

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:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	3 October 2024
Report title and date	Repairs and Maintenance Policy
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Cabinet – 18 November 2024
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	01/10/24