

Appendix 2 - Tenant Scrutiny Review

Progress/indicator RAG status	
	Work is significantly behind schedule and no progress has been made, and/or Progress has been made but the timescale has not been achieved
	Progress is being made, progress is good, and the action is likely to be achieved within timescale. Or the action has been completed but evidence is required to demonstrate achievement
	The action has been completed and there is a record of evidence to support its completion.

Recommendation and action (in priority order)	Lead Officer	Update	Target Date	RAG Status	Further Information
<p>Recommendation A: Affordability meeting information:</p> <p>Provide a document after the affordability meeting with income team colleagues with all the calculations and key information, including how people can decide to pay their rent.</p>	Jackie Cobb	<p>During the Pre-Tenancy appointment an income and expenditure check is completed through Policy in Practice and a document is now provided to the customer which shows the affordability.</p> <p>A discussion takes place between the officer and the prospective tenant re payment of rent and their preferred method, and this is also recorded on the income and expenditure check.</p> <p>If the customer requests to pay by direct debit this is also recorded and when sign up takes place a direct debit form is sent to Keychoices</p>	September 2024	Completed	

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<p>Recommendation B: Key choices description:</p> <p>Manage new tenant expectations by providing additional information on the key choice's website, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining that the property is unfurnished and is likely to need decoration • A plan of the layout and room sizes (rather than a list of dimensions) 	Carol Wordsworth	A summary Guide of the Housing Allocation Policy and has developed and now online. guide-to-the-housing-allocation-policy (rotherham.gov.uk)	October 2024	Completed	
	Carol Wordsworth	Frequently Asked Questions regarding the property have now been developed and are issued at the pre-tenancy interviews and is available on the website. These will be reviewed regularly.	October 2024	Completed	
	Carol Wordsworth	A pre-tenancy checklist has been developed to include a question regarding decoration; therefore, applicants are advised that the property is likely to need decoration. Information regarding the furnished scheme is also provided.	October 2024	Completed	Properties are currently advertised with room sizes, unfortunately the housing management system does not facilitate additional plans or room layouts. However, we acknowledge that this is a good suggestion, and we will explore the possibility in the future upgrades.
	Dean Borrill / Carol Wordsworth	A Lettable Standard has been developed by Housing Property Services and available online. Look for a council home – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	October 2024	Completed	

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		This is being shared at the pre-tenancy interview so that applicants are aware of Rotherham's Lettable Standard and know what to expect			
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<p>Recommendation C. Virtual viewings re-evaluation:</p> <p>Following expiry of the current contract, plan to re-evaluate the policy of minimising in-person viewings and potentially offering them to ALL new tenants by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying out a wider survey of tenants to ask if they would prefer virtual or in-person viewings. • Costing out if virtual viewings make substantial savings when considering the cost of the video contract. 	<p>Sandra Wardle</p>	<p>A cost analysis was completed in 2022, which showed that virtual viewings was the most cost effective in terms of staff time and mileage.</p> <p>A meeting was held with the virtual video supplier in August 2024 to review the process and on-going monthly meetings have been arranged.</p> <p>The quality of videos provided is being monitored.</p> <p>A further analysis is to be completed to detail options of procuring a contract for virtual viewings or delivering an in-house service.</p> <p>We acknowledge that in person viewing is a better customer experience and will evaluate our virtual viewings approach taking into account tenant feedback.</p> <p>Information and the outcome of this work will be shared with IPSC.</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	<p>On Target</p>	
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<p>Recommendation D. Viewings for vulnerable new tenants:</p> <p>Improve the application form to provide more support to vulnerable new tenants by including questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the applicant needs to request an in-person viewing due to physical and /or mental health needs. • If the prospective new tenant needs their support worker to view the property with them. • Allow more than 48 hours' notice for the viewing if needed to ensure that their support worker is available to attend. 	<p>Carol Wordsworth / Sandra Wardle</p>	<p>The new housing Allocation Policy has been drafted and will include a definition of vulnerable.</p> <p>A 12-week consultation on the proposed policy, including 22 proposed changes commenced on 13th January 2025 ending Sunday 6th April 2025</p> <p>The pre-tenancy checklist will be updated to include a section on vulnerability.</p>	<p>September 2025</p>	<p>On Target</p>	
		<p>Applicants who apply for medical priority have their case assessed at medical assessment panel. The decision takes into account vulnerability and includes if an in-person viewing is required with either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Occupational Therapist - Learning Disability & Autism Housing Officer <p>Within Housing Options there are 3 Housing Occupational Therapists, and a dedicated Learning Disability and Autism Housing Officer who will accompany the tenant on viewings.</p> <p>The Learning Disability and Autism Housing Officer was originally part-time, and this increased to full-time</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>The viewing process is flexible, to allow more time, and viewing will be arranged around the availability of the tenant a support worker.</p> <p>Properties will be held up to 1 week when the customer is on holiday</p>

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		to enable more support to be provided to applicants with a Learning Disability or Autism.			
		The Medical Assessment process will be reviewed as part of the Allocation Policy Review.	September 2025	On Target	
<p>Recommendation E. Welcome pack:</p> <p>Provide a welcome pack for new tenants that is handed out at sign up. The pack should include information such as neighbourhood / community activities, how to report a repair, and advice about damp and mould. It should also give details specific to that home such as how to work the boiler, location of the stop tap, and days for bin collections.</p>	Carol Wordsworth	<p>All the information provided when signing for a new tenancy has been reviewed.</p> <p>A new Welcome Pack is being developed to consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy agreement - Rotherham Council Tenancy Agreement – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • A Guide to your Home - Guide to Your Home – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • Lettable standard (complete) • Sign-up information relating to individual properties (so this won't be online) • Generic information / leaflets - such as damp & 	March 2025	On Target	The team are liaising with customer Services, Design and Digital Services and the Welcome Pack will be launched by the end February 2025.

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		<p>mould, fire action leaflet, contents insurance, district heating guide (if applicable) etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customer satisfaction survey has been developed and launched mid-February 2025 			
<p>Recommendation F. Welcome visit feedback:</p> <p>Make sure that feedback from the welcome visits on what could have been better for the tenant is collated and shared with the voids team on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Luke Chamoun</p>	<p>A new digital form for Welcome Visit is being developed. The responses to questions 4, “Are there any issues with your property?” and 5, “if yes, what are the issues” can be reported on following implementation.</p> <p>Issue that are feedback on the Welcome Visit will always be shared with the Voids team.</p>	<p>August 2025</p>	<p>On Target</p>	
<p>Recommendation G. Clarity around the Furniture scheme</p> <p>Provide more clarity around the scheme by addition of up-to date information in the leaflets and on the website, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current prices. • Confirmation that the furniture package isn’t a 	<p>Phil Hamilton</p>	<p>The Furnished Homes webpage is up to date and offers clarity on the scheme, packages that are available and confirms the minimum weekly charge price.</p> <p>Get help to furnish your council home – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	<p>On Target</p>	

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<p>life-time commitment (participants can switch/ hand back at any time).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the furniture package can be paid for from housing benefit. • Work with learning disability organisations to let them know about the furniture scheme and the benefits. 		<p>There is also a word document available for tenants with current price list and item details.</p> <p>The website explains that when tenants sign up to the scheme this is for the duration of the tenancy. However, if an applicant's financial circumstances change, there are options to downgrade or upgrade the furniture package and the weekly charge will be adjusted accordingly. If a change of package is not viable, then tenants can request to be removed from the scheme.</p> <p>If a tenant joins the scheme, a weekly charge will be applied to their rent, which is dependent on the furniture package chosen.</p> <p>The charge is added to the rent account and will show as a service charge on the account.</p> <p>The furnished charge start date will begin on delivery of items/flooring and will be confirmed and entered onto the tenancy agreement at the point of sign up.</p> <p>If the applicant is in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit,</p>			
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		<p>some or all the furnished charge may be covered and will require the applicant to update DWP when signing the tenancy agreement.</p> <p>The charge includes any repairs, maintenance, and replacements to all flooring and furnished items caused by natural wear and tear. Any damages caused by misuse or accidental could result in recharges being raised.</p> <p>Key Choices team employs a learning and disabilities officer who will promote the scheme to individual tenants and signpost for further information as needed to disability organisations.</p> <p>The service has started work on updating the leaflets to promote the service, including details of packages available, images of available items, prices and information on the scheme. The leaflet will be completed by April 25.</p>			
<p>Recommendation H. Furniture scheme extension:</p> <p>Proactively extend and publicise the furniture scheme to other tenants (not just new tenants) including people who are struggling to buy new</p>	<p>Phil Hamilton</p>	<p>The scheme is aimed at low-income households and offering the essential items for new tenants with immediacy reduces the likelihood of new tenants experiencing furniture poverty. The scheme does allow for current Council tenants who are at</p>		<p>Complete</p>	<p>We acknowledge that this is a good suggestion but unfortunately it is not feasible to introduce items like irons/vacuum cleaners as this would lead to increased costs and workloads. The team</p>

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<p>furniture and those who would like to move in first before deciding what they need/ can afford.</p> <p>Could the furniture package offer would be extended to include irons, ironing boards and vacuum cleaners.</p>		<p>risk of losing their tenancy the opportunity to join the scheme.</p> <p>As of 23/01/2025 there are 5582 furnished homes in the scheme.</p> <p>The furnished scheme is available to new tenants who sign up to an RMBC tenancy within the first six week of the tenancy commencement date.</p> <p>There is an option for tenants to purchase refurbished furniture for a one-off cost, instead of opting into the scheme. These items are cleaned, function and PAT tested were applicable to bring them to an 'as new' standard.</p>			<p>are not trained in repairing these items, and, as the scheme currently refurbishes items for re-use, these items would not been deemed safe for re-use so this would create an increased costs for replacements and disposal.</p>
	Phil Hamilton	Furnished Homes Policy to be developed and this will include the eligibility criteria.	October 2025	On Target	
	Phil Hamilton	The Council is working in partnership with a recycling centre to offer a starter pack of white goods free of charge to tenants who are struggling financially. A	31/01/2025	Complete	

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		meeting was held on 9th December to agree on a process for referrals. This is now in place			
<p>Recommendation I. Measuring sustainability:</p> <p>Ensure that the length and sustainability of tenancies is monitored and reported such as measuring how many tenants remain in their new homes for 12 months.</p>	Luke Chamoun	<p>There is an existing system report that allows us to measure tenancy sustainability. We can monitor and report how many tenants remain in their homes for 12 months.</p> <p>Monitoring of this measure is now reported to the Council's Performance and Business Intelligence Service on a monthly scorecard. Performance will also be included in the quarterly Performance and Quality report.</p>	Ongoing	Complete	.