld by the LGSCO than in the previous year. Six investigations compared to 1,212 complaints is 0.5 % of formal complaints received that have escalated to the LGSCO.

Four complaints out of the six investigations were upheld, which means that the Ombudsman found fault and agreed with the complainant. This equates to an upheld rate of 67 %, which is better than the Ombudsman's figure of the average upheld rate of similar authorities at 80 %. Three upheld complaints were in Childrens and Young Peoples Services and one was in Adult Care services.

Appendix 1 outlines the LGSCO decisions for the Council for 2023/24 and how these compare with 16 statistical neighbour councils. In 2023/24, the Council is in the top quarter in terms of the numbers investigated and the numbers upheld. It ranks as fourth out of 16 of the total investigated and fourth out of 16 of those complaints that were upheld. In the previous year, 2022/23, the Council also benchmarked in the top quartile for the number investigated and number upheld.



Furthermore, it shows that the majority of complaints that were brought to the LGSCO (46 decided), were deemed invalid or incomplete and referred back for local resolution or closed after initial enquiries. This, along with the relatively low number of investigations (0.5 % escalation rate) positively reflects that the Council's complaints' procedures are working effectively, to find fair and appropriate local resolutions. In addition, it should be noted that the Council on occasion, for non social care or housing landlord complaints, will refer residents to the Ombudsman before the full completion of the complaint's procedure. This would be done on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances of the complaint. For example, the complaint has been upheld and the facts of the complaint have been confirmed but the Council is unable to agree a requested remedy for a complaint. In these cases, further investigation is not required but the complainant remains dissatisfied and would therefore benefit from a final decision from the Ombudsman.

### 3.5 Housing Ombudsman

From April 2013, the Housing Ombudsman has dealt with all complaints from tenants regarding social housing. There were four decisions made by the Housing Ombudsman in 2023/24 and they were all upheld in part. In comparison, there were two decisions in 2022/23, which were both not upheld.

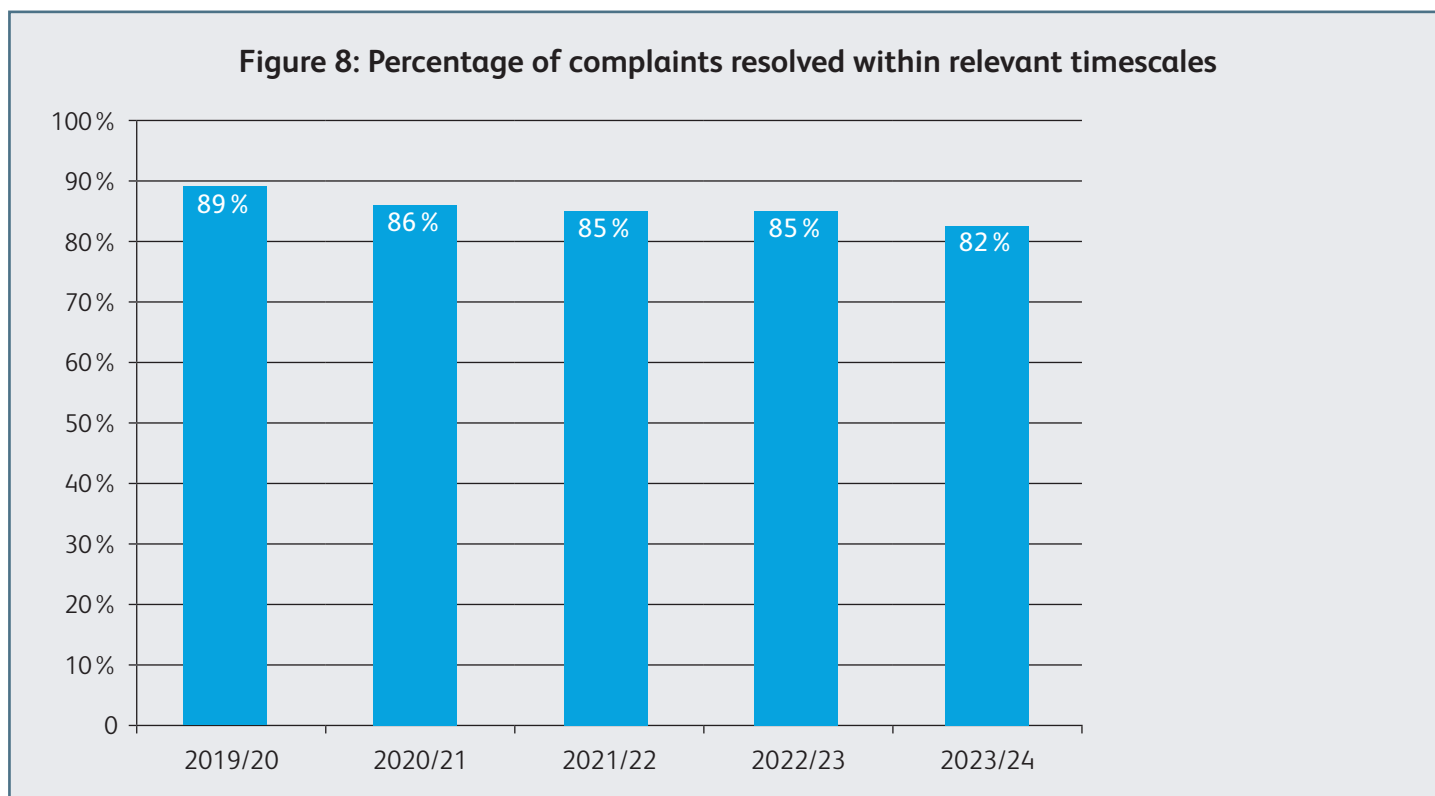
The complaints' issues in these decisions were regarding a tenancy succession, eviction from a tenancy, repairs / pest control and anti-social behaviour (ASB) / repairs.

## 4. PERFORMANCE

### 4.1 Performance Overview

Performance against the time allowed by the formal complaints' procedure is monitored through regular (weekly, monthly, and quarterly) performance reports presented to Council Directorate Leadership Team meetings and Service Management Team meetings.

The following graph compares the overall Council performance against timescales for the past five years:



Performance has decreased to 82 % of complaint responses within the target timescale. It is slightly below the five-year average of 85 % and it has not met the Council Plan target of 85 %. Four out of six service areas did not meet target. There will be further efforts made across all those council services who did not meet the target of performance to timescales, see sections five to nine for the details of the service areas' individual performance.

### 4.2 How we are improving

Improving the way that complaints are dealt with requires a whole Council approach, with services prioritising complaints and making improvements based on the feedback from customers. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every service to make responding to complaints and learning from customer feedback a priority.

A number of service improvements have been made over the year based on feedback from our customers. Key themes of service improvements have included the training and performance management of staff, reviews of processes and policies and the revision of communication materials. Examples of case studies where service improvements have been made based on complaints, are outlined within each directorate section.

## 5. ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTORATE

### 5.1 Adult Care

Figure 9: Total number of complaints and compliments relating to Adult Care

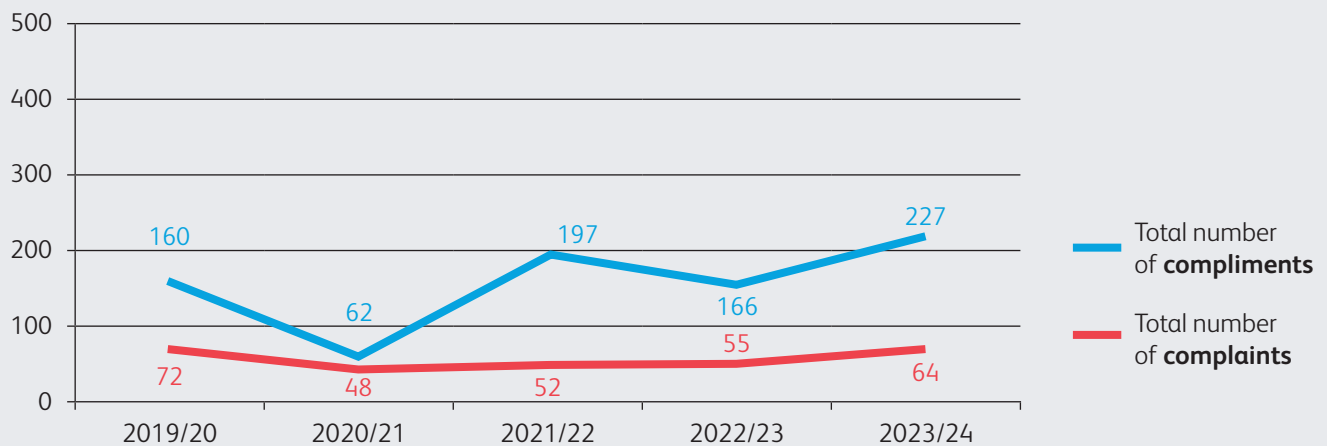


Figure 10: Percentage of complaints about Adult Care closed in timescales

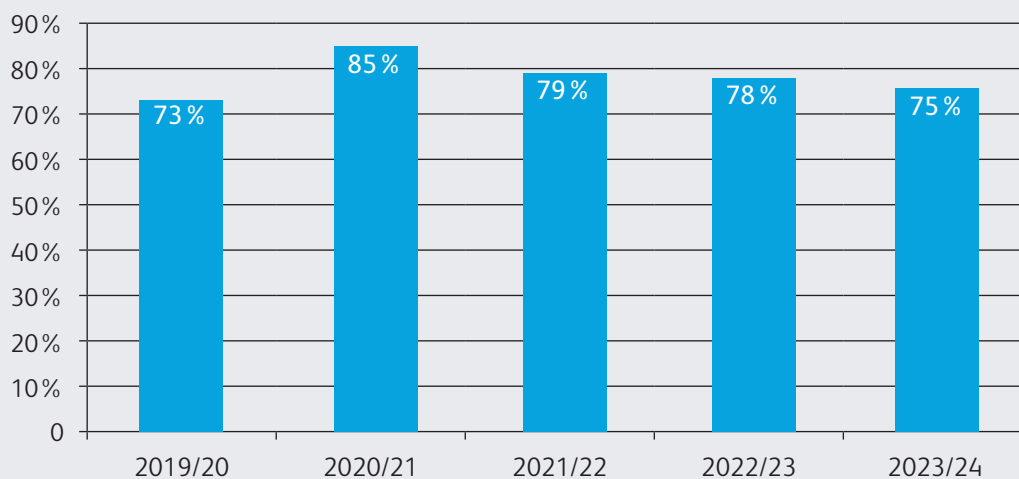
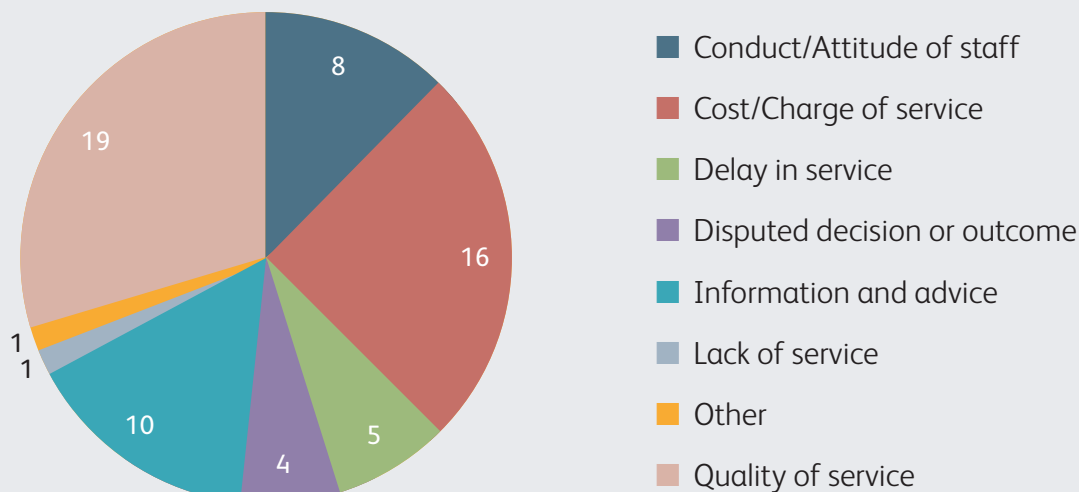


Figure 11: Complaints about Adult Care by category – 2023/24



## 5.1.1 Key Headlines

# 16%

more  
complaints  
received

**More complaints were received about Adult Care.**

(64 in 2023/24 compared to 55 in 2022/23.)

**More compliments were received about Adult Care.**

(227 in 2023/24 compared to 166.)

# 37%

more  
compliments  
received



**Fewer complaints were upheld.**

Nine complaints were upheld in 2023/24 compared with 12 in 2022/23.

This is a 25 % decrease.

**75% of complaints were responded to within timescales.**

Compared with 79 % in 2021/22.



**Two Ombudsman complaints were received.**

One was upheld.

**19 of 64 complaints were regarding Quality of Service.** 16 were regarding Cost/Charge for Service and 10 were regarding Information and Advice.



### Prevalent themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for adult services complaints were:

- Dispute Over Liability or Debt
- Conduct
- Application/Assessment Outcome or Decision
- Lack of Information/Advice
- Delay in Service Being Provided/Action Taken
- Delay in Response to Enquiry

The increase in the number of formal complaints of 16 %, is against the overall Council trend of a decrease of 13 % in the total number of complaints received. The largest increase in complaints received was in the Integrated Discharge Team (Hospital Social Work Team), increasing from four to twelve complaints received. This indicates the overall pressures facing this service, dealing with complex and urgent cases, often being the first time someone has accessed Adult Care services. Community Occupational Therapy also experienced an increase in complaints received from four in the previous year, to six received in 2023/24. Provider Services also received two complaints in 23/24 and received no formal complaints in 2022/23 and Rothercare increased from two to six formal complaints received.

Other services saw no change or a small decrease in complaints received, Locality Social Work Teams, remained the same at 28 complaints. The 28 complaints were received across six teams and followed similar trends in terms of numbers received. The types of complaints received were regarding the outcome of assessment, delay and communication / information and advice. Revenue and Payments reduced significantly from seven in 2022/23 to one this year, representing a concerted effort to find quick local resolutions at the earliest opportunity. Also, the LD Review Team saw a reduction in complaints received, from two to one received.

In terms of Ombudsman investigations received, two were received and one was upheld. The upheld complaint was regarding providing care exactly as required by a care plan.

**Examples of some of the compliments received for Adult Care in 2023/24:**

Compliment for Adult Contact Team. “The staff member was extremely helpful, very informative and generally made the task of sorting additional aids for my family member an easy process. I wanted to message you to say she is a credit to your team and to send my personal thanks.”

Compliment for Community Occupational Therapy. “The staff member is a star she arrived on time, was very professional and explained everything that might make my life easier 10/10 well done.”

Compliment for the Integrated Discharge Team. “The staff member has been very supportive and compassionate around my family member’s needs.”

Compliment for Locality Social Work Team. “Thank you for everything you have done and still do, you are a diamond.”

## 5.1.2 Lessons Learned

**Adult Care made several service improvements based on customer feedback in 2023/24. An example of these improvements is outlined in the case study below.**

### The Complaint

The resident and family were unhappy with the level of information about possible charges for care and the care options available to them.

### What did the Council do?

Investigating the complaint, the Council reviewed the information and advice provided and the time when an assessment of care was completed. Through sharing the learning from this complaint and providing additional training and advice to key members of staff, the Service will now ensure they will provide better information and advice about the assessment process. In addition, it is developing a new easy read advice leaflet for customers and family members. This will ensure that there is a consistent and high-quality advice provided at first contact with the Service.

### Who is better off?

Improvements to communication will benefit all current and future users of adult social services in Rotherham. Through a change in the advice that is available, the Council will ensure that problems experienced in this complaint will not reoccur and that services have been improved for all residents.

### Other lessons learned from complaints.

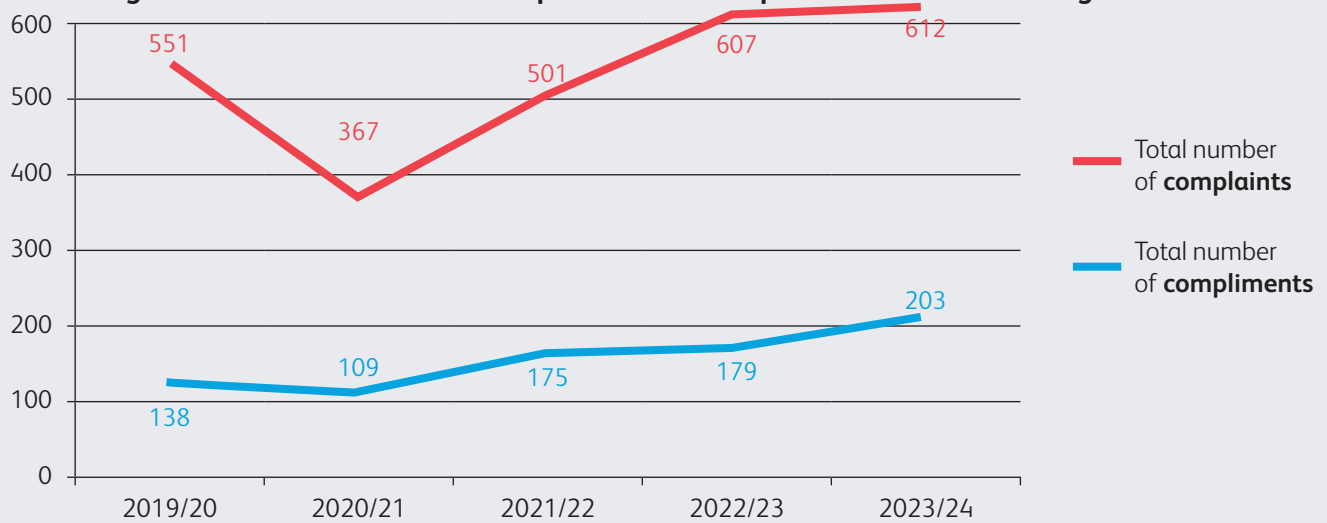
Some additional examples on where we have improved are service are as follows.

The Rothercare FAQ document has been reviewed and improved. This will better explain what services are available.

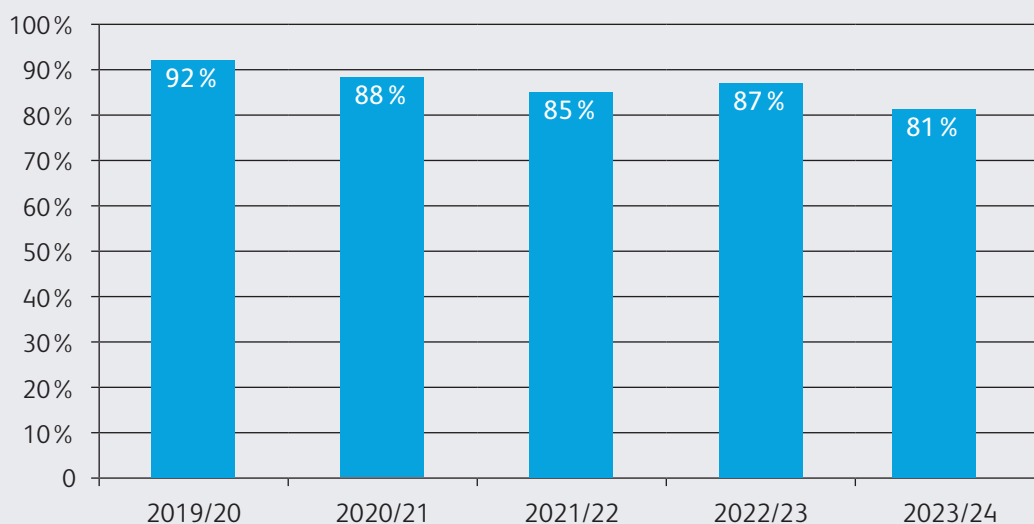
Feedback / training has been provided to staff following a complaint to ensure prompt discussions are made regarding financial assessments and possible contributions during the assessment/ support planning process.

## 5.2 Housing Services

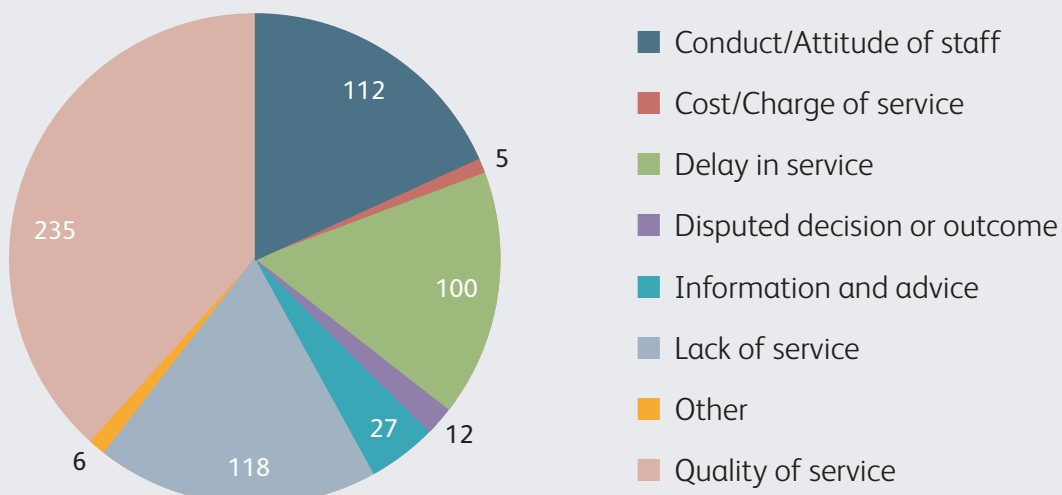
**Figure 12: Total number of complaints and compliments about Housing Services**



**Figure 13: Percentage of complaints about Housing Services closed within timescales**



**Figure 14: Complaints about Housing Services by category – 2023/24**



## 5.2.1 Key Headlines

# 1%

more  
complaints  
received

**More complaints about  
Housing Services were  
received.**

(615 in 2023/24  
compared with  
607 in 2022/23).

**Compliments have  
increased.**

(203 in 2023/24  
compared to  
179 in 2022/23).

# 13%

more  
compliments  
received



**Lower proportion of  
upheld complaints.**

21 % (131/615) in  
2023/24 compared  
to 2022/23 27 %  
(163/607).

**81% of complaints were  
responded to within  
timescales.**

This is a decrease from  
87 % in 2022/23.



**Four Ombudsman  
complaint decisions  
were received.**

They were all upheld in  
part.

**235 complaints were  
regarding quality of  
service.**

118 were regarding a lack  
of service and 112 were  
regarding the conduct/  
attitude of staff.



### Themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Housing Services complaints were:

- Quality of service provided.
- Lack of service provided.
- Conduct / Attitude of staff.
- Delay in service being provided.

Complaints received for Housing Services increased by 1 %. This is against the trend of a decrease of 13 % in the total number of complaints the Council received.

Housing & Estates saw the greatest increase in complaints, growing by 13 %, from 2022/23 to 2023/24 (120 to 135). 44 % (59) of all complaints received were categorised as lack of service provided. In addition, 39 % (52) of the 135 complaints received by Housing & Estates were regarding ASB Enforcement. Two other common themes were complaints regarding the quality of service provided 20 % (27) and the conduct or attitude of staff 20 % (27).

Repairs' Contractors had a 12 % increase in complaints from 2022/23 to 2023/24 (137 to 154). 60 % (93) of these complaints were categorised as relating to the quality of service provided. Another common theme identified from the 154 complaints that the service received was regarding a delay in service being provided, 12 % (19). The repair issue that was received the most complaints was in relation to the roof / a leak.

**Examples of some of the compliments received for Housing Services in 2023/24:**

“You’ve been so wonderful, so good to the extent of making me feel speechless. Thanks for all your support, your concern and care is unquantifiable.”

“Thank you for the help and support I have received over the past 11 months. I want to say thanks for the empathy they have shown me. In a sensitive situation they have been so pleasant and approachable and most importantly, they have always called me back promptly when I have left a voice message. I cannot thank them enough for making my very difficult situation easier.”

“Thank you for your concerned listening and your kindness in explaining the present situation. It was gratifying to be able to speak with you and to be understood and I very much respect your time and conversation and your perspective on what matters. It is not often one chances upon a real human encounter.”



## 5.2.2 Lessons Learned

**Housing Services**, in addition to its ongoing and extensive change and improvement programme, made several service improvements based on customer feedback in 2023/24. An example of these improvements is outlined in the case study below.

### The Complaint

The customer was charged an extra week's rent following the handing in of their keys to their Council property. Their rent account was terminated one week later as it was believed that the keys were not received until after the 12pm deadline for handing in keys.

### What did we do?

An investigation found that the customer had posted their keys into the external Riverside House post-box outside office hours. Because of this, the Council could not determine exactly when the keys were received. The customer also had no evidence of this. As a gesture of goodwill, the week's rent was refunded to their bank account.

To ensure accuracy, the external Riverside House post-box has now been removed. Keys must now be handed in to Riverside House reception staff, where these are logged on a written log sheet. At the end of each working day, the written log sheet is then inputted onto the computer system and is then e-mailed to the Client Voids team who terminate the rent account.

### Who is better off?

This will benefit all current and future Council tenants.

### Other lessons learned from complaints.

An additional example on where we have improved our services is as follows.

A complaint that a garage termination could not be submitted online. The Council's tenancy management system has recently been updated and we are currently working with our IT department to make more forms available online. The complainant should have been advised that the form they needed to complete was available to be sent via email. Following this complaint, extra training has been provided to relevant staff members.

## 5.3 Public Health

It is a statutory requirement to report annually on the complaints received for Public Health services. Please note that the Public Health team predominantly commission services and it is the commissioned service providers who will respond to any formal complaints via their own complaint procedures. The information below relates compliments and to complaints responded to by the Public Health services directly under the Council's complaint procedure.

### 5.3.1 Key Headlines

- No complaints were received. (None in 2022/23)
- No compliments were recorded. (One in 2022/23)
- No complaints were upheld. (None upheld in 2022/23)
- No complaints were investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

### 5.3.2 Complaints

- None received

### 5.3.3 Compliments

Detail below.

Compliment for Public Health. "The memorial event was R's creation, and she has worked extremely hard to make it the success it is."

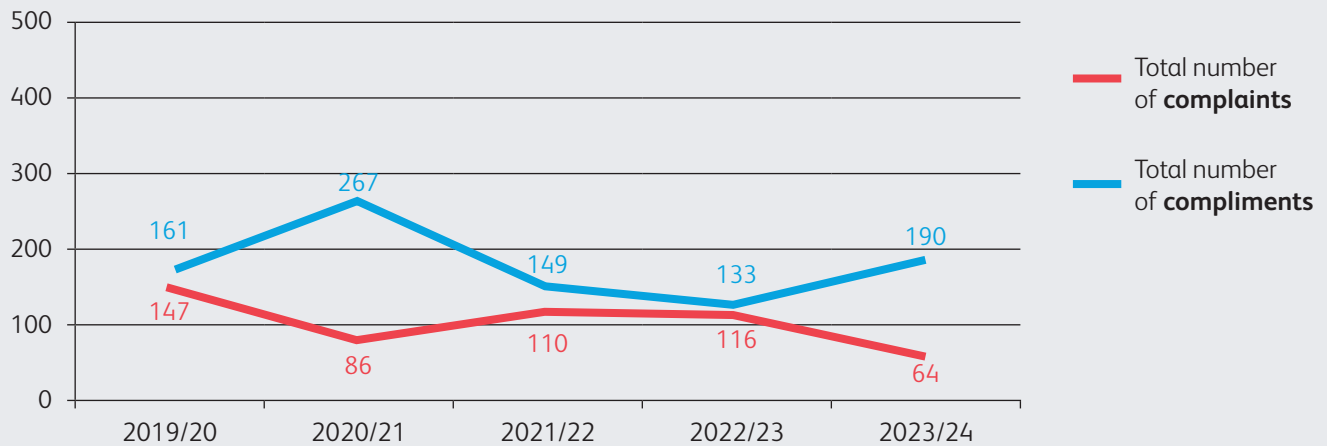
### 5.3.4 Service Requests

Two enquiries responded to outside the complaint procedure.

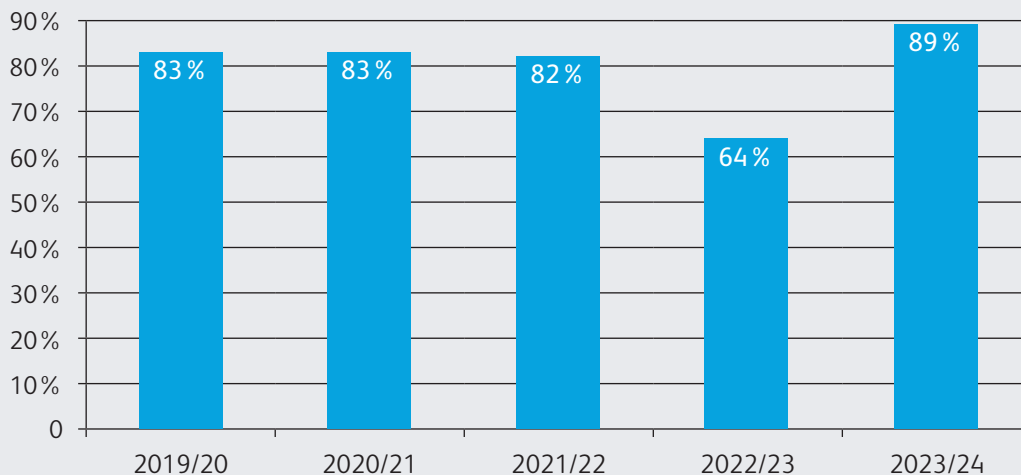
- A report about a Public Health service provider from their cleaning contractor.
- Request for advice about the Bell at Work award and asked for the website to be updated.

## 6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE

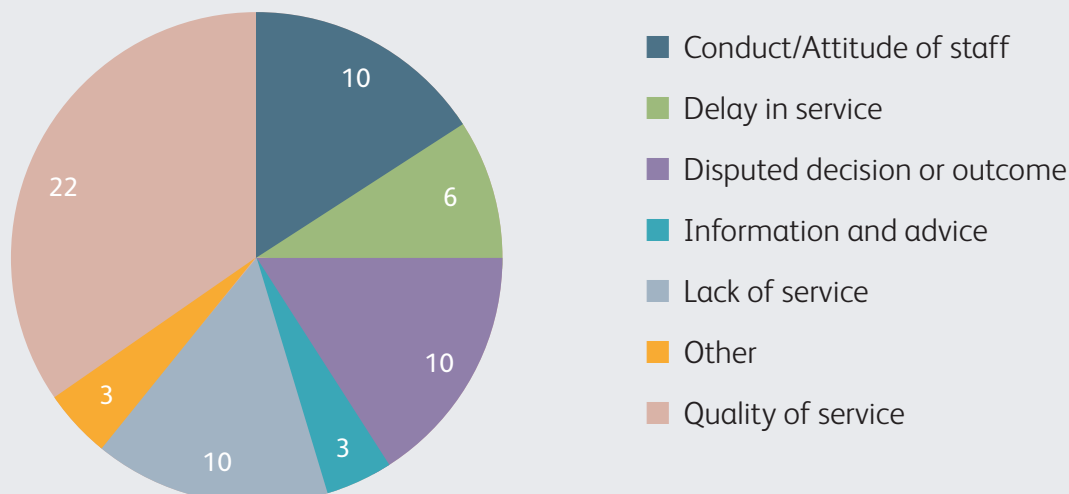
**Figure 15: Total number of complaints and compliments about Children and Young People's Services**



**Figure 16: Percentage of complaints about Children and Young People's Services closed within timescales**



**Figure 17: Complaints about Children and Young People's Services by category – 2023/24**



## 6.1 Key Headlines

# 45%

fewer  
complaints  
received

**Fewer complaints about Children and Young People's services were received**  
(64 in 2023/24 compared with 116 in 2022/23.)

**More compliments were received about Children and Young People's services.**

(190 in 2023/24 compared with 133 in 2022/23.)

# 43%

more  
compliments  
received



**Fewer complaints were upheld.**

(6 in 2023/24 compared with 42 in 2022/23.)

**89% of complaints were responded to within timescales.**

This is the first time in the last five years that the performance has exceeded 85%.



**Three Ombudsman complaint decisions were received, the same as last year.**

All of these were upheld.

**Most complaints were regarding quality of service, 22 of 64.**

Followed by conduct of staff, disputed decision, and lack of service.



### **Prevalent themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Children and Young People's Services complaints were:**

- Disagreements with decisions made and the outcome of assessment.
- Delays in finalising reports or assessments.
- Delays/difficulties with communication.

Managers have continued to be encouraged and supported to address concerns at the earliest opportunity, so that any concerns can be resolved before they enter the formal complaint procedure, which means formal complaint levels have reduced. Several 'Reframing Complaints' sessions have been delivered to colleagues in the directorate which focused on quality and timely responses as well as understanding how a restorative approach will not only be more likely to resolve the complaint but create a good working relationship. There is a direct correlation between the quality and timeliness of responses and escalating onwards through the complaint process and to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and all of these escalations have been reduced in Children and Young People's Services.

### **Some key learning and improvements from complaints:**

- Needing to be clearer around timescales for work especially when waiting on information from stakeholders and ensuring this information is requested in a timely manner.

- Focusing upon how communication can be improved with families when sharing difficult information about children's care plans.
- Viability assessment outcomes should always be shared with the individual, this should be done verbally and followed up by a written assessment. Checking that families understand the content of these, and the decisions made around these.

#### **Examples of some of the compliments received for Children & Young People's Services in 2023/24:**

A father reported feeling very supported by the Social Worker, they have been helpful and supportive. He said they had made a massive difference. Described them as 'absolutely brilliant' and referred to them as outstanding. Always polite when visited, also checked it was convenient. Parent reported workers were very professional in their practice.

"I just wanted to get in touch to feedback my positive experience with your team. I always find Rotherham to be very helpful when I contact them for the purposes of safeguarding. The colleague I spoke with today was incredibly friendly, professional and helpful."

A father complimented their Social Worker. Her approach has changed his and [his daughters] life. All social workers should aspire to be like to her."

## **6.2 Lessons Learned**

**Children and Young People's Services made several service improvements in 2023/24 following the feedback from customers. An example of this is outlined in the case study below.**

### **The Complaint**

The Council received a complaint via the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) stating that the Council did not do enough to support access to a mainstream education, did not engage in mediation forcing her to appeal to a tribunal and did not communicate with her properly.

### **What did we do?**

The Council accepted in its response, that on this occasion the communication had been poor, apologised and offered a financial remedy. It was accepted by the LGSCO that whilst there was a delay in holding an annual review, there was not any injustice, but it was for the SEND Tribunal to decide whether the placement was appropriate. The lack of mediation was due to not having available staff as this occurred during the pandemic.

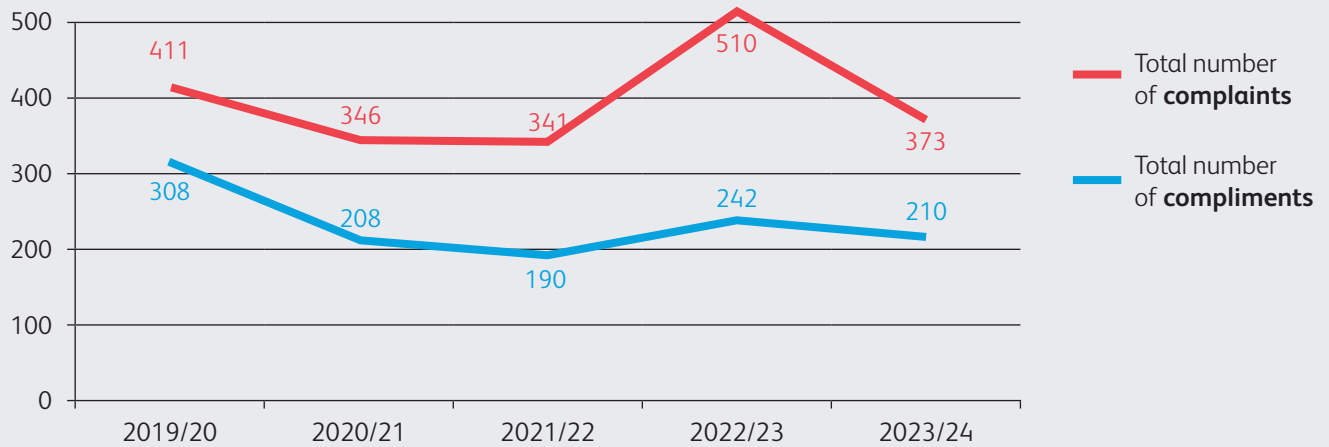
### **Who is better off?**

The communication between families and the EHCP team has improved within the last financial year and the learning from each complaint is shared within a number of key meetings with colleagues.

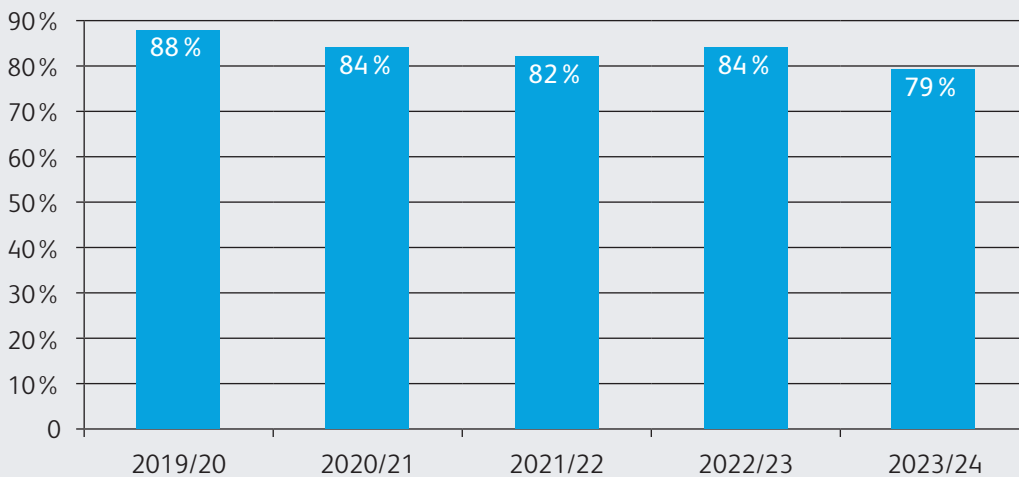
SEND complaints have reduced against the previous year and benchmarking against other Councils, it is reassuring to see that the complaints' numbers are significantly lower. The Tribunals & Resolutions Manager attached to the EHCP team ensures that any concerns are acted upon promptly and ensures the learning is acted upon in each case.

## 7. REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

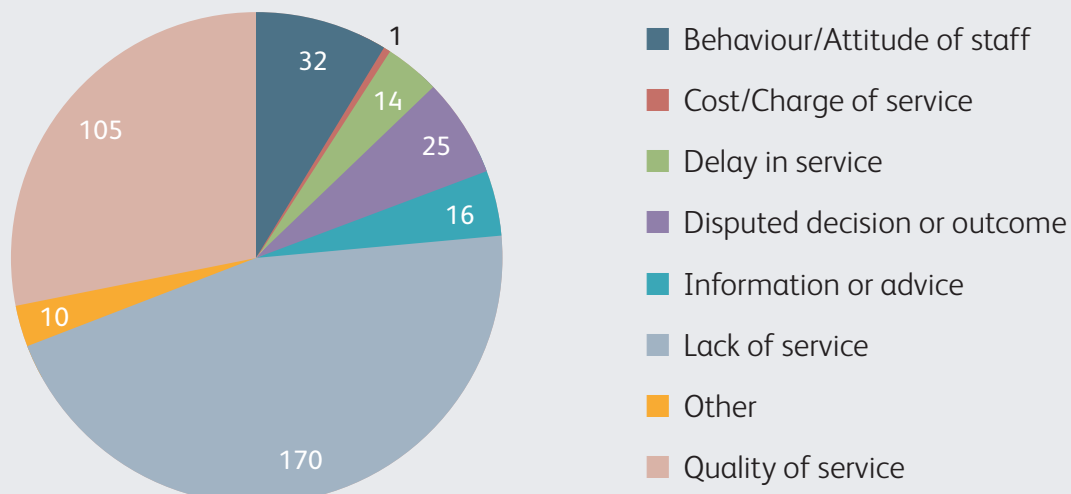
**Figure 18: Total number of compliments and complaints about Regeneration and Environment**



**Figure 19: Percentage of complaints about Regeneration and Environment closed within timescales**



**Figure 20: Complaints about Regeneration and Environment by category – 2023/24**



## 7.1 Key Headlines

# 27%

fewer  
complaints  
received

**Fewer complaints  
about Regeneration  
and Environment  
Services were received.**

(373 in 2023/24  
compared with  
510 in 2022/23.)

**Fewer compliments  
were received about  
Regeneration and  
Environment Services.**

(210 in 2023/24  
compared with  
242 in 2022/23.)

# 13%

fewer  
compliments  
received



**Fewer complaints were  
upheld.**

(141 in 2023/24  
compared with  
316 in 2022/23.)

**Fewer complaints  
responded to within  
timescales.**

(79 % in 2023/24  
compared with  
84 % in 2022/23.)



**One Ombudsman  
complaint decision  
was received.**

It was not upheld. One  
received in 2022/23.

**46% of complaints  
were regarding lack  
of service. 170 of 373  
complaints.**

105 complaints were  
regarding the quality  
of service.



### **Prevalent themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Regeneration and Environment Services were:**

- Missed bin collections and complaints about bins not being returned to the correction location.
- Lack of action or response to enquiries in relation to potholes and drainage issues.
- Quality and frequency of grass cutting.
- Lack of maintenance of trees following issues being reported to the Council.
- Issues relating to the planning application process and response to alleged breaches of planning control.

The largest number of complaints were regarding domestic waste and recycling collections in the Waste Management service, with 185 complaints received. However, this has reduced significantly from 261 received in previous year and is the biggest contributing factor in the reduction in the number of complaints for the directorate as a whole. Complaints for this service predominantly fell into the category of 'lack of service' reflecting the theme outlined above.

The remaining complaints for the directorate were distributed over a number of services in far less significant numbers with the other themes set out above represented less significant trends in complaints that were upheld.

### Examples of some of the compliments received for Regeneration and Environment Services in 2023/24:

- “I would like to thank the people who dealt with our missed bin report and follow up query about why the bin may have been missed. The person who dealt with the query by email was very positive and helpful. We were in when the “missed bins” collection arrived, and I spoke briefly to the person who was dealing with my bin. He was also very positive and helpful. Thank you.”
- “We just wanted to express our gratitude for the support received from you when dealing with our case. Since you took the case, we felt that our problems and concerns were being heard and that something was being done about it. “
- “I just wanted to email to say a huge thank you for all your hard work and efforts in delivering both towns and villages and other client’s projects this year. The workload has been unprecedented, nothing has been too much trouble, every project has been approached with dedication and professionalism.
- “I would just like to thank the cast and the entire team that put on the pantomime (and every show). I am a regular visitor to the civic as it is my local theatre and provides quality productions and shows at a reasonable price. The pantomime was really good fun, the entire cast were brilliant, but I did love the ugly sisters, their humour and campness was brilliant. The volunteers who assist with the seating are lovely. Thank you for providing a valuable social experience, at a reasonable price for a small town.”

## 7.2 Lessons Learned

**Regeneration and Environment Services made several service improvements based on customer feedback in 2023/24. An example of these improvements is outlined in the case study below:**

### The Complaint

Complaints were received regarding missed waste and recycling collections on a street in Rotherham.

### What did we do?

The Council identified from the complaints that the narrow street, layout of the houses and parking of vehicles was regularly preventing the waste/recycling vehicle from accessing the street to collect the waste and recycling bins from the properties.

The Council had on each day, made several attempts to access the street but had been unable to do so.

The Council identified the need for a narrower vehicle to be able to access this street and other streets across the borough. The Council procured and implemented the use of a narrow access waste and recycling collection vehicle, which currently serves 721 properties across the borough.

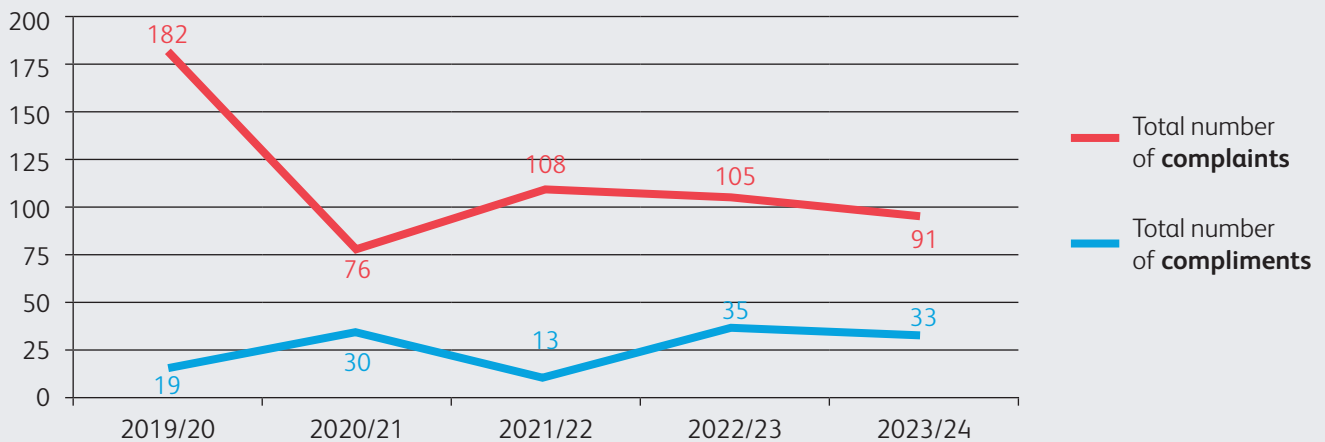
### Who is better off?

The use of this vehicle has improved access to narrower streets across the borough resulting in a significant reduction in complaints from those streets which were previously affected by access issues.

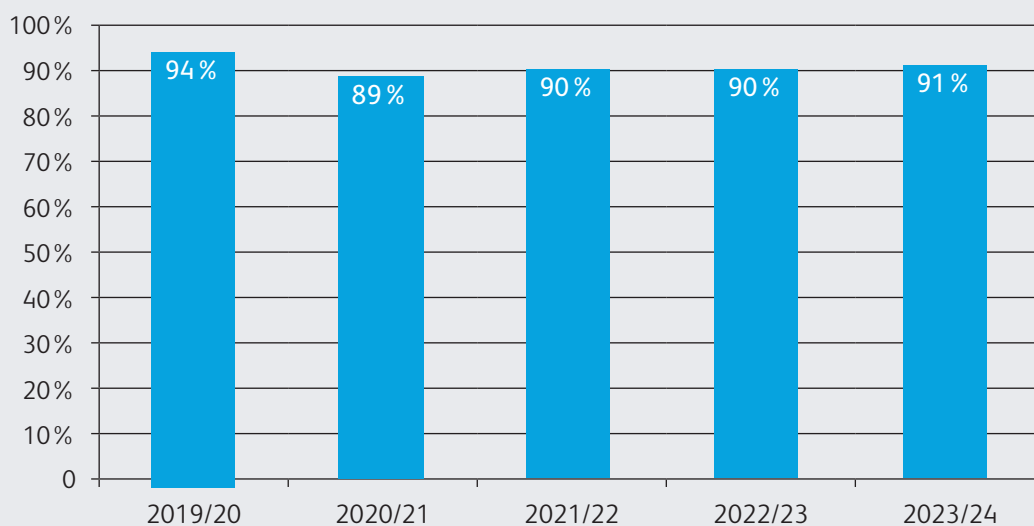


## 8. FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES DIRECTORATE

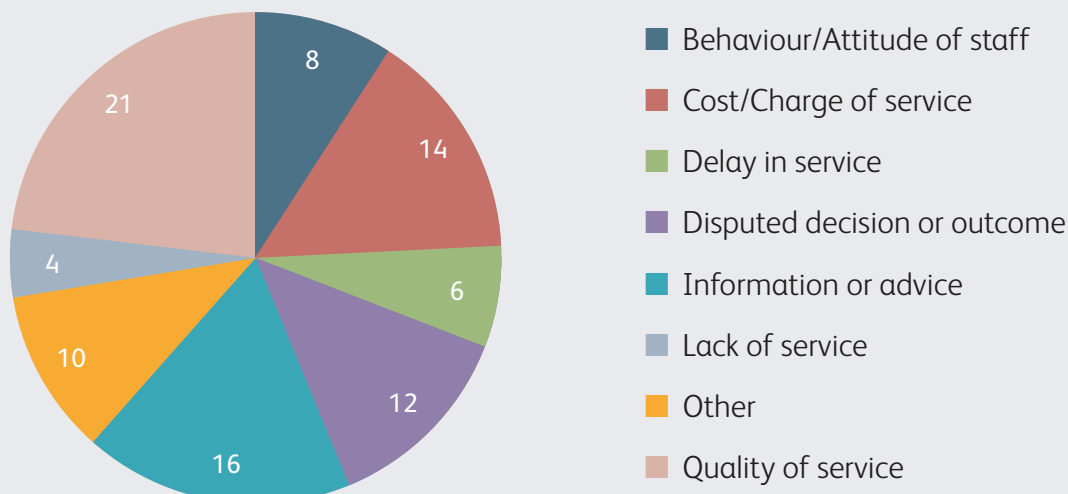
**Figure 21: Total number of complaints and compliments about Finance and Customer Services**



**Figure 22: Percentage of complaints about Finance and Customer Services closed within timescales**



**Figure 23: Complaints about Finance and Customer Services by category – 2023/24**



## 8.1 Key Headlines

# 13%

fewer  
complaints  
received

**Fewer complaints about Finance and Customer Services were received.**

(91 in 2023/24 compared with 105 in 2022/23.)

**Fewer compliments were received about Finance and Customer Services.**

(33 in 2023/24 compared with 35 in 2022/23.)

# 6%

more  
compliments  
received



**Fewer complaints were upheld.**

(15 in 2023/24 compared with 24 in 2022/23.)

**91% of complaints were responded to within timescales.**

(This is above the 5-year average of 90 % and is an improvement on the performance in 2022/23 of 90 % for the service.)



**No Ombudsman complaint decisions were received.**

**23% of complaints were regarding quality of service (21 out of 91) and 18% were regarding information and advice (16 out of 91).**



### Themes which emerged specifically within upheld and partially upheld complaints for Finance and Customer Services were:

- Significant reduction in complaints being received and upheld regarding call waiting times for Customer Services.
- Disputes regarding Council Tax liability and errors in administration of Council Tax accounts.

The directorate saw a decrease in the number of complaints received this year.

This is primarily down to a significant decrease in complaints for Customer Services which received 48 % fewer complaints than the previous year. 24 complaints were received regarding Customer Services this year, compared to 46 in the previous financial year.

Complaints in relation to Council Tax increased slightly by 4 % from 51 in the previous financial year, to 59 this year.

In addition, five complaints were received for Property and Facilities Services and only one complaint was received for Legal Services.

**Examples of some of the compliments received for Finance and Customer Services in 2023/24:**

- “She was really accommodating, and she made me feel comfortable and was a very nice person to speak to. I think people make complaints all the time and when someone has been so nice, I just want to say thank you, you made my day and thanks for sorting out all my issues.”
- “I had excellent customer service today from Customer Services for council house repairs. I was referring a tenant for banister rails. He was quick to pick up the urgency of the situation, and obtain a priority booking, and also made a really helpful suggestion about a fitting a different product to the one I had called to request.”
- “Just want to say I spoke to two separate gentlemen today one in benefits and one in over payments / recovery and both were absolutely first-class customer service so nice helpful and understanding you have two very good employees thank you so much for all your support.”

## 8.2 Lessons Learned

**Finance and Customer Services made several service improvements in 2023/24 following the feedback from customers. An example of these is outlined in the case study below:**

### The Complaint

Customers had previously complained that it took them too long to get through to speak to a member of staff when they contacted the Council’s Customer Services by telephone.

### What did we do?

The Council introduced a call-back service so that customers could request that the Council calls them rather than waiting in a queue for their call to be answered.

The Council introduced a wider range of web forms giving customers the opportunity to make their enquiry online and receive a response from the Council.

### Who is better off?

The Council implemented a range of measures to achieve an average time waiting on the phone of six minutes. The Council achieved and exceeded this target with an average call waiting time of just over three minutes. This means that customers are receiving a more efficient service when contacting the Council via telephone.

Customers now have the option to request a call-back rather than waiting on the phone to speak to someone. This was used by over 21,000 customers in the year who on average received a return telephone call within 15 minutes.

The wider range of web forms means that customers can report more issues online and choose the right form for their enquiry; and receive an appropriate response. Almost 190,000 web forms were completed in 2023/24.

This has resulted in a significant decrease in the number of complaints received regarding call-waiting times with only four complaints being received regarding the issue in this financial year.

## 9. ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE

### 9.1 Key Headlines

- Five complaints were received (Four in 2022/23).
- 39 compliments were recorded (35 in 2022/23).
- Three were stage 1 complaints. One at Stage 2. (One Informal)
- One complaint was upheld (Two upheld in 2022/23).
- No Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decisions.
- 60 % of complaints were resolved within statutory timescales (75 %, in 2022/23).

### 9.2 Complaints

The subject matter of each complaint received is listed below:

#### Democratic Services

- Administration of an Independent Appeal Panel hearing.\*
- Complaint about the handling of a petition by the Council.
- Issues with their school appeal.\*

#### Complaints Team

- Delay in responding to a stage 2 complaint investigation.
- Multiple issues relating to Housing, CYPS and Adult Care services – Complaints Manager coordinated an informal complaint response .

*\*school appeals administration has now moved to School Planning, Admissions and Appeals in the CYPS Directorate.*

### 9.3 Compliments

Examples include:

Compliment for the Communications Team “Thank you for your work on this project. You were a pleasure to work with - professional, bags of experience and knowledge and you did what you said you would by the deadlines agreed. Thanks so much and I hope to work with you again in the future.”

Compliment for Democratic Services. “Thank you for the support you provided before Christmas to a parent. This really is a fantastic example of going the extra mile and taking personal responsibility for providing exceptional customer service.”

Compliment for Neighbourhoods. “Could not speak highly enough of the staff member and the work he’s doing to improve the Town Centre. Great to hear in such a forum.”

## 10. NEXT STEPS, 2024/25

During 2023/24 the numbers of complaints decreased slightly from the previous year's total, which still demonstrates the continuing challenges facing the Council and the pressures on the delivery of services.

The need to provide excellent customer services that are efficient and cost effective is fundamental to the management of the Council. Therefore, it is vital that complaints are responded to in a timely manner and the complaints procedures work effectively for both customers and staff.

The following are the planned actions in 2024/25, to ensure that the way the Council deals with complaints and responds to customer feedback continues to improve.

### Key actions included:

- Complaints Team self-assessment completed every 12 months, to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- Complaint satisfaction survey to be rolled out for Housing Services complaints.
- New Housing Services complaint web page to include better information for tenants, including learning from complaints case studies and satisfaction information.
- Continuing review of all customer complaint literature, including website information, easy read guidance and information for children and young people to improve access to the Complaint Procedures for all residents.
- Ensure compliance against benchmarked standards ahead of expected inspections in Adult Care, CYPS and Housing Services.
- Continue to seek ways to deliver training to front line staff to allow them to understand the role and purpose of the complaint procedures.
- Continue to provide bespoke training for Investigating Managers to allow them to provide a better investigation and response to formal complaints.
- Work with management meetings in all departments to create a better learning from complaints programme. That all learning reported is considered and the impact of service improvement is understood and recorded.
- The Complaints Team will work with Council departments to check to see if there is anything more that can be done to resolve a complaint after notification that an Ombudsman investigation has been received.
- Work to improve performance to complaint procedure timescales, to make sure it meets Council Plan target of 85 %. This includes continued roll out of new reporting dashboards so that managers have direct access to their complaint information.
- Increase the number of compliments recorded, the Complaints Team will continue to work with managers to ensure that the process for recording and reporting compliments is improved. Benchmarking with other Local Authorities has taken place and their best practice approaches will be used to further increase the numbers of compliments received.
- Roll out of a new complaint management IT system to improve the way complaint web form enquiries are responded to.

# APPENDIX ONE

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decisions 2023/24, Rotherham Council and statistical neighbours.

Authority Name	Invalid or Incomplete	Advice Given	Referred Back for Local Resolution	Closed after Initial Enquiries	Not Upheld	Upheld	Total Investigated	Total	Uphold rate (%)	Average uphold rate (%) of similar authorities
Halton Borough Council	1	1	7	15	1	1	2	26	50%	79%
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	8	15	16	28	0	4	4	71	100%	80%
Telford & Wrekin Council	3	0	7	11	2	2	4	25	50%	79%
<b>Rotherham Council</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>80%</b>
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	3	3	18	18	1	5	6	48	83%	80%
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	2	2	15	23	2	6	8	50	75%	80%
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	8	4	9	22	0	8	8	51	100%	80%
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	1	3	26	14	1	9	10	54	90%	80%
City of Doncaster Council	7	2	8	35	3	7	10	62	70%	80%
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	2	3	14	17	3	8	11	47	73%	80%
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	2	0	16	25	2	10	12	55	83%	80%
Wakefield City Council	3	0	19	29	4	8	12	63	67%	80%
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	2	0	6	23	5	8	13	44	62%	79%
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	7	2	29	37	3	13	16	91	81%	79%
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	2	1	18	19	1	18	19	59	95%	80%

17 July 2024

*By email*

Ms Kemp  
Chief Executive  
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Dear Ms Kemp

### **Annual Review letter 2023-24**

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2024. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints, and I know you will consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to ensure effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer valuable opportunities to learn and improve. In addition, this year, we have encouraged Monitoring Officers to register to receive the letter directly, supporting their role to report the decisions we uphold to their council.

For most of the reporting year, Paul Najsarek steered the organisation during his tenure as interim Ombudsman, and I was delighted to take up the role of Ombudsman in February 2024. I look forward to working with you and colleagues across the local government sector to ensure we continue to harness the value of individual complaints and drive and promote systemic change and improvement across the local government landscape.

While I know this ambition will align with your own, I am aware of the difficult financial circumstances and service demands that make continuous improvement a challenging focus for the sector. However, we will continue to hold organisations to account through our investigations and recommend proportionate actions to remedy injustice. Despite the challenges, I have great confidence that you recognise the valuable contribution and insight complaints, and their swift resolution, offer to improve services for the public.

### **Complaint statistics**

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

**Complaints upheld** - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic. This year, we also provide the number of upheld complaints per 100,000 population.

**Compliance with recommendations** - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

**Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and give credit to organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 24 July 2024. This useful tool places all our data and information about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

### **Supporting complaint and service improvement**

In February, following a period of consultation, we launched the [Complaint Handling Code](#) for councils, setting out a clear process for responding to complaints effectively and fairly. It is aligned with the Code issued to housing authorities and landlords by the Housing Ombudsman Service and we encourage you to adopt the Code without undue delay. Twenty councils have volunteered to take part in an implementation pilot over the next two years that will develop further guidance and best practice.

The Code is issued to councils under our powers to provide guidance about good administrative practice. We expect councils to carefully consider the Code when developing policies and procedures and will begin considering it as part of our processes from April 2026 at the earliest.

The Code is considered good practice for all organisations we investigate (except where there are statutory complaint handling processes in place), and we may decide to issue it as guidance to other organisations in future.

Our successful complaint handling training programme continues to develop with new modules in Adult Social Care and Children's Services complaint handling available soon. All our courses include practical interactive workshops that help participants develop their complaint handling skills. We delivered 126 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1,700 people. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training) or get in touch at [training@lgo.org.uk](mailto:training@lgo.org.uk).

Returning to the theme of continuous improvement, we recognise the importance of reflecting on our own performance. With that in mind I encourage you to share your view of our organisation via this survey: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ombudsman/>. Your responses will help us to assess our impact and improve our offer to you. We want to gather a range of views and welcome multiple responses from organisations, so please do share the link with relevant colleagues.

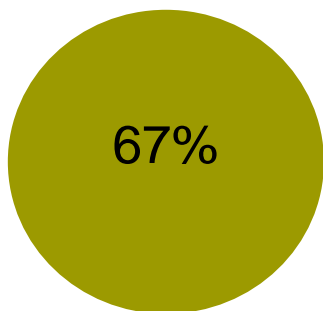
Yours sincerely,



Amerdeep Somal  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England



### Complaints upheld



**67%** of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **80%** in similar organisations.

**4**

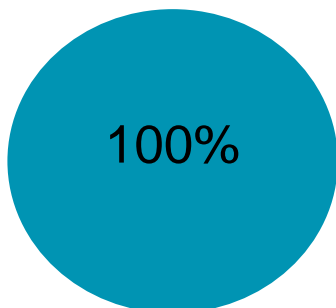
upheld decisions

This is 1.5 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

The average for authorities of this type is 4.4 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

Statistics are based on a total of **6** investigations for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

### Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



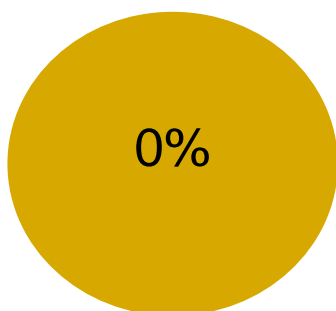
In **100%** of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of **99%** in similar organisations.

Statistics are based on a total of **5** compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

### Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation



In **0%** of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of **14%** in similar organisations.

**0**

satisfactory remedy decisions

Statistics are based on a total of **4** upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

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## **Appendix 3**

### **Complaint procedures overview**

**There are 3** stages to the Council's Corporate and (Adult and Children's) Social Care complaint procedures.

**There are 2** stages about complaints in respect of the Council's Landlord function. (Most Housing Services complaints)

#### **Stage 1 - Response from line manager**

Full response within **10** working days for Corporate Complaints. Up to **20** working days for Social Care complaints.

**Stage 2 - Investigation by independent officer** (Corporate and Adult Social Care stage 2 complaints are investigated by the Council's Complaint Team and Childrens Social Care complaints by an externally contracted investigator)

Full response:

- Up to **25** working days for Corporate Complaints.
- Up to **45** working days for Adult Social Care complaints.
- Up to **65** working days for Childrens Social Care complaints.

*Complaints about the Council's Landlord function end after stage 2. Tenants have the option of having their complaint considered by an Independent Tenants Panel (operated in Rotherham by Rotherfed) or by an Independent Person (Councillor or MP)*

#### **Stage 3 – Complaint's review panel / review by Assistant Director**

Full response:

- Up to **25** working days for Corporate Complaints (Members panel).
- Up to **20** working days for Adult Social Care complaints (Review by Assistant Director).
- Up to **50** working days for Childrens Social Care complaints (Externally contracted independent professionals).

**If unresolved, a complaint can be taken to,**

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman / Housing Ombudsman (Landlord function complaints)

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Public Report  
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 13 November 2024

**Report Title**

The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Annual Report 2023-24

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Andrew Bramidge, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

**Report Author(s)**

Carol Adamson, Community Safety Service Manager  
[carol.adamson@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:carol.adamson@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

Under section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, annual scrutiny is required of decisions made and actions taken by responsible authorities in connection with the discharge of crime and disorder functions. The SRP annual report 2023-24 is presented to assist with this requirement.

**Recommendations**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board notes the progress of the Safer Rotherham Partnership in tackling crime and disorder in 2023-24 against its key priorities and makes recommendations in relation to the current and future work of the partnership.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Safer Rotherham Partnership annual report 2023-24

**Background Papers**

[Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2022-2025](#)

[Safer Rotherham Partnership annual report 2022-23](#) reported to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 11 October 2023

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

The annual report was presented to and agreed by the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board on 5 September 2024.

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## The Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report 2023-24

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) is the borough's Community Safety Partnership, established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Responsible authorities have a duty to work together to protect their local communities and help people feel safer. They work out how to deal with crime and local issues like anti-social behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and reoffending. They assess local crime priorities annually, consulting with partners and the local community about their priorities and monitor progress in achieving them. There are five responsible authorities that make up the Safer Rotherham Partnership:

- Probation Service
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board
- South Yorkshire Police

The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust, Voluntary Action Rotherham and Victim Support are also represented at SRP Board meetings.

- 1.2 Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, requires the Local Authority to ensure that it has a committee with power to review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendation to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions. The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, require this committee to meet annually. The SRP annual report is presented to assist the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in meeting this annual statutory requirement.

### 2. Key Issues

#### 2.1 How the SRP Plan and Priorities for 2022-25 were agreed

- 2.2 The overarching priorities referred to in the annual report were agreed by the SRP Board on 7 April 2022, following an enhanced assessment and consultation process to develop 3-year priorities from 2022 to 2025. This included a comprehensive review of Police and partner data and information; wide ranging consultation; use of the Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRiLE) tool to assess risks; and workshops with strategic leads and professionals with relevant expertise. The Plan was subsequently endorsed by Cabinet on 20 September 2022 and approved at the full Council meeting on 5 October 2022.

#### 2.3 SRP Priorities and Objective Areas for 2022-25

- 2.4 The SRP Board agreed four overarching priorities that are contained within the SRP Plan 2022-2025. These were: Protecting Vulnerable Children; Protecting Vulnerable Adults; Safer Stronger Communities; Protecting People

from Violence and Organised Crime. The priorities and objective areas were agreed in accordance with the overall SRP vision statement – *Working together to make Rotherham safe, to keep Rotherham safe and to ensure the communities of Rotherham feel safe.*

## 2.5 Annual review of priorities

2.6 The SRP has conducted annual reviews of the plan and priorities, informed by assessments of high-risk crime and community safety related threats and areas presenting an increasing or changing risk level. Annual reviews have led to the original priorities being retained throughout the life of the plan with changes made to objective areas and performance indicators to address changing risks and threats.

2.7 Table 1 below shows the objective areas under each priority which provided the focus for action in 2023-24.

## 2.8 Table 1 - SRP priorities and commitments 2023-24

### Protecting Vulnerable Children

#### Our commitments

Objective area:	We will:
<b>Child Abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase understanding of the potential signs of neglect and child abuse through training and awareness raising with partners.</li> <li>• Raise awareness with the public around the signs of early abuse and mechanisms for reporting.</li> </ul>
<b>Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase understanding of CCE and CSE, reporting and responses, with professionals and the public through training and awareness raising.</li> <li>• Work together with partners and the public to reduce the risk of CSE and CCE and ensure accurate recording of investigations and quality outcomes.</li> <li>• Increase understanding of CSE and CCE, how it affects our communities and how our actions as a partnership improve the lives of children.</li> <li>• Develop and promote training and awareness for professionals and parents/carers to better understand online abuse and exploitation (<i>links with online safety objective areas under safer stronger communities</i>).</li> </ul>

### Protecting Vulnerable Adults

#### Our commitments

Objective area:	We will:
-----------------	----------

<b>Substance misuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase engagement and positive outcomes from substance misuse treatment services for offenders within the criminal justice system.</li> <li>• Increase understanding and awareness of substance misuse issues, harm minimisation techniques and the referral pathways for staff within the criminal justice system.</li> <li>• Support the Combatting Drugs Partnership Action Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Mental health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the use and impact of mental health treatment requirements in the criminal justice system.</li> <li>• Review dual diagnosis pathways to support service users with mental health and alcohol/ drug use treatment needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Modern slavery and Human Trafficking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase understanding of modern slavery through training and awareness raising with partners.</li> <li>• Raise awareness around the signs of modern slavery and mechanisms for reporting.</li> </ul>

### **Safer and Stronger Communities**

#### **Our commitments**

<b>Objective area:</b>	<b>We will:</b>
<b>Making communities safer – tackling community safety priority locations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and evaluate the partnership approach to problem solving in local neighbourhoods, including thresholds and methodology for partnership activity.</li> <li>• Seek appropriate external funding opportunities and support and participate in partnership bids to secure additional funding for activity in the borough.</li> </ul>
<b>Preventing hate crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the use of education and engagement to prevent hate crime by tackling the drivers of hate.</li> <li>• Improve victims' experiences of reporting hate crime and incidents.</li> </ul>
<b>Online crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore innovative ways in which partners and the public can be educated around online safety and digital technologies and develop engagement with young people, families and older people.</li> </ul>

### **Protecting people from violence and organised crime**

#### **Our commitments**

<b>Objective area:</b>	<b>We will:</b>
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<b>Domestic abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor domestic abuse services, in line with the partnership strategy to improve outcomes for victims.</li> <li>• Ensure all those fleeing domestic abuse are able to access safe accommodation and appropriate support.</li> <li>• Improve the use of criminal justice measures to better protect victims and tackle perpetrator behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and refresh the sexual abuse delivery plan, focussing on victim engagement.</li> <li>• Improve timely reporting of sexual offences to increase forensic opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Male violence against women and girls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce male violence against women and girls by focussing on hot spot locations and repeat perpetrators.</li> <li>• Deliver awareness raising events, projects and promotions aimed at improving women and girls' safety and feelings of safety.</li> </ul>
<b>Serious violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ways out for those already entrenched in violence, or who have been previously incarcerated to support effective rehabilitation.</li> <li>• Reduce violence through victim identification, care and support programmes.</li> <li>• Reduce availability and access to lethal weapons</li> <li>• Work to change cultural and social norms that support violence.</li> <li>• Encourage all professionals and organisations to continue to work towards becoming trauma-informed, to an approved standard for South Yorkshire.</li> </ul>
<b>Organised crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and implement a whole system partnership approach to tackling organised crime.</li> <li>• Prevent individuals and emerging groups from becoming involved in organised crime.</li> <li>• Build stronger information sharing structures between partners and communities.</li> <li>• Target our partnership approach to those causing the highest harm to individuals and groups in our communities.</li> <li>• Disrupt organised crime via a partnership approach, utilising the national Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare framework.</li> </ul>

<b>Counter terrorism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the risk of terrorism by taking a partnership approach to the Prevent, Protect and Prepare workstreams of the UK Contest Counter Terrorism Strategy</li> <li>• Achieve compliance with the Channel and Prevent duties, (under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015) and Protect and Prepare (Martyn's law) forthcoming duties demonstrated through self-assessment using Home Office toolkits</li> </ul>
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## 2.9 Annual report content

- 2.10 The annual report (at appendix 1) provides an overview of the achievements and progress made in 2023-24, along with current and emerging challenges. Data and case studies are included to illustrate key issues and areas of work. Next steps are included for each priority, as are the areas of focus for 2024-2025, as agreed by the SRP Board following the 2024 annual review. The annual report also provides an overview of how SRP partners have sought to maximise available funding and resources through collaborative working, joint commissioning and pooling resources of multi-agency partners and services.

## 2.11 Governance and performance management

- 2.12 SRP governance processes ensure robust performance management of the priorities. Each objective area has a set of performance indicators that enable progress to be tracked. Monitoring is carried out by designated priority strategic leads who attend the SRP Board and are supported by partnership priority groups and designated RMBC Community Safety Officers. The priority strategic leads present a quarterly performance dashboard to the SRP Board, covering what is working well, current challenges and next steps for their priority area. Ensuing discussions allow for challenge by the wider Board members and discussion around any remedial action required. The process also provides assurance to the Board of progress.

## 3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 This report is presented to assist with meeting statutory requirements for the review and scrutiny of crime and disorder functions by the responsible authorities, therefore no alternative options have been considered

## 4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The SRP Annual Report 2023-24 was presented to, and approved by, the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board at its meeting on 5 September 2024.

## 5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Not applicable

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 When delivering their services day to day, the organisations that make up the Safer Rotherham Partnership allocate considerable resources each year to community safety priorities. Under the leadership of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board, partners are able to work together to maximise the use of available resources. This is achieved through collaborative working, joint commissioning and pooling resources of multi-agency partners and services. Examples of successful collaborative working are included within the SRP Annual Report 2023-2024.
- 6.2 In 2023-2024, the SRP secured external funding for additional services and activities to tackle community safety priorities. This included £163,063 Community Safety Funding, £78,265 Domestic Abuse Core Funding and £35,000 domestic abuse target hardening intervention funding awarded by the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire. In addition, the Council was awarded £632,075 Domestic Abuse Duty Funding by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; and £109,084 Home Office Safer Streets 5 funding.
- 6.3 There are no direct procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in this report.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 Under section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 the Local Authority is required to ensure that it has a committee with power to review and scrutinise decisions made or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions and to make reports or recommendation to the Local Authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.
- 7.2 As set out within the body of the report The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 complements the Act and requires the committee to meet annually as a minimum. This a statutory requirement and to satisfy the duty, this is currently undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from the recommendations within this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 Protecting vulnerable children and protecting vulnerable adults were adopted as continuing priorities by the Safer Rotherham Partnership from 2022-2025. The Annual Report 2023-2024 shows how the partnership has worked to achieve the SRP Plan 2022-25 priorities and address crime and community safety risks, threats and vulnerabilities relating to children and vulnerable adults. Delivery plans, governance structures and performance management

are in place for both the Protecting Vulnerable Children and Protecting Vulnerable Adults priorities.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 The SRP Plan 2022-2025 identifies and puts in place actions that protect the most vulnerable people and communities within the Borough. The key priorities: Protecting Vulnerable Children; Protecting Vulnerable Adults; Safer Stronger Communities; and Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime, are fully inclusive of Equality Act protected characteristic groups. Objectives, action plans and performance measurements against each priority are monitored on a quarterly basis by the relevant SRP priority groups and a quarterly performance dashboard is presented to the SRP Board. Where possible and relevant, performance measurements are disaggregated to identify any differential impact on protected characteristic groups so that underlying causes can be investigated further. This enables mitigating action to be taken where necessary. Engagement, consultation and customer satisfaction survey opportunities help partners take account of service user voices and experiences. Annual reviews of crime data are carried out in relation to each priority and demographic information is analysed in relation to victims and offenders across the various crime types, which also helps inform priorities and actions. Care is also taken to ensure awareness campaigns use inclusive imagery. Actions taken by the Safer Rotherham Partnership to tackle discrimination and harassment, advance equal opportunities and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not, are reflected throughout the SRP annual report 2023-2024.

## **11. Implications for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 There are no direct CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions implications associated with this report. A Carbon Impact Assessment was undertaken during the development of the SRP Plan 2022-2025. As the SRP coordinates existing partner activity and resources, there were no specific impacts identified related to the SRP Plan 2022-25
- 11.2 Climate change is an aggravating factor which affects dimensions of community safety. Climate change is a driver of modern slavery, with links to child sexual exploitation and organised crime. Human trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation in the wake of natural disasters is well documented, as people who are displaced or forced to migrate lose their livelihoods and social ties in their communities: children may be separated from their parents, sold into indentured labour or forced into marriage. Human trafficking in the UK is connected to global networks of exploitation and organised crime. As climate change increases the frequency and severity of natural disasters, their far-reaching impacts will be felt in Rotherham, as elsewhere.
- 11.3 Albeit there are no direct implications for carbon emissions from the SRP Annual Report 2023-24, actions and emerging challenges described in the report have their own carbon impacts. Understanding the links between

community safety and climate change can maximise opportunities to deliver 'co-benefits' which address both these strategic priorities. Operation Grow, launched in 2021 to tackle domestic cannabis production after power outages in Rotherham were attributed to illegal electricity connections, may be an exemplar in this respect, with direct environmental benefits arising from action to disrupt organised crime.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 There are no direct implications for partners associated with this report.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 The production of this report for scrutiny ensures that legal requirements are met under section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009,

## **14. Accountable Officer(s)**

Sam Barstow, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene  
Emma Ellis, Head of Service, Community Safety and Regulatory Services

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

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# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

WORKING TOGETHER TO  
MAKE ROTHERHAM SAFE, TO  
KEEP ROTHERHAM SAFE AND  
TO ENSURE THE  
COMMUNITIES OF  
ROTHERHAM FEEL SAFE





# Foreword

**I am pleased to present the Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report for 2023-24.**

The report describes the priorities, work and achievements of the Partnership over the year as we have worked to achieve our core ambition for all people in Rotherham to be safe and feel safe as they go about their daily lives.

This year has seen partners working together to make progress against our commitments to protect vulnerable children, protect vulnerable adults, protecting people from violence and organised crime and safer stronger communities. Although it is difficult to single out specific areas of work from the many initiatives described in this annual report, here are some highlights:



Partners are continuing to work together to protect children and young people from exploitation, focusing on preventing offending, intervening to protect those at risk and bringing offenders to justice, through the excellent work of the Evolve team. Training is continuing to be delivered across the partnership to raise awareness of the signs of child exploitation with training for staff and partners who work with children and families as well as the wider workforce.

Another success has been in securing the continuation of our restorative hate crime service through investment of funding by the Council and Police. The service, which is provided by Remedi, provides educational interventions for hate crime offenders as well as awareness sessions about the harms of hate to young people. The service was developed in response to feedback from communities who wanted to see educational work taking place with offenders as well as awareness raising for those who may be targeted for hate crime.

Domestic abuse cuts across all areas of life. Experiencing and witnessing domestic abuse can have devastating impacts on victims, their children, friends and family and also wider societal and economic impacts. No one should live in fear. Our focus in Rotherham is on early intervention and prevention, minimising harm and providing victims/survivors with outreach support services, safe accommodation and support to prevent homelessness. Alongside this is an intervention programme for domestic abuse perpetrators, aimed at changing behaviours.

Robust action is continuing against organised crime groups in Rotherham, with actions to disrupt and pursue those causing highest harm. The multi-agency cannabis operation continues to support identification and investigation of cannabis grows linked to organised crime, and public awareness raising is taking place to increase reporting.

We continue to monitor progress across all our community safety priorities, regularly reviewing emerging risks and challenges. As well as describing the progress made this year, this report sets out where we still have work to do, and what we need to do as we move forward into 2024/25.

I would like to thank all board members and partners for their hard work and participation over the last year and I look forward to working with you over the coming year where we will continue to strengthen our partnership to make Rotherham a safer place.

**Councillor Saghir Alam OBE**  
**Chair of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board**



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# Our priorities for 2023-24

The Safer Rotherham Partnership brings together partner organisations within the Borough to protect local communities and help people feel safer.

## Working together to make Rotherham Safe, to keep Rotherham safe and to ensure the communities of Rotherham feel safe

The Safer Rotherham Partnership is a multi-agency strategic partnership made up of senior leaders. Together, partners work out how to deal with crime and local issues like anti-social behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and re-offending. They assess local crime priorities annually, consulting with partners and the local community about their priorities, and monitor progress in achieving them.

Organisations represented at Safer Rotherham Partnership Board meetings in 2023-24 were:

- Probation Service
- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- South Yorkshire Police
- Victim Support
- Voluntary Action Rotherham
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire

Whilst each of the above organisations has individual responsibilities and priorities to prevent crime and to keep people safe from harm, the Safer Rotherham Partnership is able to direct additional activities and achieve additional value through combining expertise, experience and resources.

Each priority is led by a senior leader drawn from our partner organisations.

### Our priorities for 2023-24 were:

Priority	Objective Areas	Strategic Leads
Protecting Vulnerable Children	Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	Head of Service, Safeguarding, Quality and Learning, Children and Young People Services, RMBC
	Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	
	Child Abuse	Superintendent South Yorkshire Police

Priority	Objective Areas	Strategic Leads
Protecting Vulnerable Adults	Substance Misuse	Head of Service Safeguarding and Mental Health Adult Social Care, RMBC
	Mental Health	
	Modern Slavery	

Priority	Objective Areas	Strategic Leads
Safer and Stronger Communities	Making communities safer – tackling community safety priority locations	Director of Services (Infrastructure) Voluntary Action Rotherham  Group Manager South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue
	Preventing Hate Crime	
	Online Crime	

Priority	Objective Areas	Strategic Leads
Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime	Domestic Abuse	Head of Service Community Safety and Regulatory Services RMBC  Superintendent, South Yorkshire Police
	Sexual Abuse	
	Male Violence Against Women and Girls	
	Organised Crime	
	Serious Violence	
	Counter Terrorism	

# Protecting Vulnerable Children

## What we did in 2023-2024

### Child Abuse

Neglect is a persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs. If concerns are not identified and addressed early, it can have a long lasting impact on their physical and emotional wellbeing. Neglect can also become child abuse. The Neglect Delivery group has been established and the Neglect strategy is in development. This will be launched by the Rotherham Safeguarding Childrens Partnership in 2024 alongside a campaign to communicate with families and the wider community and promote the support available from professionals.

The Neglect Strategy will support training and development for practitioners working with neglect with the aim of ensuring that interventions are targeted and that the impact of neglect upon the child is reduced. The strategy will also ensure that the needs of children with disabilities will remain at the forefront of the service and practice will take into account the increased risk factors.

A Task and Finish Group has been established to produce a neglect pathway for practitioners across the partnership from initial concern to screening. This is being developed alongside targeted assessment tools in order to identify cases of neglect and work alongside parents and carers to address the issues and improve outcomes for children.

### Protecting Young People Online

Online safety and awareness was a key theme for Safeguarding Awareness Week in November 2023. Training and awareness sessions were developed for professionals and the public around online safety and young people for Safer Internet Day in February 2024.

Information is regularly shared through the Digital Champions Network to raise awareness of emerging issues or risky apps.

A community Online Safety awareness session has been developed and delivered to members of the public alongside the Digital Inclusion Team. The session is being adapted to target parents and carers to help protect young people online with a particular focus on image sharing which continues to be raised as an issue by professionals working with young people.

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

The Evolve Team works directly with children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, or a mixture of both. Most of their work is with children who are at high and medium risk of harm. Information and data from Evolve and South Yorkshire Police is collated and discussed between partners at the Child Exploitation Delivery Group to give a deeper understanding of the number of young people at risk and the interventions being put in place.

Referrals to South Yorkshire Police for child exploitation are scrutinised through the Safer Rotherham Partnership and increases and decreases are monitored and explored. Prompt action to address emerging performance issues, including training, is carried out where required.

There have been increases in referrals and intelligence for child exploitation over the year. This is discussed at a weekly partnership meeting where information is shared and discussions take place around concerns for vulnerable children. Wider learning is also explored, for example, spotting the signs and opportunities to engage with young people. The relationships formed encourage good partnership working with good representation at the weekly meetings from all partners. New processes have been developed with Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools via the Education Safeguarding Lead to continue the increases.



### 39% of CSE offences are committed online

Whilst there has been a decrease in Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) offences throughout the year, the increased use of digital technology carries with it the risk of criminals increasingly using the online space to exploit children and young people

# Protecting Vulnerable Children

## Current and emerging challenges

### Child Abuse

Working Together to Safeguard Children is statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children issued by the Department for Education. There have been recent changes in this legislation and there is a limited timescale for implementation. This will be monitored to ensure it does not have an impact on partnership work.

The use of the Graded Care Profile (GCP2) supports families to understand where concerns are and allows professionals to work alongside them to develop plans to address the issues. There are currently only a small number of people who are trained to use this tool.

Whilst deprivation and poverty does not lead to neglect it can have an impact on families particularly with the continued cost of living increases.

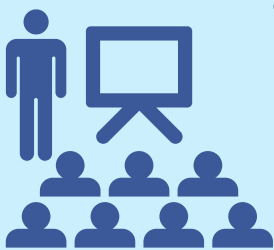
### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Continued increases in the risk of online exploitation and the use of digital technology to harm and exploit young people. Work is being done to address this through the Digital Inclusion Team who are delivering awareness sessions in the community and family hubs and through work with partners and schools to ensure information is widely shared and accessible to families.

As with Child Abuse, the changes in Working Together to Safeguard Children legislation may have an impact on partnership work

The transition from Stovewood in January 2024 continues to be monitored by South Yorkshire Police to ensure a smooth transition to business as usual.

### Training



Minimising Unconscious Bias in Child Criminal Exploitation training was delivered to 197 professionals. The sessions were aimed at those working directly with young people involved in exploitation and looked at how unconscious bias can impact our work.

Training on the risks of vaping to young people, including the additional vulnerability to exploitation, was delivered to 4 education settings and to 68 professionals. Links have been established with partners who are exploring targeted work in relation to vaping, the risks for young people and how to address the behaviour challenges this presents to schools.

## What we need to do

### Child Abuse

A robust suite of multi-agency data will support the partnership to understand the 'Rotherham picture' in relation to neglect and give clear oversight to partners within the Neglect Delivery Group

Increase the number of staff across the partnership who are trained in completing the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) to enable better identification of neglect and improve the supporting response as the local pathway is developed and implemented.

Continue work to raise awareness of the signs of neglect and pathways to support and reporting.

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Continue to raise awareness of the signs of child exploitation with training for staff and partners working directly with children and the wider workforce

Provide ongoing training and awareness to professionals, schools and the public around online risks and ways to safeguard young people online through community awareness sessions delivered by the Digital Inclusion Team, working with partners such as Early Help and Education and regular updates provided through the Digital Champions Network.

# Protecting Vulnerable Adults

## What we did in 2023-2024

### Substance Misuse

Consolidation of working arrangements between the Probation Service and Drug and Alcohol Service has improved offender management and client engagement with services, resulting in more positive overall outcomes for service users.

This working arrangement includes reaching out to individuals and communities, specialist pathways for young people and appropriate support delivered in community locations, a single point of contact for referral and assessment, a variety of specialty interventions including psycho-social support and specialist prescribing.

We also continued with the programme of training for staff working within the Criminal Justice System.

### Mental Health

The work of the dedicated Mental Health Clinical Specialist, based within the Police Safer Neighbourhood Service, continued to play a key role in tackling the growing challenges of mental health. Interventions have continued to increase year on year including the number of face-to-face interventions.

During the period this work continued to ensure that referred adults with mental health needs were provided with, or signposted to, the most appropriate support, reducing their vulnerability to becoming involved with the criminal justice system as either a victim or perpetrator.

During the year, data management and recording of interventions by the Mental Health Clinical Specialist in conjunction with RDaSH (Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust) were reviewed and improved, and now better reflect successful outcomes to improve future responses.

## Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

The partnerships response to tackling Modern Slavery continued to progress with the continued delivery of awareness raising training to professionals.

The introduction of a Modern Slavery Steering Group has further improved co-ordination across the council, particularly in respect of driving activity and monitoring progress towards achieving the objectives within the Modern Slavery Action Plan.

As in previous years, the annual review and refresh of the Council's Modern Slavery Transparency Statement was completed and published.

During the year Modern Slavery data and information sharing improved through the quarterly provision of a data suite covering all relevant information in respect of potential victims of modern slavery referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

### Case Study - Mental Health Clinical Lead

As part of the wider partnership response to protecting vulnerable adults, the Mental Health Clinical Lead within the Police Safer Neighbourhood Service offers mental health support and intervention in cases where mental health issues are a primary or contributory factor to involvement in the criminal justice system.

For a recent case they have facilitated the return to the area for a female who had been admitted to a secure unit following an arrest for arson. Significant levels of coordination were required to manage her return due to the complexities of her mental health concerns and issues relating to her offence.

The close links to other agencies that the Mental Health Clinical Lead has facilitated and the psychiatric intervention that has been established has significantly assisted in the management of risk to the general public and provided quality levels of service to someone with significantly complex mental health needs with a high level of risk attached.



### Training

Training across the partnership has progressed throughout the year to raise awareness for professionals on spotting the signs of modern slavery and how to report concerns.

Future training will be provided for council staff who manage council issued building and works contracts to ensure full compliance with the relevant sections of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. There will also be training targeted towards higher risk sectors such as the care sector.



# Protecting Vulnerable Adults

## Current and emerging challenges

### Substance Misuse

Over the next 12-months we would expect to see further increases in the number of Drug Rehabilitation Requirement Orders and Alcohol Rehabilitation Requirement Orders issued through the courts in line with the national expectation of an increase in community sentence treatment requirements being given at court.

### Mental Health

Demand on the service has increased and is expected to continue to do so over the next 12 months. The capacity of the service to respond to increased demand will be monitored throughout the year.

### Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Referrals by agencies to the Modern Slavery National Referral Mechanism (NRM) decreased slightly on the previous year but remains consistent with previous years. The emphasis of providing training across the partnership will continue over the next 12 months.

## What we need to do

### Substance Misuse

Continue to develop and progress working relationships and practices between the Probation Service and the Rotherham Drug and Alcohol Service, particularly around co-located working and information sharing.

Continue to support the Combatting Drugs Partnership Action Plan.

Consolidate the refreshed process for the collection, management and accuracy of data relating to substance misuse.

### Mental Health

Monitor the capacity of the mental health practitioner within the Safer Neighbourhood Service to meet increasing demand for services.

Proactively respond to the Whole System Approach for women and girls in, or at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System.

Continue to address Cuckooing through the mapping of potential vulnerable victims and locations.

### Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Further Modern Slavery training will be delivered to professionals across the partnership to improve and increase intelligence gathering and sharing.

Continue delivery on the recommendations from Rotherham Councils Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Modern Slavery Spotlight Review.

Work with commissioned providers regarding risk of labour exploitation within the care sector.

### Substance Misuse Case Study Client A

Client A was referred to the Rotherham Alcohol and Drugs Service (ROADS) criminal justice team in the summer after serving a lengthy custodial sentence for robbery. She had been diagnosed with several types of personality disorders and psychosis and had been an inpatient at Swallownest Court. Before the most recent custodial sentence, Client A was using high levels of crack cocaine and heroin daily, which was funded through criminal behaviour. Social care had removed her children as, in her own words, "I couldn't look after them".

Upon release from custody, Client A wanted to make positive changes to her lifestyle and substance use. She has been meeting her ROADS worker regularly. Using motivational interviewing and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approaches, her ROADS worker has been able to help Client A develop coping strategies and build and maintain motivation.

Today Client A is receiving a monthly Buprenorphine injection at Carnson House, is regularly testing negative for all illicit substances and has attended every appointment. Client A also has regular contact with both of her children and is working towards becoming a full-time parent again. She has recently moved into a 2-bedroom property and is making plans to spend Christmas day with her family and children.

# Safer Stronger Communities

## What we did in 2023-2024

### Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

Increased, proactive patrols around the town centre led to a reduction in the number of violent crimes. Work is ongoing with the transport Interchange and night time economy businesses to further mitigate risks and improve people's safety.

The Problem Orientated Partnership (POP) approach piloted in Rotherham was considered by South Yorkshire Police at the ASB Symposium on 24th November 2023 and has now been adopted at Force level. The approach puts in place intensive partnership actions to tackle specific problem crime and ASB issues and has been successful in tackling problems such as environmental crime in Kilnhurst.

The Council's Community Protection Unit (CPU) began patrols across 12 identified hotspots in the borough every weekday. These involved CPU staff along with volunteers from Council Homes, Licensing and Street Scene. Groups of up to six officers in high visibility jackets patrolled the areas to identify ASB along with offering reassurance to the public and communities. More visible RMBC presence results in more ASB reporting with guidance offered to the public and businesses. CPU Enforcement patrols also occurred every Saturday to identify ASB in the hotspot areas. Any environmental issues that could increase ASB in the area were also logged and reported to the relevant department. The data around the patrols show a high compliance rate and some significant reductions on ASB for the latter part of this year compared to last year. The main areas were Maltby and Swinton.

We purchased re-deployable CCTV units, forming part of a wider crime prevention measure, for use within public places to aid crime prevention.

### Hate Crime

We have continued working closely with schools and colleges to keep awareness of hate crime high and to reduce the risk of vulnerable young people drifting towards hateful extremism. We ran a second Harms of Hate event for 154 year 6 pupils from three primaries across the borough, which produced some excellent feedback; and a performance workshop on Extremism and Radicalisation was attended, and participated in, by students from three secondary schools.

We celebrated the work done by local schools to tackle hate and bullying with a pictorial calendar showcasing activities and projects and distributed these to all schools and colleges to share good practice. In June 2023, we launched a quarterly e-newsletter to provide news, information and resources to our schools; and to share some of the excellent practice which regularly takes place in some of them.

### Online Crime

An awareness session to help older people stay safe online and feel confident using digital technology has been developed with the Digital Inclusion team for delivery in the community by Digital Support Officers. A booklet has been produced to be used alongside these sessions and includes useful information for people to take away with them. The first session was delivered at Rotherham Minster in March 2024 and sessions will continue to be delivered throughout the borough. The booklet has also been made available online and printed copies are being distributed to venues and groups.

A presentation on online bullying and how schools can respond was delivered to Designated Safeguarding Leads from schools across Rotherham at the Education Safeguarding Forum to coincide with Safer Internet Day in February 2024, information on online support, advice and resources were provided. Posters for secondary schools were also developed to encourage young people to seek support if they are a victim of or witness to bullying.

### Tackling Hate Crime

122 schools  
and  
colleges  
engaged in  
projects

519 young  
people  
attended  
education  
sessions

81 hate crime  
offender  
sessions  
delivered by  
Remedi



# Safer Stronger Communities

## Current and emerging challenges

We identified that legislative changes around the ownership of XL bulldogs could increase the risk to members of the public should dogs be turned onto the street by irresponsible owners seeking to avoid their duties under the new law. Funds were made available to increase space at local kennels to house dogs that were given up or seized to mitigate the potential dangers.

The continuous evolvement of digital technology is an ongoing challenge in addressing online crime and managing risks.

Further training for professionals and for parents/carers is needed to address general online safety issues which will help minimise risks for young people. Links have been established with schools through the Education Safeguarding Forum to promote training and awareness and reach parents and carers.



Online Safety is a concern for older people in the community particularly in relation to scams and fraud. Improving online confidence for communities has been identified as an area for development.

A booklet has been developed to address some of the barriers to online confidence and forms the basis of discussion group sessions within communities. An initial session was delivered to 19 people at Rotherham Minster in March 2024. The Digital Inclusion Team will continue working with communities to increase online confidence, awareness of risks and how to manage them.

You can find the booklet at:  
[www.rotherhamdigital.co.uk/safe-online-1](http://www.rotherhamdigital.co.uk/safe-online-1)

## What we need to do

Effective partnership working remains key to providing an informed and balanced approach to addressing ASB; to maximise use of resources and to ensure the most appropriate response, e.g. Police or Early Help Outreach. We will aim to reinforce our partnership approach via the Safer Stronger Communities Partnership Group, providing an open and trusted forum where all partners can raise issues and discuss and agree a suitable response.

We will explore the possibility of outreach work with people who have chaotic lifestyles and who are involved in ASB in public spaces. There are reports of homeless individuals and street drinkers moving to different locales within the Town Centre and affecting residential blocks – for example, gaining entry into insecure buildings with resulting reports of ASB and criminal behaviour. We will be working to make sure Commercial landlords are aware of, and fulfilling, their duties to keep properties secure whilst reporting ASB and criminal behaviour to the appropriate agency.

Data from hotspot patrols will be used to develop proactive actions and deliver preventive projects with the Community Protection Unit planning for further patrols with dedicated officers in identified hotspot areas.

Water safety meetings last year were a real benefit to partnership planning around ASB in the key locations as well as minimising the risk to young people around the water. This will continue to support 'target hardening' in preparation for key dates over summer.

Days of action and targeted activity with the Motorcycle and Rural Crime Team regarding off road bikes will be planned and delivered in key areas.

There is a constant need for training and awareness around online safety due to ever evolving technology which provides new opportunities for those who exploit it for harmful or criminal purposes.

# Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

## Domestic and Sexual Abuse

### What we did in 2023-2024

The Domestic Abuse 'one front door pathway' approach continues to operate well. Throughout the year we have seen a continuous increase of victims/survivors seeking support and guidance from the service. What is also apparent is the number of victims remaining engaged, knowing how complex domestic abuse is and the difficulties victims face when engaging with services. The engagement rate remains at or above 80% which is above the council plan target of 60%.

The Council's Domestic Abuse Assertive Outreach Service continues to provide support for those individuals with additional complexities that can often create barriers to recovery. Offering an intensive, person-centered approach to tackling domestic abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Homelessness Officers continue to provide 1:1 support for domestic abuse victims/survivors presenting as homeless. All the 13 specialist local authority domestic abuse properties are now consistently occupied and have provided 60 combined victims and children with their own independent safe accommodation to create a strong foundation to rebuild their lives.

We continue to tackle and disrupt perpetrator behaviour with the commissioning and monitoring of Cranstoun Inspire to Change. 59% of perpetrators who started the Inspire to change course have completed the 26-week programme. In addition, we continue to push the use of criminal justice measures such as Domestic Violence Protection Order (DVPO) applications and Domestic Abuse Disclosure (Clare's law) applications.

The Sexual Abuse delivery partners group was set up in 2023 with representatives from the MESMAC, adult Sexual Abuse Referral Centre (SARC), Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) and Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service (ROTHACS). The key purpose of this group is to look at ongoing trends, gaps and frontline issues to feed into the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Partners Group.

A South Yorkshire sex work steering group has been established and includes representatives from partner agencies including organisations working with sex workers. The aim of this group is to improve understanding of sex work in South Yorkshire and increase awareness of services supporting sex workers so that we are best placed to share this knowledge. The meetings have been a great forum for discussion and information sharing and have also highlighted that there are knowledge gaps and more work to do in this space.

A Rotherham sexual abuse pathway to identify clear routes to support for victims of sexual abuse has been completed.

Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness week took place in February. Messaging was shared across social media to promote local support services and reporting mechanisms and initiatives such as Ask for Angela and Drink Spike Aware.

### The Homelessness Prevention fund

The Homelessness Prevention fund supports victims and families at risk of being made homeless due to domestic abuse with essential financial support, including help with paying rent arrears to allow them to secure their own property as well as paying for removal and storage costs when fleeing domestic abuse.

The fund also provides essential items to allow victims at risk to feel safe secure and comfortable in their property including beds, mattresses and curtains, white goods and emergency basic supplies including food, utensils, and toiletries.

The fund has also paid for additional security measures in properties to allow victims to feel secure and safe, providing locks, smart doorbells, and cameras to deter perpetrators from re attending their homes.

**150 victims and families supported**

**Additional security measures completed on 142 properties**

# Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

## Domestic and Sexual Abuse

### Current and emerging challenges

Our Domestic Abuse training programme is currently being delivered in partnership with City of Doncaster Council. An emerging challenge is to scope out options to ensure a high standard of domestic abuse training continues to be delivered to professionals throughout the borough.

There is a current waiting list for one to one support with Rotherham Rise, however this does not include high-risk victims and those on the waiting list are provided with safety planning and alternative offers of group work as well as a webchat provision available. Work is ongoing to explore options to reduce the waiting list.

As in other areas, this year has seen an increase in the number of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) cases in Rotherham. This in part is due to better identification of domestic abuse related deaths by suicide. There is a cost to complete each DHR and there is no current central funding for this. We are currently exploring options for joint funding from partners. DHRs are a statutory duty and an important way of identifying lessons learned to prevent future deaths.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of domestic abuse. Therefore, there is a need to identify the number of children affected by domestic abuse whether indirectly or directly and ensure provisions are in place for support. We are gathering data from children's social care, police and support services on children experiencing domestic abuse and looking at how we can ensure good quality provisions are in place for support and recovery.

Rotherham has sex workers who mainly work from home or travel to other areas to work, namely Sheffield and Doncaster, over 10% of street workers in these areas are thought to live in Rotherham. The South Yorkshire Sex Work steering group will continue to share knowledge and information to address gaps in support provision and improve understanding and awareness.

There is a need for ongoing training on sexual abuse and a programme for delivery in Rotherham.

### What we need to do

We are currently looking at options to ensure we have a robust domestic abuse training package in place to ensure professionals are trained and up to date with domestic abuse legislation and best practice.

We will continue to support our commissioned domestic abuse service to ensure victims are receiving the support they need.

Our domestic abuse pathway is being reviewed to gain a better understanding of victims journey and satisfaction with services, we will undertake more victim consultation so that we can continue to improve the support available.

Develop a training package for frontline workers to ensure they know how to support and refer sexual abuse victims, including in relation to online safety.

Identify opportunities to improve the support offer for sex workers in Rotherham.

To understand the support offer for perpetrators of sexual abuse and identify gaps.

### Summer Domestic Abuse Campaign

Whereby in previous years there has been an increase in domestic abuse incidents during the winter, over last the 2 years incidents were at their highest during the summer months, coinciding with the school holidays.



This can often be a stressful time for families with victims and children often hidden indoors, unseen. Therefore, to ensure provisions were accessible at the time of need, we launched a targeted social media 'Summer Domestic Abuse Campaign'. Key targeted messages reached out to victims with details of how they could access support and report the abuse.



# Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

## Male Violence Against Women and Girls

### What we did in 2023-2024

There have been a number of actions focused on preventing re-offending and repeat perpetrators to address violence against women and girls (VAWG) and we have seen a reduction in the number of repeat VAWG perpetrators from comparative quarters.

Links have been developed into other priority action plans to address repeat perpetrators in relation to domestic and sexual abuse and exploitation.

The South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit has supported a number of projects to improve attitudes towards women and girls which has included focused outreach, engagement and education within marginalised communities, developing resources and projects for use by support services and education settings and working with local colleges to improve practices and raise awareness.

Targeted work has been done in identified anti-social behaviour hotspot locations through the Police GRIP Team which has included funding for removal of undergrowth in areas in the town centre to open spaces more and improve feelings of safety and visibility. Funding from Government Safer Streets funds has provided CCTV in high ASB locations and a CCTV van which can be deployed to address specific issues or areas of concern. There has also been improved lighting in Coronation Park to address ASB and improve feelings of safety.

Hotspot crime areas are reviewed at the Police Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group (TTCG) and considered for Problem Oriented Policing (POP) plans if appropriate.

### Current and emerging challenges

The Rotherham Satisfaction Survey identified that feelings of safety at night are lower than the national average in Rotherham and there is a significant difference between feelings of safety for men and women.

Increasing use of digital technology and misogynistic online influences

### What we need to do

Continue to reduce male violence against women and girls by focusing on hot spot locations and repeat perpetrators.

Continue to deliver awareness raising events, projects and promotions aimed at improving women and girls' safety and feelings of safety".

Explore digital tools and technology to identify online risks and hot spot locations for non-crime incidents.

### Reclaim The Night

Reclaim the Night has been running in Rotherham since 2015 and is about empowering women and reclaiming spaces which may be perceived as unsafe. In Rotherham, we walk through the town centre in the evening and then return to a venue to warm up, have refreshments and listen to some inspirational speakers.



This year, the event took place on Thursday 23rd November 2023, starting the walk at Ministry Pavilion and returning for speakers. The event attracted over 100 people this year.

The theme for this year was 'A Safe Night Out' and one of our speakers spoke about their own experiences with drink spiking to raise awareness of what happened to her, the longer term impact and the importance of reporting incidents and seeking support from specialist services and friends. Other speakers included Rotherham Council Chief Executive Sharon Kemp and Detective Chief Inspector Aneela Khalil-Khan talking about the work South Yorkshire Police are doing to address women's safety.

# Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

## Male Violence Against Women and Girls



Social media campaigns have been shared throughout the year across Community Safety Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) and through Rotherham Council corporate channels and partners.

This has included a domestic abuse campaign in the summer to address seasonal increases and the 16 Days of Action campaign which focused on the scale of Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and promoting the support available to victims. We also promoted Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week and shared information on local support services and reporting mechanisms and initiatives such as Ask for Angela and Drink Spike Aware.

VAWG campaigns from partners have also been widely shared including the No More campaign and the Do More campaign focusing on male alliance and targeting repeat perpetrators.

We have continued to promote initiatives such as Ask for Angela and Drink Spike aware. This has included 4 training events for Licensed Premises focusing on safe nights out, anti-drink spiking, domestic and sexual abuse and anti-violence and bystander training for bar staff and door staff.

We also held 2 events with Rotherham Colleges targeting younger people focusing on safety when out and about promoting the 'strut safe help line' as well as delivering drink spiking awareness to pupils ensuring young people know what to do and how to protect themselves.

During Safeguarding Awareness Day and Safeguarding Awareness Week we have promoted free training such as Suzy Lamplugh Bystander Training and shared additional messaging on social media.



Rotherham is a member of the national Safe Places scheme and this year we have worked with

our existing venues to refresh training with their staff to ensure they are able to offer help if required. We have also worked with a town centre college visiting businesses to increase awareness. We continue to work with local residents, businesses and education settings to promote the scheme and increase venues.

We have supported the Safe Space evenings delivered through the Violence Reduction Unit over the Christmas period. This included Rotherham Councils CCTV van deployed with a Police Officer, Medics providing outreach first aid and medical cover in the designated area and Outreach and Engagement within the Town Centre focused on key safety awareness messages.



The Violence Reduction Unit launched their new campaign to address Violence Against Women and Girls. Every Man Can focuses on the positive, everyday actions that all men can take such as respecting personal space, stepping in when someone's being harassed and calling out unacceptable behaviour.

# Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

## Violence and Organised Crime

### What we did in 2023-2024

The Monthly Organised Crime Group partnership meeting has been reviewed and renewed with an updated and increased membership from across the partnership. Structures have been established to ensure escalation and support between operational and strategic teams and drive disruption, resources and the pursuit of those causing highest harm.

We are piloting a bi-weekly police intelligence sharing meeting which is testing sharing real time organised crime intelligence with partners aimed at tasking a multiagency response.

We have driven increases in information sharing, collaborative projects and training to strengthen the network and knowledge of the partnership.

There has been an increase in targeted commissioning of initiatives for young people in areas impacted by Organised Crime Groups.

We have strengthened the links between multi agency child exploitation and organised crime teams to more effectively identify and tackle those targeting young people and warning notices have been issued to numbers of organised crime members around gun crime and child exploitation which add increased scrutiny and checks.

Relations with Probation Service have been harnessed to reduce re-offending of organised crime members.

A local strengths map has been developed which details key partner powers and capabilities to inform all teams and maximise opportunities to disrupt criminals.

### Current and emerging challenges

Exploration of a pilot to identify individuals and areas susceptible to cuckooing and the opportunity to develop a proactive response.

South Yorkshire wide Dangerous Dogs group established to address dangerous dog breeding linked to organised crime with a sharing platform which will support a project to target those exploiting breeding opportunities.

Multi Agency Cannabis Operation further developed to support the increased identification and investigation of organised crime. Cannabis Grow public awareness established to raise knowledge of links to organised crime and reporting.

Increased multiagency mapping work and information sharing around professional enablers such as solicitors, landlords and car hire companies. Work to disrupt will aim to utilise all powers and resources from across the partnership in synergy.

Areas vulnerable to financial exploitation/ fraud/ money laundering in public services such as Housing, Benefits & Licencing are involved in work to identify, investigate and take action against those responsible.

Raising awareness of online safety and targeting those responsible.

13 Targeted school and community initiatives delivered

Over 1,000 professionals trained on intelligence sharing

42 Warrants carried out with 39 Organised Criminals arrested

99 disruptions to Organised Crime Groups

£15.6 million worth of cannabis plants, 16 firearms, 31 IEDs and 370 rounds of ammunition seized

£554,000 worth of illicit vapes, tobacco and cigarettes seized

3 council properties at risk of purchase with suspicious funds have had applications denied and investigated



# Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

## Violence and Organised Crime

### What we need to do

Roll out the PIR (Partner Intelligence Report)  
Training to wider partners – Continuing roll out of training to access the pathway for professionals to provide intelligence to the police.

Further embed information sharing structures and processes between partner agencies to expand networks and ensure a multiagency response to organised crime.

Bring key multiagency teams together to generate and execute plans to tackle mapped organised crime groups.

Increase the reporting of activity that disrupts organised crime impacting our residents, to accurately communicate partnership efforts in tackling organised crime.

### Raising Awareness



Monthly public awareness Pop Up Events have been established and are driving information about key organised crime themes such as Cannabis Production and County Lines. We have also delivered targeted training to partners around countylines, metal crime and serious and organised crime.

### Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

The Rotherham Violence Reduction Partnership Manager, working with the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit, brings together the police, council, health and community sectors to deliver a plan of action to tackle violent crime and its root causes.

In line with the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) commitment to reduce anti-social behaviour and violence within key hotspot areas of the borough, the VRU has funded a variety of voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver a vast array of projects.

#### Community Outreach and Engagement

A number of Voluntary and Community organisations were funded to deliver positive outreach and engagement within their communities including educational diversionary activities delivered over the summer holiday period and boxing, football and fitness sessions.

Two youth workers were funded to deliver positive outreach and diversionary activities and facilitate a youth club for young people within the Masborough and Ferham area of the borough.

Voluntary and Community organisations also provided a wide range of activities and positive learning opportunities for adults and families to engage with along with support for adults who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless offering housing advice, education and training, creative activities and support for health and addictions.

#### Drone to tackle Organised Crime Groups (OCGs)

The purchase of a drone with good imaging and thermal capability to aid with developing intelligence efficiently and assisting with fleeing offenders and disposing of evidence.

#### Operation Sceptre

Operation Sceptre is an intensification week for partners to demonstrate collective activity to remove knives from communities. As part of Operation Sceptre co-ordinated activities were delivered resulting in 359 children and young people participating in activities around knife crime, first aid and developing support skills.

#### Safer Schools Together

Awareness events for staff in all secondary education settings covering best practice search awareness, seizure advice, serious incident response and first aid. Additional events were delivered around knife crime issues and first aid provision.

# Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

## Counter Terrorism

### What we did in 2023-2024

Prevent is a national initiative that aims to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism, intervene early to support people susceptible to radicalisation and enable people who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

An annual performance assessment is carried out by the Home Office Regional Prevent Adviser to ensure proportionate compliance with the Prevent Duty against 8 assessment criteria. Rotherham was assessed as scoring the highest mark "Exceeding" in each category.

In response to the new Prevent duty guidance 2023, the Rotherham Prevent action plan has been rewritten following consultation with the Home Office Prevent Regional Advisor, Counter Terrorism Police colleagues and the Prevent Partners Group. In addition, an overarching Counter Terrorism Silver Group provides increased governance across all partnership counter terrorism requirements, including Prevent and the forthcoming Protect Duty (Martyn's Law).

A well established, well attended multi-agency Protect and Prepare Group (PAPG) is in place and meeting on a regular basis. The group is overseeing and assessing the borough's protective and security preparedness work against Home Office recommendations.

A Hostile Vehicle Mitigation working group has also been established to support the work of the PAPG around aspects of security within Rotherham town centre and other locations and events subject to relatively high levels of attendance. The group is engaged with the wider partnership in introducing measures to reduce and mitigate the risk of potential terrorist acts.

### Current and emerging challenges

The key risks identified by the Counter Terrorism Local Profile are young people being drawn into terrorism offences.

Online extremism and radicalisation have also been identified as priority areas due to the ease that susceptible individuals can access material. Radicalisers and online activists are active across many platforms, including social media, chat rooms and gaming where they can spread misinformation, hate, harmful extremist ideology and terrorist propaganda.



### What we need to do

The Home Office Prevent assessment has a number of useful recommendations that Rotherham will be working on in 2024-25.

Work will be undertaken with Prevent Duty partners to review the local Prevent risk assessment, taking account of the 2024 Counter Terrorism Local Profile.

Partnership action will continue to prepare for the introduction of Martyn's law.

### Channel

Channel is a confidential, voluntary, multi-agency programme that provides early intervention to protect children and adults who might be susceptible to being radicalised where, if left unsupported, could lead to involvement in terrorist-related or violent extremist activity. Channel is run in every local authority in England and Wales. The Rotherham Channel Panel is made up of representatives from different safeguarding areas including children's and adults social care, Early Help and Family Support service, health, mental health, housing and the Police. All referrals are carefully assessed. The panel will offer support, tailored to an individual's needs. Support could include services such as social care, early help and family support, assistance with education or employment, health or mental health support, housing support and mentoring to provide vulnerable individuals with the skills to protect themselves from harmful influences.



The Community Safety team manage social media pages across Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. We regularly share information through these channels linking to local and national events, issues or awareness days to take safety messages into the community. Information we post is also shared through wider channels such as the Councils corporate Facebook page and through other organisations such as South Yorkshire Police.

The Community Safety Team also attend and organise events and projects throughout the year to share safety information and support partner agencies to deliver community safety messages.

**CALL OUT  
YOUR MATE.**

**DO MORE**



# Other Highlights

## Community Payback

Community Payback is an alternative to a prison sentence for people who have committed a crime. Offenders carry out unpaid work to benefit communities as punishment and reparation.

The teams complete a range of manual tasks such as clearing overgrowth to make public spaces safer, improving community facilities such as community buildings and playgrounds, tidying flowerbeds, litter picking and graffiti removal. The activity provides an important programme for the rehabilitation of offenders and provides public reassurance that offenders are “paying back” to the community for their crimes. Participants make positive changes to local communities, learn new skills, and improve their chances of employment as they make positive changes in their own lives.

Rotherham has a bespoke Community Payback Programme which provides a dedicated team to carry out work requested through communities and partners.

By having a dedicated team for Rotherham, community payback can respond to direct requests quickly and schedule projects. Project work has received positive feedback from commissioning services, members of the public, Ward Councillors and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

“Just wanted to say how amazing the men have been at Church, the fence is looking good, but they have gone over and above what we have asked for. They have cut all the lawn and done a really good job. A disabled member of the congregation messaged to say how much they helped her this morning.

Feedback from Thurcroft Church



Projects completed in 2023/24 include:

Repairs and redecorations at various sites

Groundworks completed at various sites

Litterpicks at locations throughout the borough

Grass cutting at several locations

Catering at events to aid the celebration of the Kings Jubilee

11,450 offender hours completed

A value of £119,309 based on real living wage

“I want to give some positive feedback to whoever cleaned the pavements on Upper Wortley Road, from Keppel Road to Oaks Lane. They have done a fantastic job and cleared away all the debris to the back of the pavement. It makes it much easier to walk along the pavement and remain further away from the traffic.

Feedback from local resident



# Other Highlights

## Be Share Aware

The Evidence Based Hub deliver the Be Share Aware educational intervention sessions to young people referred by the Police into the Youth Justice Service that have sent, distributed, or received indecent images. The programme's facilitator has developed this into a prevention and early intervention programme to be delivered with vulnerable groups and high schools across the borough.

Be Share Aware prevention sessions have been delivered to 5 education settings throughout the year and is targeted to students identified by each school as those that have either experienced issues with online bullying, shared inappropriate content, where there are general concerns relating to their online activity or they are known to be extremely vulnerable in years 7 to 10.

The sessions cover a number of different topics such as risky websites and measures which can be put in place, the law on sending inappropriate images and online safety feelings. Sessions are also tailored to address specific needs within a group such as online bullying or particular apps. The facilitator regularly updates the content to reflect current and emerging issues.

An evaluation is carried out before and after each session to assess how safe young people feel online and if the session has had an impact in their feelings of safety. In every session delivered all of the young people involved said that they felt safer afterwards. Schools safeguarding leads are involved in these sessions to follow up on any disclosures and share information and advice with parents.

The sessions also provide valuable feedback on current areas of concern and this feedback is used to research the pros and cons of any app and the safety functions available. This then directs the production of resources and is shared through the Digital Champions Network with children, families and professionals supporting them.

## Tackling illegal vapes and raising awareness

The use of vapes (particularly counterfeit ones with dangerous, illegal or above safety threshold chemical contents) is a real and present health threat – especially to young people who are more likely to buy them via unscrupulous online suppliers to avoid age restrictions.

Knowledge and understanding of the risk of Vapes – how these can be far more dangerous than they may seem, with counterfeits containing dangerous chemicals etc. was raised as an emerging issue.

Funding was secured to deliver training to staff and partners to raise awareness of the risks posed by illegal vapes especially, and to highlight the very wide use of these by young people which far exceeds the numbers who previously took up smoking cigarettes.

Kits were purchased to test random samples alongside mystery shopping checks of local retailers by young people to tackle the sale of illegal vapes.

Work with education, early intervention, trading standards and Public Health England is continuing to improve our joint response to the challenges and threats around vape use.

# Funding Overview

When delivering their services day to day, the organisations that make up the Safer Rotherham Partnership allocate considerable resources each year to our priorities of protecting children and vulnerable adults, building safer and stronger communities and protecting people from violence and organised crime. Under the leadership of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board, partners are able to work together to maximise the use of available resources. This is achieved through collaborative working, joint commissioning and pooling resources of multi-agency partners and services. Examples of successful collaborative working include:

- Co-located, locality based multi-agency teams based in the North, Central and South areas of the Borough, which improve the ability of agencies to share information and provide swifter responses to neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour concerns.
- Continuing investment in upgrading CCTV in the Borough, maximising external funding opportunities such as SaferStreets Funding, which has also facilitated the employment of a manager based within the Council's Community Protection Unit to coordinate CCTV and Safer Streets work.
- Effective use of Government domestic abuse duty grant funding to provide services to support domestic abuse victims/survivors in safe accommodation and prevent homelessness.
- Continued Safer Rotherham Partnership support to the Combatting Drugs Partnership and Combatting Drugs Strategy, led by RMBC Public Health.
- The Rotherham Police Safer Neighbourhood Service has continued to coordinate partnership processes for responding to and mitigating risks to vulnerable adults and has a dedicated Police Officer hate crime coordinator.
- RDASH continue to resource the dedicated Mental Health Clinical Specialist, based within the Police Safer Neighbourhood Service.
- RMBC Adult Social Care service has been successful in securing approval and resources to enable recruitment of a new vulnerable adults lead.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner has secured Home Office and Ministry of Justice funding for a number of South Yorkshire wide programmes, including for domestic abuse support services, youth justice services and many community-based support services.
- The Council's Community Safety team provides support to the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board and Strategic Priority Leads across the full range of SRP priorities, coordinating the development and delivery of priority action plans and collating performance reports to monitor progress. The Community Safety team also leads partnership strategy and delivery of statutory duties such as domestic abuse, counter terrorism (Prevent, Channel and forthcoming Protect Duties) and hosts the Violence Reduction Unit Partnership Manager. The team also coordinated the successful bid for £237,417 Government Safer Streets 5 funding to deliver projects in the financial year 2023-2024 and 2024-25.
- In 2023-24, the Police and Crime Commissioner's annual grant award to the Safer Rotherham Partnership was allocated to sustaining the Organised Crime Partnership Coordinator to work across the partnership to support achievement of organised crime priorities. The funding also supported the Cranstoun Inspire to Change programme, which is an important component of our domestic abuse priorities. Other projects supported included training and communications work and initiatives to tackle new and emerging issues such as responding to new legislation on dangerous dogs, education about risks related to vapes for young people, outreach engagement work on water safety, and an additional drone based with South Yorkshire Police.

# Our priorities for 2024-25

## Protecting Vulnerable Children

Objective	Commitments
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	<p>Increase understanding of CCE and CSE reporting and responses, with professionals and the public through training and awareness raising</p> <p>Work together with partners and the public to reduce the risk of CSE and CCE and ensure accurate recording of investigations and quality outcomes</p> <p>Develop and promote training and awareness for professionals and parents/carers to better understand online abuse</p>
Child Abuse	<p>Increase understanding of the potential signs of neglect and child abuse through training and awareness raising with partners</p> <p>Raise awareness with the public around the signs of early abuse and mechanisms for reporting</p>

## Protecting Vulnerable Adults

Objective	Commitments
Substance Misuse	<p>Increase engagement and positive outcomes from substance misuse treatment services for offenders within the criminal justice system</p> <p>Increased understanding and awareness of substance misuse issues, harm minimisation techniques and the referral pathways for staff within the Criminal Justice System</p>
Mental Health	<p>Review the use and impact of mental health treatment requirements in the criminal justice system</p> <p>Test approaches of developed dual diagnosis pathways to support service users with mental health and alcohol/drug use treatment needs</p>
Modern Slavery	<p>Increase understanding of of modern slavery through training and awareness raising with partners</p> <p>Raise awareness around the signs of modern slavery and mechanisms for reporting</p>

# Our priorities for 2024-25

## Safer Stronger Communities

Objective	Commitments
Making communities safer – tackling community safety priority locations	<p>Monitor and evaluate the partnership approach to problem solving in local neighbourhoods, including thresholds and methodology for partnership activity</p> <p>Seek appropriate external funding opportunities and support and participate in partnership bids to secure additional funding for activity in the borough</p>
Preventing hate crime	<p>Focus on the use of education and engagement to prevent hate crime by tackling the drivers of hate</p> <p>Improve victims' experiences of reporting hate crime and incidents</p>
Online Crime	Explore innovative ways in which partners and the public can be educated around online safety and digital technologies and develop engagement with young people, families and older people

## Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

Domestic Abuse, Sexual Abuse and  
Male Violence Against Women and Girls (MVAWG)

Objective	Commitments
Domestic Abuse	<p>Monitor Domestic Abuse services, ensuring they are in line with the partnership strategy, to improve outcomes for victims</p> <p>Ensure all those fleeing domestic abuse are able to access safe accommodation and appropriate support</p> <p>Improve the use of criminal justice measures to better protect victims and tackle perpetrator behaviour</p>
Sexual Abuse	<p>To continue to focus on victim engagement</p> <p>To improve timely reporting of sexual offences to increase forensic opportunities</p> <p>To explore how to work with perpetrators to reduce reoffending</p>
Male Violence Against Women and Girls (MVAWG)	<p>Continue to reduce male violence against women and girls by focussing on hot spot locations and repeat perpetrators</p> <p>Continue to deliver awareness raising events, projects and promotions aimed at improving women and girls' safety and feelings of safety</p> <p>Explore digital tools and technology to identify online risks and hot spot locations for non-crime incidents</p>

# Our priorities for 2024-25

## Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime

### Violence and Organised Crime

Objective	Commitments
Organised Crime	<p>Identify and implement a whole system partnership approach to tackling Organised Crime</p> <p>Prevent individuals and emerging groups from becoming involved in Organised Crime</p> <p>Build stronger information sharing structures between partners and communities</p> <p>Target our partnership approach to those causing the highest harm to individuals and groups in our communities</p> <p>Disrupt Organised Crime via a partnership approach utilising the national 4P framework</p>
Serious Violence Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)	<p>Provide ways out for those already entrenched in violence, or who have been previously incarcerated, to support effective rehabilitation</p> <p>Reduce violence through victim identification, care and support programmes</p> <p>Reduce availability and access to lethal weapons</p> <p>Work to change cultural and social norms that support violence</p> <p>Encourage all professionals and organisations to continue to work toward becoming trauma-informed, to an approved standard for South Yorkshire</p>
Counter Terrorism	<p>Reduce the risk of terrorism by taking a partnership approach to the Prevent, Protect and Prepare workstreams of the UK Contest Counter Terrorism Strategy</p> <p>Achieve compliance with the Channel, Prevent, Protect and Prepare duties (under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015) demonstrated through self-assessment using Home Office toolkits</p>



THE SAFER ROTHERHAM  
PARTNERSHIP

For further information visit the Safer Rotherham Partnership website at [www.saferrotherham.org.uk](http://www.saferrotherham.org.uk) or follow us on social media for our latest news and updates at:

 [www.facebook.com/Rotherhamcommunitysafety](https://www.facebook.com/Rotherhamcommunitysafety)

 [www.instagram.com/rmbccommunitysafety](https://www.instagram.com/rmbccommunitysafety)

 [www.x.com/RmbcSafety](https://www.x.com/RmbcSafety)

If you would like this information in another language or format, please ask us. You can contact us through our website or by emailing [community.safety@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:community.safety@rotherham.gov.uk)



**South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE**





Public Report  
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board - 13 November 2024

**Report Title**

Response from Cabinet 16 September 2024 to the Scrutiny Review  
Recommendations – Referral from Council to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region"

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

**Report Author(s)**

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services

[emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk)

Caroline Webb, Senior Governance Adviser

[caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

The purpose of this report is to feedback the response of Cabinet (following its meeting of 16 September 2024), to the recommendations arising from OSMB's consideration of the petition referred from Council "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region".

The response, as outlined in Appendix 1, details those recommendations that the Cabinet can act upon. Progress in discharging those actions is detailed in Appendix 2.

**Recommendations**

- 1) That OSMB notes the Cabinet response to the petition as outlined in Appendix 1.
- 2) That OSMB notes the progress made in discharging those recommendations requiring action, as outlined in Appendix 2.
- 3) That progress on discharging any outstanding actions arising from its recommendations be reported to OSMB in six months.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Letter from the Leader to Cllr Brian Steele, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board  
Appendix 2 Petition Action Log.

**Background Papers**

[Meeting of Council, Wednesday 28 February 2024 \(Item 97.\) Agenda item - PETITIONS - Rotherham Council](#)

[Meeting of Cabinet, Monday 16 September 2024 \(Item 51\)](#)

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Council – 28 February 2024  
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 24 July 2024  
Cabinet – 16 September 2024

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

**Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Referral from Council to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region"**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 A Petition was presented to Council on 28 February 2024, calling on the Council to commit to a permanent ceasefire and promote peace in Palestine and in the region. As it contained 4031 valid signatures, it triggered a debate on the salient issues raised by the petitioners and was subsequently referred to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) for consideration.
- 1.2 A sub-group of OSMB met with representatives of the petitioners on two occasions to formulate its response and recommendations. The sub-group committed to ensuring that its recommendations were reported formally at the earliest opportunity. However, the report was deferred from its scheduled presentation to OSMB on 5 June 2024 until 24 July 2024 because of restrictions relating to the pre-election publicity period for the General Election.
- 1.3 Following its submission to OSMB, Cabinet received a formal request from the Chair, Cllr Brian Steele, to expedite its response. Recognising the unique circumstances surrounding this petition and delay owing to the pre-election publicity period, Cabinet agreed to the request to amend the usual timescales and processes for responding to scrutiny recommendations. The response was provided alongside the report's formal receipt by Cabinet at its meeting of 16 September 2024.

**2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 This report outlines the Cabinet's response to those recommendations it can act upon, as outlined in a letter to Cllr Steele (Appendix 1). Progress made in discharging those recommendations requiring action, is outlined in Appendix 2.
- 2.2 At the time of writing, of the 13 actions requiring further action, 8 are complete with the remaining 5 in progress.
- 2.3 It is suggested that a further briefing be submitted in six months to outline progress on discharging any outstanding actions arising from the Cabinet response to OSMB's recommendations.

**3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

Both OSMB's recommendations and the Cabinet's response have been informed by advice from officers and in compliance with relevant policy and/or local government legislation.

**4. Consultation on proposal**

- 4.1 Members have regard to the expressed views of their constituents in their formulation of scrutiny priorities and lines of enquiry. Prior to forming

recommendations, Members consulted with officers of the Council and representatives from the Petitioners.

**5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The accountability for implementing recommendations arising from this report will sit with Cabinet and relevant officers

**6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this petition. Regarding the recommendations dealing with the Council's procurement approach for goods and services the Council has a set of Financial Procurement Procedure Rules (FPPR's) and an Ethical Procurement Policy and will always procure goods services in line with these rules and this Policy.

**7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct Legal Implications as a result of this petition which are not already captured in this report.

**8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report however it is recognised that council employees may be affected by events referenced in this report and where needed, will be supported through our established channels.

**9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 There are no implications for Children, Young People, and Vulnerable Adults directly arising from the report.

**10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 Furthering equalities and human rights are key objectives in undertaking scrutiny activity; therefore, Members have considered equalities implications in the development of scrutiny work programmes, lines of enquiry and in their formulation of recommendations designed to improve the delivery of council services for residents

**11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 There are no climate or emissions implications directly associated with this report.

**12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1. There are no implications for partners directly arising from the report.

**13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 Members have regard to the risks and mitigation factors associated with the services under scrutiny and have made recommendations accordingly.

**14. Accountable Officers**

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

*Report Author: Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services*  
*emma.hill@rotherham.gov.uk*

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

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**Councillor Chris Read – Leader of the Council**

Riverside House

Main Street

Rotherham

S60 1AE

Tel: (01709) 822700

E-mail: [chris.read@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:chris.read@rotherham.gov.uk)

*Email the Council for **free** @ your local library!*

**Our Ref:**

CR/LH

**Direct Line:**

(01709) 822700

**Extension:**

22700

**Please Contact:**

Councillor Chris Read

27<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Councillor Brian Steele

Chair of OSMB

Via email: [brian.steele@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:brian.steele@rotherham.gov.uk)

Dear Cllr Steele

**Petition: Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region**

As promised in the Cabinet Meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September, I am formally writing to set out in some detail the Council's response to the Petition following the decisions made at Cabinet.

The response was as follows:

**a) Publicly condemn the Israeli Government's human rights violations**

Cabinet notes that the resolution of the Council on 28th February in response to the Petition included "...publicly condemning the human rights violations being conducted". This includes human rights violations by the Israeli Government. As a consequence, Cabinet is clear that the Council condemns human rights violations.

**b) Demand the UK Government call for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.**

Cabinet also notes that on the 28th February the Council called on the UK Government for a permanent ceasefire to be adopted. This remains the position of the Council and Cabinet is again clear that the position of the UK Government should be (as it presently is) that there should be a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

**c) That the Council issue a press release explaining the resolution agreed in the debate held on 28 February 2024.**

A press release will be published explaining both the resolution agreed by Council on the 28th February and additionally the outcome of the considerations of OSMB following this meeting.

- d) In the interests of transparency, that the Council publishes details of whether the Council has formal associations with the Israeli government.**

Officers will consider this and write to the lead petitioner with the outcome of this work.

- e) That the Council reviews its contractual relationships to establish if it has links with any of the companies named in the UN Human Rights Council's list as part of the Council's visible supply chain.**

Officers will consider this and write to the lead petitioner with the outcome of that work.

- f) Notes the restrictions placed on local authorities in respect of the factors which they may take into account when procuring goods or services under Section 17 of the 1988 Local Government Act.**

Cabinet notes that the provisions of the Section above and this this curtails the factors that the Council is lawfully entitled to consider when making decisions on the procurement of goods and services.

- g) With respect to the request within the petition to prioritise human rights and equality in Rotherham's international relations, especially for the Palestinian people, the OSMB response noted that the Council cannot implement this recommendation as it is stated in the petition, as international relations fall to central rather than local government.**

Cabinet notes the OSMB response to this request.

- h) Notes that the Council no longer has active twinning arrangements, and it is not recommended that these recommence.**

Cabinet notes the recommendation.

- i) Notes the strength of Rotherham's local communities in supporting communities in need around the world. This includes promoting values such as human rights and equality which the Council supports.**

Cabinet notes the recommendation.

- j) Reiterates its commitment to its Ethical Procurement Policy and notes that the Council will always procure services in line with this Policy.**

Cabinet is pleased that the commitment to Ethical Procurement through its Policy is noted and that it guides our Services in procuring Services.

- k) Publishes an overview of its investments on its website.**

Cabinet supports this recommendations and Officers will be asked to provide this information on the Council's website.

- l) Requests that South Yorkshire Pension Authority publishes its investments on its website.**

Cabinet will ask South Yorkshire Pension Authority to publish details of its investments on its websites.



- m) **Notes that the discretion of the Council to make ethical procurement decisions in respect of not supporting countries with illegal occupations or companies benefitting from such activities was removed under s.17 of the Local Government Act, 1988.**

Cabinet notes the recommendation.

- n) **To enable councils to reflect on the concerns of communities that they are elected to represent, that the Leader writes to the relevant Minister to a) request the repeal of those sections of the Local Government Act 1988 which prohibit councils from taking 'non-commercial considerations' into account when awarding contracts and b) in opposition to the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill currently before Parliament.**

Cabinet agrees to this recommendation and the Leader will write to the relevant Minister to make this point.

- o) **Approve to the display of the Palestinian flag as a gesture of solidarity to those in Gaza and the wider region who are affected by the conflict and support peace on the United Nation's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November 2024).**

Cabinet agrees to this recommendation and approves the flying of the Palestinian Flag on 29th November.

- p) **Notes the efforts of the community in organising visible gestures of solidarity to those in Gaza and the wider region who are affected by the conflict and support peace.**

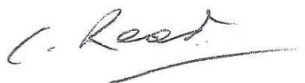
Cabinet notes the recommendation.

- q) **That elected members are reminded that under the existing Flag Protocol, a motion to support a cause or campaign, which can include the flying of a flag, can be submitted to Council for decision.**

Cabinet notes this recommendation and will ask that this information is included in the next bulletin that is produced for all Councillors.

Thank you to you and your OSMB colleagues for the work you have done with the petitioners and to get the Council to this position.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Chris Read**  
**Leader of Rotherham Council**

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## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	Recommendation	Cabinet response	Action	Accountability	Target date for completion	Action Completed (BRAG)
<b>1a.</b>	Publicly condemn the Israeli Government's human rights violations	Cabinet notes that the resolution of the Council on 28th February in response to the Petition included "...publicly condemning the human rights violations being conducted". This includes human rights violations by the Israeli Government. As a consequence Cabinet is clear that the Council condemns human rights violations.	No further action required.			
<b>1b.</b>	Demand the UK Government call for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza	Cabinet also notes that on the 28th February the Council called on the UK Government for a permanent	No further action required.			

## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	Recommendation	Cabinet response	Action	Accountability	Target date for completion	Action Completed (BRAG)
		ceasefire to be adopted. This remains the position of the Council and Cabinet is again clear that the position of the UK Government should be (as it presently is) that there should be a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.				
<b>1c.</b>	That the Council issue a press release explaining the resolution agreed in the debate held on 28 February 2024.	A press release will be published explaining both the resolution agreed by Council on the 28th February and additionally the outcome of the considerations of OSMB following this meeting.	Publish the press release	Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive	30/9/24	Complete – 24/09/24
<b>1d.</b>	In the interests of transparency, that the Council publishes details	Officers will consider this and write to the lead	Write to the lead petitioner	Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and	30/9/24	In progress

## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cabinet response</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Target date for completion</b>	<b>Action Completed (BRAG)</b>
	of whether the Council has formal associations with the Israeli government.	petitioner with the outcome of this work.		Customer Services		
<b>1e.</b>	That the Council reviews its contractual relationships to establish if it has links with any of the companies named in the UN Human Rights Council's list as part of the Council's visible supply chain.	Officers will consider this and write to the lead petitioner with the outcome of that work.	Write to the lead petitioner	Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services	30/9/24	In progress
<b>1f.</b>	Notes the restrictions placed on local authorities in respect of the factors which they may take into account when procuring goods or services under Section 17 of the 1988 Local Government Act.	Cabinet notes that the provisions of the Section above and this curtails the factors that the Council is lawfully entitled to consider when making decisions on the procurement of drugs and services.	No further action required.			
<b>1g.</b>	With respect to the request within the	Cabinet notes the OSMB response to this request.	No further action required.			

## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cabinet response</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Target date for completion</b>	<b>Action Completed (BRAG)</b>
	petition to prioritise human rights and equality in Rotherham's international relations, especially for the Palestinian people, the OSMB response noted that the Council cannot implement this recommendations as it is stated in the petition, as international relations fall to central rather than local government.					
<b>1h.</b>	Notes that the Council no longer has active twinning arrangements, and it is not recommended that these recommence.	Cabinet notes the recommendation	No further action required.			
<b>1i.</b>	Notes the strength of Rotherham's local	Cabinet notes the recommendation.	No further action required.			

## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cabinet response</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Target date for completion</b>	<b>Action Completed (BRAG)</b>
	communities in supporting communities in need around the world. This includes promoting values such as human rights and equality which the Council supports.					
<b>1j.</b>	To reiterate its commitment to its Ethical Procurement Policy and note that the Council will always procure services in line with this Policy.	Cabinet is pleased that the commitment to Ethical Procurement through its Policy is noted and that it guides our Services in procuring Services.	No further action required.			
<b>1k.</b>	That the Council will publish an overview of its investments on its website.	Cabinet supports this recommendation, and Officers will be asked to provide this information on the Council's website.	Publish an overview of Council investments on the website.	Judith Badger, Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services	30/9/24	In progress
<b>1l.</b>	That the Council will request that SY Pension	Cabinet will ask South Yorkshire	Request that SY Pension Authority	Jo Brown,	30/9/24	Complete

## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cabinet response</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Target date for completion</b>	<b>Action Completed (BRAG)</b>
	Authority publishes its investments on its website.	Pension Authority to publish details of its investments on its websites.	publishes its investments on its website.	Assistant Chief Executive		
<b>1m.</b>	To note that the discretion of the Council to make ethical procurement decisions in respect of not supporting countries with illegal occupations or companies benefitting from such activities was removed under s.17 of the Local Government Act, 1988.	Cabinet notes the recommendation.	No further action required			
<b>1n.</b>	To enable councils to reflect on the concerns of communities that they are elected to represent, that the Leader writes to the relevant Minister to a) request the repeal of those sections of the Local Government Act 1988 which prohibit councils from taking 'non-commercial	Cabinet agrees to this recommendation and the Leader will write to the relevant Minister to make this point.	Leader to write to the relevant Minister.	Lesley Harrison, Cabinet Support Manager	30/9/24	Complete – 27/09/24



## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	Recommendation	Cabinet response	Action	Accountability	Target date for completion	Action Completed (BRAG)
	considerations' into account when awarding contracts and b) in opposition to the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill currently before Parliament.					
<b>1o.</b>	Approve to the display of the Palestinian flag as a gesture of solidarity to those in Gaza and the wider region who are affected by the conflict and support peace on the United Nation's International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November 2024).	Cabinet agrees to this recommendation and approves the flying of the Palestinian Flag on 29th November.	Fly the Palestinian Flag on 29 November 2024.	Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services	29/11/24	In progress – flag to be flown on November 29, 2024
<b>1p.</b>	To support the recommendation that the community considers organising a visible gesture of solidarity to those in Gaza and the wider region who are affected by the conflict and support peace. For	Notes the efforts of the community in organising visible gestures of solidarity to those in Gaza and the wider region who are affected by	No further action.			

## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Cabinet response</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Target date for completion</b>	<b>Action Completed (BRAG)</b>
	example, this could include inter-faith, sporting or cultural events.	the conflict and support peace.				
<b>1q.</b>	That elected members are reminded that under the existing Flag Protocol, a motion to support a cause or campaign, which by implication will include the flying of a flag, can be submitted to Council for decision.	Cabinet notes this recommendation and will ask that this information is included in the next bulletin that is produced for all Councillors.	Include in Member Bulletin.	Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services	End Oct 24	Complete
<b>2.</b>	That the Leader writes to local MPs informing them of the agreed recommendations and any proposed actions resulting from these.	Cabinet agrees to this recommendation and the Leader will write to MPs to inform them of the recommendations and the outcome of this Cabinet meeting.	Leader to write to local MPs informing them of the agreed recommendations and any proposed actions resulting from these.	Lesley Harrison, Cabinet Support Manager	30/9/24	Complete 27/09/24
<b>3.</b>	That the decision of Cabinet is reported back to OSMB within two	The report and response are being	Include on October or November OSMB	Barbel Gale, Governance Manager	Nov 24	Complete

## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	Recommendation	Cabinet response	Action	Accountability	Target date for completion	Action Completed (BRAG)
	months of its submission.	considered at today's meeting.	agenda.			
4.	That the Cabinet Spokesperson continues to hold dialogue with Petitioners to continue to seek peace in Palestine and the Region.	The Council will continue to engage in dialogue with the petitioners where appropriate and where this can practically and constructively contribute towards the objective of peace in Palestine and the wider Middle East Region.	Cabinet Spokesperson to continue to hold dialogue with Petitioners to continue to seek peace in Palestine and the Region.	Lesley Harrison, Cabinet Support Manager	On-going	In progress
5.	That Cabinet consider expediting the governance processes and provide updates to OSMB on progress against the recommendations.	The report and response are being considered at today's meeting. Cabinet will write to OSMB following the meeting, with an update on the actions listed above.	Leader to write to OSMB	Lesley Harrison, Cabinet Support Manager	30/9/24	Complete 27/09/24

## Appendix 2 - Gaza Petition Action Tracker

	Recommendation	Cabinet response	Action	Accountability	Target date for completion	Action Completed (BRAG)
6.	That the Leader write to the lead petitioner, explaining the outcome of the petition process.	Agreed in the meeting.	Leader to write to Hafsa Yusufi	Lesley Harrison, Cabinet Support Manager	30/9/24	Complete 24/10/24

**Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – Work Programme 2024-25****Chair: Councillor Brian Steele****Vice-Chair: Councillor Joshua Bacon****Governance Manager: Barbel Gale****Link Officer: Jo Brown**

The following principles were endorsed by OSMB at its meeting of 5 July 2023 as criteria to long/short list each of the commission's respective priorities:

**Establish as a starting point:**

- What are the key issues?
- What is the outcome that we want?

**Agree principles for longlisting:**

- Can scrutiny add value or influence?
- Is it being looked at elsewhere?
- Is it a priority – council or community?

**Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria e.g.**

- T: Time: is it the right time, enough resources?
- O: Others: is this duplicating the work of another body?
- P: Performance: can scrutiny make a difference
- I: Interest – what is the interest to the public?
- C: Contribution to the corporate plan

Meeting Date	Agenda Item
05-Jun-24	Pre-decision items
24-Jul-24	Referral from Council to OSMB - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region" Council Plan & Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Update - Pre-decision Scrutiny Financial Outturn 2023-2024 - Pre-decision Scrutiny Dinnington Leveling up Progress Report - Pre-decision Scrutiny
10-Sep-24	Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Preparation for Adulthood July 2024-25 Financial Monitoring - Poss. Pre-decision Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 Boroughwide & Town Centre/Clifton Park Public Space Protection Order - Poss. Pre-decision
09-Oct-24	Future Rothercare Model - Pre-decision scrutiny Work Programme Work in progress from Select Commissions Forward Plan of Key Decisions

17-Oct-24	Children's Takeover Challenge - Children's Health and Wellbeing
Additional Meeting (5pm - 7pm)	<b>(single item agenda)</b>
Monday 4 November 2024	Planning Enforcement: A meeting with Chair of OSMB, Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, Chair of Planning Board, and Development Manager - South Team & Enforcement to discuss the strategy for planning enforcement, specifically the measurements for success and current statistics.
13-Nov-24	<p>Complaints Annual Report (including Housing Process)</p> <p>Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report</p> <p>Response from Cabinet 16 September 2024 to the Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Referral from Council to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) - Petition "Rotherham's Commitment to a Permanent Ceasefire and To Promote Peace in Palestine and in the Region"</p> <p>Looked After Children (LAC) Sufficiency Update (including the residential development progress update) - Pre-decision</p> <p>Temporary Accommodation Policy - Pre-decision</p> <p>Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy - Pre-decision</p>
11-Dec-24	<p>Byelaws/Life Saving Equipment motion</p> <p>Home to School Transport Budget pressures / mitigations Update</p> <p>HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2024-25 - Poss. Pre-decision</p>
14-Jan-25	<p>Mid Year Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Report - Poss. Pre-decision</p> <p>HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2024-25 - Poss. Pre-decision</p> <p>Leader Q&amp;A - to be scheduled after Council plan on the agenda.</p>
05-Feb-25	<p>Budget and Council Tax Report</p> <p><b>(Usually a single item agenda)</b></p>
12-Mar-25	<p>Climate Emergency Annual Report</p> <p>Social Value Annual Report - Poss. Pre-decision</p> <p>Transport Capital Programme 2025/2026 - Poss. Pre-decision</p> <p>Modern Slavery Transparency Statement - annual Refresh - Poss. Pre-decision</p> <p>Council Plan 2025 - 2028 &amp; New Year Ahead Delivery Plan</p>
08-Apr-25	

07-May-25	
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### Items for Scheduling

Dec-24	A spotlight review into life-saving equipment and related byelaws - as agreed by OSMB at it's meeting on 10 May 2023 ( <a href="https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=894&amp;MID=15772#AI96184">https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=894&amp;MID=15772#AI96184</a> ) linked to the Byelaws/Life Saving Equipment motion (Council 30/11/22 <a href="https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=95268">https://modgov-p-db1.rotherham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=95268</a> )
In progress	Spotlight Review - Agency Staff
In progress	Spotlight Review - Grass Cutting / Ground Maintenance
TBC	Community Infrastructure Levy
TBC	Leader of the Council - General Q&A
TBC	Major Capital Projects (delays, project scaling back)
Apr-26	Future Rothercare Model

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**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**  
**1 November 2024 – 31 January 2025**

This is formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of Key Decisions due to be taken by the Authority and of those parts of the Cabinet meeting identified in this Forward Plan will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information as defined in the Local Government Act 1972.

Contact Information:-

Democratic Services  
Riverside House  
Main Street  
Rotherham  
S60 1AE

Email: [governance@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:governance@rotherham.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01709 822477

**What is the Forward Plan?**

The Forward Plan contains all the key decisions the Council expects to take over the next three months. It will be refreshed monthly and will give at least 28 days’ notice of any Key Decisions and, if applicable, the Cabinet’s intention to discuss an item in private. This gives you the opportunity to submit relevant documents to the decision maker concerning any individual Key Decisions and draws to your attention any relevant constitution process.

**What is a Key Decision?**

A Key Decision is one which is likely to:-

- relate to the capital or revenue budget framework that is reserved to the Council, or
- result in income, expenditure or savings of £400,000 or greater, or
- have a significant effect on two or more wards

A Key Decision can be made by the Cabinet. The Forward Plan also includes some matters which are not Key Decisions under the heading “Decisions which are not Key Decisions”.

**What does the Forward Plan tell me?**

The plan gives information about:

- what key decisions are to be made in the next three months.
- the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made.
- who will make the key decisions.
- when those key decisions are likely to be made.
- what documents will be considered.
- who you can contact for further information.

**Who takes Key Decisions?**

Under the Authority’s Constitution, Key Decisions are taken by the Cabinet. Key Decisions are taken at public meetings of the Cabinet. The Cabinet meets once a month on a Monday at 10.00am at Rotherham Town Hall. Meeting dates for 2024/25 are:

10 June 2024	29 July 2024	16 September 2024	14 October 2024	18 November 2024	16 December 2024
20 Jan 2025	10 Feb 2025	17 March 2025	14 April 2025	12 May 2025	

**Further information and Representations about items proposed to be heard in Private**

Names of contact officers are included in the Plan.

If you wish to make representations that a decision which is proposed to be heard in private should instead be dealt with in public, you should contact Democratic Services by no later than five clear working days before the meeting. At the end of this document are extracts from the Local Government Act 1972 setting out the descriptions of information which may be classed as “exempt”, and the definition of confidential information.

**The members of the Cabinet and their areas of responsibility are: -**

Councillor Chris Read	Leader of the Council
Councillor David Sheppard	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working
Councillor Saghir Alam	Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities
Councillor Victoria Cusworth	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Councillor Robert Taylor	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy
Councillor Joanna Baker-Rogers	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor Sarah Allen	Cabinet Member for Housing

KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 18 NOVEMBER 2024 OR LATER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
<b>Deferred from Oct</b> Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policies	May 2024	To agree the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy. Gas and Carbon Monoxide Policy and Electrical Safety Policy.	Cabinet Member of Housing	<b>Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.</b>	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 <a href="mailto:ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk">ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Rotherham Leaving Care Strategy 2024 – 2027	17/07/24	To approve the Rotherham Leaving Care Strategy 2024 – 2027	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All Wards	Open	Nicola Curley 01709 823858 <a href="mailto:nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk">nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements	01/08/24	To approve the new children's safeguarding arrangements as required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All	Open	Nicola Curley 01709 823858 <a href="mailto:nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk">nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
LAC Sufficiency Update (Inc. residential development progress update)		To receive an update on progress and agree the LAC Sufficiency Plan 2025/26	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All	Open	Nicola Curley 01709 823858 <a href="mailto:nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk">nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
September 2024-25 Financial Monitoring Report	March 2024	To note the current revenue and capital monitoring position and agree any required actions.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 <a href="mailto:judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk">judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
<b>DEFERRED TO DECEMBER</b> Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	<b>March 2024</b>	<b>To note the updates to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities</b>	<b>Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.</b>	<b>Report and appendices</b>	<b>All Wards</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Judith Badger</b> <b>Tel: 01709 822046</b> <b><a href="mailto:judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk">judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk</a></b>
<b>REMOVE</b> Property Transactions	<b>June 2024</b>	<b>To consider any recommendations for property transaction, including disposals, acquisitions, leases and licences.</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and Local Economy</b>	<b>Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>All Wards</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Judith Badger</b> <b>Tel: 01709 822046</b> <b><a href="mailto:judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk">judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk</a></b>
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								

DEFERRED TO DECEMBER Waste Collections Policy	19/03/24	To approve the revised Waste Collections Policy  <b>NOT FOR PUBLICATION</b> The policies are due for a refresh and renewal and should be updated in light of the Environment Act 2021	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and Local Economy	Relevant Members, officers, stakeholders	Report & Appendices	All Wards	Open	Andrew Bramidge Tel: 01709 212314. Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 18 NOVEMBER 2024 OR LATER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
<b>Moved from September</b> Temporary Accommodation Policy	Sept 2024	Approve the adoption of the new Temporary Accommodation Policy.  Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Adult Care Housing and Public Health to make minor amendments to the Policy when the need is identified.  To note the progress in the development of the Temporary Accommodation provision.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report & Appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
<b>New</b> Household Support Fund Update	24/09/24	To receive an update on the Household Support Fund.	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders	Report & Appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 <a href="mailto:jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk">jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk</a>

KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 16 DECEMBER 2024 OR LATER								
ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH								
<b>MOVED FROM JANUARY 2025.</b>  HRA Business Plan, Rent Setting and Service Charges 2024-25	March 2024	To approve HRA 2025-26 business plan and associated rents, fees and services charges for 2025-26.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All	Open.	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 <a href="mailto:ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk">ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES								
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Planning at Newman School – <b>NEW</b>	16/10/24	To approve capital investment at Newman School to provide sufficiency of accommodation and contribute towards the improved condition of the school site.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All	Open	Nicola Curley 01709 823858 <a href="mailto:nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk">nicola.curley@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES								
Property Transactions	June 2024	To consider any recommendations for property transaction, including disposals, acquisitions, leases and licences.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 <a href="mailto:judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk">judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	March 2024	To note the updates to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy	Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 <a href="mailto:judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk">judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk</a>

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT								
Boroughwide & Town Centre PSPO's	13/9/24	To approve the Boroughwide and Town Centre PSPO's  Not for Publication Following September Cabinet (2024)	Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Andrew Bramidge Tel: 01709 212314. Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
Refreshing the Health and Safety Policy	19/3/24	To approve the refreshed Health and Safety Policy  <b>NOT FOR PUBLICATION</b> The Health and Safety Policy is reviewed every two years. It was last updated in September 2022	Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders.	Report & Appendices	All	Open	Andrew Bramidge Tel: 01709 212314. Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
<b>NEW</b> Indicative Highway Repair Programme 2024/2025. Additional Schemes	16/10/24	To approve the proposed additional roads to be added to the Highway Repair Programme 2024/2025  <b>NOT FOR PUBLICATION</b>  Approval to deliver the proposed additional highway repairs further to the existing agreed Highway Repair Programme 2024/2025 and in accordance with the Councils statutory duty to maintain its highways through Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All	Open	Andrew Bramidge Tel: 01709 212314. <a href="mailto:Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk">Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
DEFERRED FROM NOVEMBER Waste Collections Policy	16/10/24	To approve the revised Waste Collections Policy  <b>NOT FOR PUBLICATION</b> The policies are due for a refresh and renewal and should be updated in light of the Environment Act 2021	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and Local Economy	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders	Report & Appendices	All Wards	Open	Andrew Bramidge Tel: 01709 212314. Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk

Deferred from Nov Our Places Fund	13/09/24	To agree to the allocation of the Our Places Fund and the subsequent implementation of projects.  <b>NOT FOR PUBLICATION</b> Update on the progression of the Our Places Fund, allocation of funding and project specification.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Working	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All	Open	Andrew Bramidge Tel: 01709 212314. Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
<b>NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 16 DECEMBER 2024 OR LATER</b>								
<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES</b>								
Scrutiny Review Recommendations – Preparation for Adulthood	Sept 2024	To formally respond to the Improving Lives Select Commission Review Recommendations – Preparation for Adulthood.	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
<b>FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES</b>								
New Applications for Business Rates Relief for <b>Arc Church</b>	June 2023	To consider the recommendation for a new application for Business Rates discretionary relief.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk

<b>NEW</b> Building Compliance Policies	Oct 2024	To approve the updated Compliance Policies for Fire and Legionella in relation to Council Buildings	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 <a href="mailto:judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk">judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
<b>KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 20 JANUARY 2025 OR LATER</b>								
<b>ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH</b>								
<b>NEW</b> Intermediate Care and Residential Care proposals.	October 2024	To approve a new model of care and support.	Cabinet Member for Adult Care	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders.	Report and appendices.	All	Open Report with Exempt Appendices	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 <a href="mailto:ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk">ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
<b>FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES</b>								
November 2024-25 Financial Monitoring Report	March 2024	To note the current revenue and capital monitoring position and agree any required actions.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 <a href="mailto:judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk">judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
<b>NEW</b> Property Transactions	June 2024	To consider recommendations for property transaction, including disposals, acquisitions, leases and licences.	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and Local Economy	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 <a href="mailto:judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk">judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk</a>
<b>REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT</b>								
Bassingthorpe Farm Supplementary Planning Document	13/09/24	To approve the draft Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation and to give authority to explore a <b>collaborative working agreement</b> .  NOT FOR PUBLICATION  Cabinet approval to undertake public consultation on draft SPD is required and Cabinet update required on potential JV option	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant officers and Cabinet Member	Report & Appendices	Greasbrough Rotherham West Rawmarsh West	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Andrew Bramidge Tel: 01709 212314. <a href="mailto:Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk">Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk</a>



<b>NEW</b> South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy	16/10/24	To consider the draft of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy  NOT FOR PUBLICATION  Cabinet approval to undertake public consultation on draft SPD is required and Cabinet update required on potential JV option	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy	Relevant officers and Cabinet Member	Report & Appendices	All	Part exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	Andrew Bramidge Tel: 01709 212314. Andrew.bramidge@rotherham.gov.uk
<b>NON-KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN ON 20 JANUARY 2025 OR LATER</b>								
<b>ADULT CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH</b>								
<b>NEW</b> Tenant Satisfaction Measures and Housing Regulatory Compliance update	October 2024	To update on Housing Service delivery against the social housing regulations.	Cabinet Member for Housing	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Ian Spicer Tel: 01709 255992 ian.spicer@rotherham.gov.uk
<b>ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>								
<b>NEW</b> Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Update.	March 2024	Report on progress against Council Plan performance and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan for 2024-2025.	Leader of the Council	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk

<b>NEW</b> Outcomes from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board relating to the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing	17/10/24	To receive the report and note the recommendations from the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Relevant Members, officers and stakeholders.	Report and appendices	All Wards	Open	Jo Brown Tel: 01709 255269 jo.brown@rotherham.gov.uk
<b>FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES</b>								
New Applications for Business Rates Relief	March 2024	To consider the recommendation for a new application for Business Rates discretionary relief.	Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities	Relevant Members, Officers and Stakeholders.	Report	All Wards	Open	Judith Badger Tel: 01709 822046 judith.badger@rotherham.gov.uk