

# Tenancy Audit Policy



Directorate: Customers and Communities

Issue Date: September 2023

Review Date: September 2024

Version: 1

## Document Information

### Scope:

This policy will ensure that Salix Homes understands its tenants, tenancies and properties. The aims of tenancy audits are to;

- Keep household information up to date to enable us to understand who lives in our properties and to help us deliver quality and timely services that are tailored to individual needs.
- To identify any issues with the tenancy or the condition of property that are impacting a tenant's enjoyment of their tenancy. For example, repairs, damp and mould, unreported ASB, any tenancy support needs.
- Help identify any customer support needs and where necessary refer them onto specialist agencies for individual support.
- Identify households who are occupying properties that no longer meet their needs and provide support if they wish to move.
- To identify and deal with any unauthorised property alterations and to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements.
- To promote Safe Homes
- To promote fire safety advice and prevention
- To enable customers to raise any concerns they have with us or request information about our services.

### Service Standards / Performance Measures / Corporate Strategy:

#### Tenancy audits

100% of tenancy audits due in year completed in year.

Number of no access visits.

#### Household information

Percentage of tenancies on which we hold up to date tenant and household information.

#### Tenant needs and issues

Number of support needs identified as a result of visits by category.

Number of housing management issues identified as a result of visits by category.

Number of safeguarding referrals made.

Number of untidy tenancies identified by category.

**Document Information**

**Property condition**

Number of property condition issues identified by category.  
 Number of unauthorised alterations identified.

**Safer homes**

Number of home safety issues identified.

**Tenancy fraud**

Number of tenancy fraud cases identified by category.

**Property suitability**

Number of tenants’ living in a property too large for their needs.  
 Number of tenants’ living in a property too small for their needs.  
 Number of tenants’ living in a property that does not meet their health needs.  
 Number of tenants support to move to a more suitable property as a result of tenancy audits.  
 Number of tenants supported to remain in their home with support as a result of tenancy audits.

**Risks:**

**Failure to gain access to carry out visits – Warren Carlon – Director of Communities**

- Tenants informed of visits 10 days in advance and are able to rearrange to a more suitable time.
- Visits carried out in early evening and weekend.
- Visits carried out as part of other appointments with tenants – repairs, gas safety checks, other appointments.

**Workload of tenancy audits unmanageable and targets not hit - Warren Carlon – Director of Communities**

- Carry out tenant audits on a three year rolling programme to ensure workload manageable as part of role of housing officer, income officer and property safety officer.
- Clear identification of annual programme of visits so officers know which tenancies they need to visit and can include visits as part of their daily workload.
- Regular reporting of progress of visits against targets to identify any issues.

**Tenancy audits identify large numbers of issues that need to be managed within existing resources – Executive Director of Customers and Communities**

- Recording and reporting of issues identified so demand can be understood and managed.
- Monitoring and reporting of impact on staffing resources and budgets.

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:**

Salix Homes is committed to promoting and embedding a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within our workplaces and the communities we serve.

## Document Information

- Equality is about ensuring that every individual has an opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents;
- Diversity is recognising difference and responding positively to those differences;
- Inclusion is about creating an environment where our services and employment opportunities are accessible to all.

We are committed to meeting our obligations and duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to promoting equal opportunities both in the provision of services and in our employment practices. We will consider all the protected characteristics of the Act which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity

We also recognise that Socioeconomic background is an area where inequalities exist and commit to addressing this disadvantage and inequality in our communities where able to do so.

We are also mindful of our duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty, which is to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Where reasonable to do so, Salix Homes will make any reasonable adjustment to ensure compliance with the Act.

### Related Policy/Procedure & Documents:

Tenancy audit procedure  
 Tenancy audit form  
 Tenancy audit notification of visit letter  
 Tenancy audit customer information leaflet  
 Repairs policy and procedure  
 Property condition policy and procedure  
 Tenancy fraud policy and procedure  
 Management Move policy and procedure  
 ASB policy and procedure

Document Information
<p>Damp, mould and condensation policy and procedure                      Management move policy and procedure                      Downsizing policy and procedure</p>
<p><b>Related Legislation / Relevant Regulation:</b></p> <p>Housing Act 1985                      Housing Act 1988                      Housing Act 2004                      Social Housing (regulation) Act 2023                      Building Safety Act 2022                      Housing Health and Safety Rating System                      Data Protection Act 2018                      Prevention of Housing Fraud Act 2013                      Equality Act 2010</p>
<p><b>Responsibilities:</b></p> <p><b>Executive Director of Customers and Communities</b> – policy owner and responsible for oversight of the implementation of the policy and monitoring progress to ensure the policy delivers its aims</p> <p><b>Director of Communities</b> – responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented within the communities directorate, employees in the communities directorate receive training and for ensuring the policy delivers its aims.</p> <p><b>Housing Managers and Income Manager</b> - responsible for ensuring policy is implemented and officer are trained in carrying out the tenancy audits.</p> <p><b>Housing officers/ income officers/ property safety officers</b> – responsible for carryout the tenancy audits, recording the outcomes and ensuring actions identified as a result of the audits are implemented.</p>
<p><b>Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)</b></p> <p>A DPIA was completed on 10 August 2023.</p>
<p><b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b></p> <p>An EIA was completed on 10 August 2023.</p>

## Introduction

Salix Homes aims to deliver excellent services which meet tenants needs and expectations, whilst also using ensuring best use of resources and value for money.

This policy sets out Salix Homes' approach to tenancy audits. Tenancy audits will help us understand our tenants, our tenancies and our properties. They will ensure we are able to identify service improvements that will benefit our tenants.

## Risk based approach to tenancy audits

We will carry out a rolling programme of tenancy audits. The programme of tenancy audits will be determined by risk including building safety risk and risk that a tenant's health or support needs could change quickly.

We will carry out annual tenancy audits in our high rise and sheltered schemes. Our high rise buildings are a high building and fire safety risk. The tenants in our sheltered schemes are at higher risk of their health or support needs changing quickly.

For the remainder of our general needs stock we will carry tenancy audits on a three year rolling programme. Where we identify a tenant is vulnerable or there have been issues with the tenancy we will classify the tenancy as high risk and carry out annual tenancy visits during the lifetime of that tenancy.

We will exclude tenancies less than a year old from the audit programme. These will visited as part of our starter tenancy policy.

## Household information

During the tenancy audit we will be reviewing and updating the information we currently hold on our tenants, which will include who lives in the household and their relationships to each other, dates of birth and sex.

In addition to household information we will also ask about the households equality and diversity information including ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender and belief. This is to ensure that we can plan our services better and that we are complying with our Public Sector Equality Duties.

We will also ask about any reasonable adjustments tenants may need to the services we provide to enable them to better access and use our services. This may include adjustments to how we communicate (language, medium etc), awareness of health issues and any vulnerabilities.

## Property condition

Tenancy audits provide an opportunity to assess the condition of our properties including, where relevant, gardens.

The tenancy audit provides an opportunity for us to identify any outstanding repairs or any issues with damp, mould and condensation and ensure they are reported and dealt with.

Salix Homes tenants are expected to:  
Keep the interior of the home clean and in a good state of decoration.  
Keep and maintain gardens, trees, lawn, and hedges in a neat and tidy condition.  
Make good any damage caused to fixtures and fittings or structure of the property by a member of the household or a visitor to the home.  
Report any repairs to Salix Homes in a timely manner.

Where the tenancy audit identifies any issues with the property or garden condition that are the tenant's responsibility, we will work with the tenant using our property or garden condition policy and procedure to resolve the issue.

Where the tenancy audit identifies any unauthorised structural changes these will be followed up within 28 working days of the visit by a surveyor.

## Safe homes

The tenancy audits provide an opportunity to promote safe homes and have a discussion with the tenant about fire safety and fire prevention. The tenancy audit will enable us to identify any safety concerns within the property and to work with the tenant to resolve these.

## Identifying tenant needs

The tenancy audit is an opportunity to identify any support needs a tenant may have. Where we identify support needs the housing officer will work with tenant to put in place a support plan. Where we need another agency to provide support and help we will make appropriate referrals.

## Tenancy fraud

Under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 it is a criminal offence to sub-let or part with possession of social housing. The tenancy audit will enable us to check that the person or people living at the property are the tenant(s) and their household members.

We will ask tenants to provide identification during the visit to ensure that the correct person is living in the property. Where we suspect the person or people living in the property are not the tenant or members of the tenant's household, we will take action under our Tenancy Fraud Policy and Procedure.

## Property suitability

The tenancy audit provides an opportunity to ensure the tenant's home is still meeting their and their households needs and to discuss with the tenant any options that may be available to them. A property may no longer meet their needs if its too large, too small or their health has changed making the property difficult to live in.

## Under occupation

Tenancy audits may identify households who are living in a home with more bedrooms than they need. Where this is the case, we will offer information and support on moving to a smaller property, particularly where a household is struggling to manage or afford the

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Page: 6 of 8

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property. This may include information on mutual exchanges, Salford Homesearch and bidding assistance and information on how we can support them to move to a smaller property in line with our Downsizing Policy and Management Move Policy.

### Over crowding

Tenancy audits may identify households that are overcrowded. If households are overcrowded, we will offer information and support on mutual exchanges, Salford Homesearch and bidding assistance. Where there is severe overcrowding that is impacting the health of the household, we will consider supporting them to move through our Management Move policy.

### Changes to health

Over the lifetime of a tenancy a person's health may change making the property unsuitable for the tenant's or tenant's household. Where this is the case, we can discuss with the tenant options that are available including disabled adaptations, moving to a property more suitable to their needs or referrals to other agencies that may be able to provide support to enable the tenant to remain in their current property.

### Breaches of tenancy

Whilst not being the main driver for carrying out tenancy audits, tenancy audits may identify where a tenant is in breach of their tenancy. This may occur during the visit or as a result of us failing to gain access to a property.

Where we identify tenancy breaches as part of the tenancy audit we will take appropriate action to ensure the tenancy conditions are being complied with. If we suspect there has been a breach of tenancy but the tenant refuses access or to cooperate, we can take appropriate legal action to enforce this.

### Carrying out visits and access

Where possible will give tenants 10 days' notice of the visit in writing. The letter will clearly state the purpose of the visit.

We may also carry out tenancy audits without notice with the permission of the tenant, as part of our normal activities.

If written notice has been given and we are still unable to access the property we will take appropriate action to access the property including coinciding tenancy audit visits with other visits such as gas and electrical safety checks, stock condition surveys or other appointments. We may also apply to the County Court for access.

### Information and confidentiality

We will notify the tenant of the reason why we are carrying out the tenancy audit visit and the purpose of collecting the information. We will also inform them about how the information will be treated. This information will be included in the letter informing them of the visit and will be discussed at the visit.

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The information we collect will be stored, maintained on our CRM system and processed in accordance with data protection legislation and Salix Homes Information and Confidentiality Policy.

### Inclusion and accessibility

Salix Homes will ensure support is available to vulnerable customers or customers who may have difficulties understanding information through internal support mechanisms or the use of external agencies and/or support workers; this includes the use of British sign language, alternative formats and alternative languages where necessary.