
TENANT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

Revised August 2026



Tenant Involvement Policy

Introduction

Our ambition is to be a landlord where every tenant feels heard, respected and able to influence decisions about their home and community. We will act on what tenants tell us, report back clearly, and ensure involvement is meaningful, accessible and inclusive for all.

We believe that Council tenants are the experts on living in council homes and, as a landlord, we must listen, understand and work in partnership with our tenants to make sure our services are continually improving and that we provide decent homes in thriving communities.

We want our tenants to feel empowered to hold us to account and to have opportunities to become actively involved in shaping the housing service. Effective tenant involvement can bring benefits not only to our tenants but also to the Council by ensuring we develop policies and services that meet the needs and aspirations of our tenants, creating genuine opportunities for them to influence decisions, and increase levels of satisfaction.

Purpose of this policy

- Set out our commitment to tenant involvement including the reasons why we involve tenants
- Make sure that the needs of tenants are at the centre of what the housing service delivers
- Ensure tenant involvement is inclusive and reflects the diverse needs, characteristics and lived experiences of our tenants, so that involvement opportunities are fair, accessible and representative
- To build respectful and trusting relationships between tenants and staff
- Set out our priorities in relation to tenant involvement
- Set out the ways in which we will involve tenants and ensure that they are part of our decision making and service improvement processes
- Set out how our performance will be monitored, reviewed and published
- To comply with the statutory requirements, legislation and good practice relating to tenant involvement.
- To improve our tenants' understanding and satisfaction with the housing services we deliver

Aims and objectives

- To promote existing and develop new opportunities for tenant involvement.
We want to use our everyday interactions and tenant involvement delivery methods to ensure that all tenants and prospective tenants are aware of how they can be involved in shaping our housing services.
- To improve the way, we communicate with and interact with our tenants
We want to capture a range of views and make it easy for our tenants and customers to

speak to us. To help us do this, we also want to improve our understanding and knowledge of the needs of individual residents to make sure that everyone is heard, listened to and responded to.

- To increase the opportunities for residents to influence the service in a real and meaningful way

We want to involve and integrate tenants across the service at all levels but particularly where decisions are being made. We will also provide feedback to demonstrate how tenants have been involved in decision making.

- To provide transparent, open and accessible information about our performance

We want to make sure that all our tenants and prospective tenants know how our housing service is performing and how they can challenge us when things are not working as they should.

- To demonstrate clearly how tenant feedback has influenced decisions, through transparent reporting and regular “You Said, We Listened” updates

We will show tenants how their views shape our services by reporting back clearly, consistently and in accessible formats, so tenants can see the difference their involvement makes.

- To use tenant insight, satisfaction data and lived experience to drive continuous improvement across all housing services

We will use what tenants tell us — through surveys, complaints, day-to-day contact and lived experience — to identify issues, target improvements and ensure our services remain responsive and evidence-based.

- To ensure involvement opportunities reflect the diversity of our tenants and proactively include under-represented groups

We will design involvement opportunities that are inclusive, accessible and representative, removing barriers so that tenants from all backgrounds can participate and influence decisions.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to Tendring District Council tenants, prospective tenants and leaseholders. Any reference to tenants includes leaseholders.

Legal and regulatory context

➤ Housing Act 1985

This provided secure tenants of local authorities in England with a wide range of legal rights in respect of tenant involvement including the right to be consulted on matters of housing management and a right to information about housing tenancies and the allocation of homes.

➤ The Housing (Right to Manage) (England) Regulations 2012

The Right to Manage, first introduced in 1994, offers tenants the option to form a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) and take over responsibility for managing housing services, such as repairs, caretaking, and rent collection from their landlord.

➤ Charter for Social Housing Tenants

The Government's 2020 white paper 'The Charter for Social Housing Tenants' built on the lessons learnt from the Grenfell Tower fire and this contains seven commitments that social housing tenants should expect from their landlord. These are:

- To be safe in their homes
- To know how their landlord is performing
- To have complaints dealt with fairly and promptly
- To be treated with respect
- To have their voice heard by their landlord
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood
- To be supported to take the first steps into home ownership

➤ Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

This legislation builds upon the existing regulatory framework for housing and introduces revised standards that came into force on 1 April 2024. These standards contain specific expectations registered providers of social housing must comply with and detail the outcomes that providers are expected to achieve.

The standards and the areas they relate to are:

Safety and quality	• Stock Quality; Decency; Health and Safety; Repairs, Maintenance and Planned Improvements; Adaptations
Tenancy	• Allocations and Lettings; Tenancy sustainment and evictions; Tenure; Mutual Exchange
Neighbourhood and community	• Safety of shared spaces; Local co-operation; Anti-social behaviour and hate incidents; Domestic abuse
Transparency, Influence and Accountability	• Fairness and respect; Diverse needs; Involvement with tenants; Information about landlord services; Performance information; Complaints

This legislation also gave the regulator new powers that moved it from a reactive approach to consumer regulation, where it could only investigate issues when there was 'a serious detriment' to tenants, for example a serious health and safety breach, to a proactive approach led by a regular programme of landlord inspections.

In relation to the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, the required outcomes relevant to tenant involvement are that registered providers must:

- Treat tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect.
- Take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants and, where relevant, prospective tenants.
- Take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered and communicate how tenants' views have been considered.
- Communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.
- Collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord services.

Under the 2024 Consumer Standards, we must demonstrate how tenant views shape services, how we meet diverse needs, and how we ensure tenants can hold us to account. This policy sets out how we will meet these expectations.

➤ Housing Ombudsman

The Complaint Handling Code, first introduced by the Housing Ombudsman in 2020, became statutory from 1st April 2024 and provides a single, robust set of standards for complaints procedures to be accessible, fair and efficient.

In addition, a legal duty is placed on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Code, regardless of whether it receives individual complaints from residents about a landlord. This means that landlords are required to submit their self-assessment to the Housing Ombudsman each year.

What is tenant involvement?

Tenant involvement:

- is a term used to cover many different activities within a housing service through which tenants can contribute to how the service is delivered
- is about tenants taking part in the decision-making process and influencing choices which affect the services, homes and communities in which they live. It is an evolving two-way process of communication between tenants and their landlord
- includes listening to lived experience, particularly from tenants with diverse needs or protected characteristics, to ensure services are fair, accessible and responsive

We want to ensure that tenants are provided with a wide range of options for involvement and at different levels, including both formal and informal settings in person and online.

Benefits of tenant Involvement

In addition to the legal and regulatory context, there is a strong business case for involving tenants. 'Successful businesses in all sectors have a common theme – they know, understand

and respond to their current and future customers. They do this by developing approaches and mechanisms to engage with service users.' (New Approaches to Tenant Scrutiny, Chartered Institute of Housing).

The main benefits of tenant involvement are:

- Improved levels of tenant satisfaction with their homes and neighbourhoods
- Learning from the experiences of tenants to inform the continuous improvement of housing services
- By understanding what tenants want and the problems they are facing, services can be tailored appropriately
- Identification of neighbourhood issues that need resolution
- Tenants are able to scrutinise and challenge the services we offer
- Services are delivered in a more efficient and cost-effective manner
- Mutual trust, respect and understanding are developed
- The Council and its tenants become aware of each other's perspectives
- Tenants are given an understanding of what a housing provider must consider when delivering a service
- Having informed and knowledgeable tenants who have the skills and confidence to influence decisions.
- Tenants have the opportunities to develop new skills, knowledge and confidence that can help in other areas of their life

Supporting a tenant involvement culture

Tenant involvement can only be effective where landlords are committed to and have a culture of involving tenants in their decision-making process and where these principles are adopted throughout the housing service.

Tenant involvement comes from and promotes a culture of mutual trust, respect and partnership between tenants and the landlord. It exists when these interests work together towards a common goal of better housing conditions and housing services.

Tenant involvement is not the responsibility of one member of staff or team but is the expectation of all members of staff involved in the delivery of housing services.

The key elements of a successful tenant Involvement culture are that:

- Tenant involvement should be a continuous process where participants share information and ideas, working towards a common understanding of problems and agreeing solutions
- Tenant involvement should be easy and accessible, allowing tenants to choose their own level and type of involvement

- All participants need to have all the information available to consider issues properly and this needs to be clear, timely and accessible
- Tenants should have enough time to consider issues properly.
- The purpose and benefit of involvement is made clear to all staff involved in the delivery of housing services
- Decision-making processes should be open, clear and accountable
- Feedback should be provided to demonstrate how views have been taken into account
- We will use tenant data, satisfaction measures and lived experience to identify inequalities and target improvements
- We will work with the Tenant Panel to ensure involvement opportunities reflect the district's diversity

Barriers to Tenant Involvement

We recognise there can be barriers that prevent tenants from getting involved and it is important that we identify these barriers and consider how they can be overcome. These barriers include but are not limited to:

- Lack of skills, training and/or the confidence needed or perceived to be needed
- Understanding published information
- Time, work, family and caring constraints
- Transport, travel and other expenses
- Digital exclusion
- Language barriers
- Cultural or confidence barriers
- Accessibility needs (hearing, visual, neurodiversity, mobility)

To help address these, we want to offer solutions and opportunities so that tenants find it as easy as possible to get involved. The solutions we offer include, but are not limited to:

- Providing training and support for tenants who would like to engage in any way
- Providing information in a range of formats to make sure it can be understood by all, including translated materials and a translation service
- Making sure information is provided in a timely way, allowing tenants a reasonable and appropriate period to understand the information before commenting or giving feedback
- Arranging transport and / or covering the financial costs incurred by tenants and leaseholders in carrying out their roles
- Offering a wide range of involvement methods to suit all lifestyles
- Arranging meetings and events at times and locations, or online, which are fully accessible and safe for tenants

- Providing practical support for established tenants groups and other involved tenants
- Offering digital support drop-ins

Options for tenant involvement

We accept that not all tenants will want the same level of involvement in all areas of the housing services we provide. The level of involvement that tenants are interested in may simply mean being kept informed or providing feedback about specific housing issues or they may want to have more detailed involvement in the decision-making process, as illustrated in the table below:

Informed	• Tenants are told what is happening but have no real influence. A one-way flow of information – examples include newsletters and website updates
Consulted	• Tenants are asked for their feedback on ideas and asked for their suggestions. However, the final decision remains with the Council examples include policy reviews and focus groups
Involved	• Tenants are asked to make suggestions and influence outcomes – examples include Estate Walkabouts, service assessor roles and block champions
Influencing	• Tenants' views are heard across the service, and they have some influence over decision making – examples include being a member of the Tenant Panel and/or Tenant Panel subgroup
Tenant Collaboration	• Tenants inform key decision making and help set priorities. At this level, tenant involvement is consistently applied throughout the service – examples include co-design and scrutiny

Opportunities to get involved

Alongside the involvement levels described above, tenants can take part in a range of practical roles that help shape and improve our services. These opportunities are open to all tenants and designed to be flexible, accessible and inclusive:

- **Service Assessors:**
 - **Void Inspectors:** Play a vital role in identifying required works, monitoring quality and ensuring our homes meet our letting standard.
 - **Diverse Needs Group:** Tenants with diverse needs or lived experience of barriers to communication and accessibility can work with us to review our website, documents and information to ensure they are fair, accessible and easy to understand for everyone, as well as shaping services and decision making.
- **Block Champions:** Help monitor the condition of their block or estate, reporting issues such as cleaning standards, repairs, safety concerns or environmental improvements, and working with officers to resolve them.
- **Reading Group Member:** Review draft policies, letters, leaflets, webpages and key documents to ensure they are clear, accessible and written in plain English. This helps us meet the needs of tenants with different communication preferences.
- **Estate Walkabouts:** Give tenants the opportunity to meet officers on site and highlight issues or concerns in their local area. By walking around estates together, tenants and leaseholders can help identify improvements such as repairs, cleaning or safety issues, ensuring timely action is taken and contributing to keeping neighbourhoods safe, clean and well maintained.

Tenants can choose the level of involvement that suits them, from occasional feedback to regular participation – and we will provide support, training and accessible formats to help you take part. We will work with our tenants to develop a structure giving a range of opportunities for them to get involved as much or as little as they want.

At the time of writing this policy, these are the core opportunities available to tenants, in addition to the Tenant Panel and its subgroups. We expect these to continue to develop as tenant feedback, service needs and tenant profile data, highlight new ways for tenants to influence, scrutinise and shape the housing service.

Further information around Involvement activities can be obtained from the [Tenant Involvement Guide](#).

Training for tenant Involvement

For this policy to be successful it will be important that staff and tenants have the right skills and approach. This will require a comprehensive training programme to help develop the right culture within the housing service and to equip tenants with the necessary understanding of the service.

This will include:

- Induction and regular refresher training for all members of staff involved in the delivery of housing services, so that they understand the benefits of tenant involvement and their role in promoting and enabling this, examples of this include:

- Equality Act 2010
- Trauma-informed practice
- Cultural awareness
- Inclusive communication
- Anti-discrimination behaviours
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of this policy and have the skills and knowledge to implement it
- Delivery of relevant courses and training to assist and enhance tenants' involvement and to allow them to become more effective in their role
 - Panel members are supported in participating in training offered to promote greater understanding of housing and related matters
 - Training needs will be subject to a biennial assessment and a programme to meet the needs identified will be agreed with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Panel
 - Additional training will also be arranged, as required, for those members of the Panel appointed to its themed subgroups
 - In addition, training will be delivered once every three years in relation to equality and diversity issues and working together as a team

Resources for tenant involvement

To encourage and support tenants and leaseholders to be involved, we will:

- Reimburse reasonable travel expenses and/or provide transport to events or meetings
- Reimburse tenants and leaseholders for children and dependency care costs to enable attendance at meetings or consultation events
- Provide refreshments at meetings and other consultation events.
- Hold prize draws, where considered appropriate, for tenants and leaseholders responding to surveys
- Provide for the translation or interpretation of documents/information at meetings, where needed
- Provide grants to resident associations that meet our recognition criteria
- Organise events across the district to reach out and engage as many tenants and leaseholders as possible
- Continue to have a designated annual budget for tenant and leaseholder involvement activities
- Provide Locally Determined Environmental Improvement budgets to tenants' groups meeting our eligibility criteria

Measuring quality and performance

It is important that tenants hold us to account that we do what we say we will do and our performance against the priorities set out in this policy are visible to tenants, leaseholders and other key stakeholders.

To do this we will:

- Develop an action plan to meet the aims and objectives of this policy
- Develop a set of key performance indicators to measure key aspects of this policy
- Involve tenants in the development and monitoring of our action plan and performance indicators
- Regularly report on our progress to all tenants
- Tenant Involvement Six-monthly Briefing Note
- Annual Diverse Needs Report
- Publishing TSM equality analysis
- Tracking participation by demographic group
- Reporting “You Said, We Listened” outcomes
- Monitoring accessibility and inclusion of Involvement activities

As part of the regulatory regime for housing, providers are also required to collect specified data in relation to their performance known as Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Of the 22 Tenant Satisfaction Measures, 12 are perception measures that are informed by an annual tenant satisfaction survey and the ones most relevant to tenant involvement are:

- Overall satisfaction with the service provided
- Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them
- Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenant informed about things that matter to them
- Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect

We have to submit this information to the Regulator of Social Housing each year and will also publish our results on our website and in our tenant newsletter.

Complaints procedure

The Council’s Corporate and Housing Complaints Policy is available to any tenant or prospective tenant who is dissatisfied with any aspect of the housing services we provide. Further information can be obtained from the Council’s Corporate and Housing Complaints Policy [Corporate and housing complaints policy](#).

Equalities statement

The Council recognises that it delivers its housing services to communities within which there is a wide social diversity and is committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity.

We want all our tenants to have the opportunity to be involved, regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity status. Discrimination on the basis of any of these grounds is not acceptable.

- We will proactively identify and remove barriers faced by tenants with diverse needs
- We will use data from tenancy checks, TSMs and CORE to understand inequalities and target improvements
- We will ensure involvement opportunities reflect the diversity of Tendring's communities

The Council will tackle inequality, treat people with dignity and respect and continue to work to improve services for all service users.

The legal framework for the Council's approach is provided by the Equality Act 2010 and specifically by the Public Sector Equality Duty, under which a public authority must work consciously to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimization and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people with differing characteristics

Understanding and responding to diverse needs

- We will collect, validate and use data on tenants' diverse needs to shape services
- We will ensure involvement opportunities are accessible to tenants with disabilities, language needs, cultural needs, digital exclusion or other vulnerabilities
- We will work with the Tenant Panel to ensure representation across protected characteristics
- We will publish an annual report on diverse needs and resulting service improvements

Policy review

The Council is committed to ensuring that this Tenant Involvement Policy remains current, effective and aligned with legislation, regulatory requirements and best practice.

This policy will be:

- Formally reviewed every two years, in consultation with tenants, staff, the Tenant Panel, and the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning
- Reviewed earlier if required due to changes in legislation, regulation, statutory guidance, or significant organisational or service changes
- Updated to reflect learning from tenant feedback, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, complaints, scrutiny activity, and insight from the annual "Understanding Our Tenants' Diverse Needs" report
- Republished following each review, with clear communication to tenants on any changes