

Housing Repairs and Property Services

Compliance Policy

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1 Introduction

Reading Borough Council, as a responsible landlord, is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of tenants by maintaining safe housing environments. This combined Compliance Policy integrates requirements for the key six statutory disciplines namely:

- 1) Gas Safety
- 2) Electrical Safety
- 3) Water Hygiene
- 4) Passenger Lifts and Stairlifts Safety
- 5) Fire Safety
- 6) Asbestos Management

This policy serves to ensure consistent standards across Housing in line with the following Key Statutory Legislations: (Full list of legislation is in Appendix A of this policy):

- 1) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- 2) Fire Safety Act 2023
- 3) Building Safety Act 2022.

2 Purpose

This Compliance Policy is designed to provide clear guidance for Council staff, tenants and other stakeholders of Reading Borough Council on how housing compliance is managed, in accordance with the requirements set by Reading Borough Council, the Regulator of Social Housing, and other relevant statutory bodies.

This policy complies with all applicable legal and regulatory standards. Reading Borough Council are committed to ensure that all properties are well-maintained, safe, and in proper condition, while also promoting effective engagement and communication.

The policy outlines our statutory obligations as well as the roles and responsibilities of both the Council and its tenants.

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all compliance work is completed in a timely, effective, and transparent manner which results in safe, well-maintained properties and a positive experience for tenants.

The Council is committed to meeting the diverse needs of our tenants and adhere to

the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, as well as the Equality Act 2010, to ensure that all tenants receive a consistent level of service.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all properties managed by the Council, including statutory repairs, routine maintenance, urgent repairs, and planned improvements.

Where properties are managed on behalf of the Council by another company (for example a Private Finance Initiative), this policy will apply unless alternative repair and maintenance responsibilities are outlined in a separate management agreement.

4 Responsibilities

This section outlines the responsibilities of the Council and tenants. This list is not exhaustive, and tenants should refer to the tenancy agreement for the full list of responsibilities.

Reading Borough Council's responsibilities include the following:

- Inform tenants of all legislations that relate to your property
- Conduct statutory inspections within required timescales
- Maintain all applicable inspection and servicing records securely.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant regulations and legislation regarding Health and Safety, Fire Safety, property compliance and building safety.
- Provide clear communication and support for tenants, contractors and staff.
- Ensure statutory inspections are completed within health and safety guidelines.

Tenants' responsibilities include the following:

- Allow access for inspections and servicing of the property.
- Maintain the property to a good standard.
- Report faults promptly to allow us to take appropriate action in good time
- Follow safety guidance provided by the Council.
- Do not undertake any modification to the property without prior consent.
- Do not store any items on the balcony or loft
- Ensure all additional works to the property have been approved by the Council to allow for adequate health and safety, and compliance, to be considered.

- Do not block any emergency access and escape routes within the home or communal areas.
- Do not store flammable or dangerous items in the property.

5 Asbestos

Asbestos Risk Assessment and Surveying

Reading Borough Council will carry out a comprehensive asbestos survey for all its buildings that fall under the “duty to manage” (CAR 2012 Reg. 4) to identify any Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM’s). Surveys will be conducted as follows:

- **Management Survey:** A non-intrusive survey to identify potential ACMs in areas that are likely to be disturbed during normal activities.
- **Refurbishment/Demolition Survey (R&D):** A more invasive survey carried out when planning refurbishment or demolition works to ensure all asbestos is identified before disturbing the fabric of the building.

The results of the surveys are used to create and maintain an **Asbestos Register**, which details the locations, condition, and risk assessments of all identified ACM’s. This register will be kept up to date and accessible to all relevant staff and contractors prior to commencement of any works.

Managing Asbestos Risks

Risk Assessment:

- A risk assessment will be conducted for all identified ACMs. The assessment will consider the type, condition, location, and accessibility of the asbestos, as well as the likelihood of disturbance.
- Based on the risk assessment, a decision will be made on whether to manage the asbestos in place (if it is in good condition and unlikely to be disturbed) or remove it.

Asbestos Management Plan:

- An asbestos management plan will be developed for any property where ACMs are present. This plan will outline how the asbestos will be managed and what actions will be taken to ensure safety.

- The management plan will include regular inspections of known ACMs to check for deterioration, as well as procedures for dealing with any identified issues.

Removal of Asbestos:

- Asbestos removal will be carried out only by licensed asbestos removal contractors, in line with the **Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012**.
- Tenants will be informed in advance if asbestos removal work is necessary and will be provided with details of the work to be done and any precautions they need to take.
- Work will be carried out with the minimum disruption to tenants as far as reasonably practicable, and appropriate safety measures, including air monitoring, will be implemented to ensure that no asbestos fibres are released.

Emergency Procedures

If ACMs are disturbed accidentally, we will implement emergency procedures, including:

- Evacuating the affected area if necessary.
- Notifying the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and following all legal requirements.
- Engaging a licensed asbestos removal contractor to safely handle and remove the asbestos.
- Communicating with tenants to provide guidance on any actions they need to take.

Communication with Tenants

The safety and well-being of our tenants is a top priority. The Council will ensure tenants are:

- **Informed:** Tenants will be made aware of the locations of ACMs in their homes, if applicable, and advised not to disturb them.
- **Supported:** Tenants will be provided with guidance and support, particularly if asbestos removal or disturbance is necessary.

- **Consulted:** Tenants will be informed of any planned work involving asbestos and will be given the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.

6 Water safety

Legionella Risk Assessment and Control Measures

Risk Assessment:

Reading Borough Council will carry out a Legionella risk assessment to all blocks of flats that share a communal cold and wholesome water supply systems. The assessment will:

- Identify potential sources of Legionella bacteria growth in water systems such as communal or property water tanks, pipe work infrastructure condition, pipe work dead legs, low usage outlets and shower heads.
- Evaluate the likelihood of Legionella growth, considering factors like temperature, water stagnation, and system design.
- Identify individuals who may be at risk to enable Reading Borough Council to put control measures in place.
- Provide clear recommendations on control measures to prevent Legionella contamination and protect tenants.

The risk assessment will be reviewed every two years for properties with communal water tanks and 5 years for properties with no communal water tanks but a shared communal water supply system.

Control Measures:

Based on the risk assessment, appropriate control measures will be put in place, including:

- **Temperature Control:** Ensuring that water temperatures are maintained outside the Legionella growth range (above 60°C for hot water systems and below 20°C for cold water systems).
- **Water Tank Maintenance:** Cleaning and disinfecting water tanks regularly to prevent the buildup of bacteria and other contaminants.
- **Flushing:** Ensuring that infrequently used water outlets, such as taps or showers, are regularly flushed to prevent water stagnation.

- **System Modifications:** Making any necessary modifications to the water system to ensure no water stagnation and the infrastructure pipework is operating safely and efficiently.

Monitoring and Testing:

Regular monitoring and testing of water systems will be carried out to ensure the effectiveness of control measures. This includes:

- Routine testing of water temperatures at key points in the water system.
- Periodic water sample collections and testing to detect the presence of Legionella bacteria, particularly in high-risk areas.
- Regular inspection of water tanks and pipes for any signs of stagnation, contamination or maintenance issues.

Specific Risk Assessment and Control of water hygiene for Domestic General Housing Stock

Reading Borough Council will carry out a review of the domestic general street houses and bungalows that may have water tanks and assess the risks accordingly. The water systems within these properties fall into the following 4 categories:

1. Domestic systems with gas central heating and stored hot or cold water tanks
2. Domestic systems with gas central heating combination boilers with instantaneous hot water and no storage tanks
3. Electrically heated hot water systems with both hot or cold water storage tanks (including cylinders)
4. Electric point of use water heaters

Simple control measures, which can prevent the growth of legionella bacteria include;

- Inspection of water tanks during void stage to identify possible stagnation
- Ensuring water storage tanks are correctly installed including good fitting water tank lids so no debris can enter the tank and all pipe work both hot and cold is suitably lagged
- Flushing out water systems before re-letting our properties
- Inspecting and installing new shower heads during the property void stage.

- Set the temperature of the hot water so it achieves 60 degrees centigrade once in a 24-hour period
- Making sure any redundant pipework/dead legs (a length of water pipework leading to a fitting through which water only passes infrequently) are removed
- Advising tenants to clean shower heads and hoses regularly and to flush all outlets after longer periods of little or no use – such as holidays

Void Properties

The risk of legionella may increase when a property is unoccupied, and the water system is not used for a period of more than 2 weeks which may cause the water to stagnate.

A void property offers us the opportunity to survey the water system and correct any faults that may encourage legionella bacteria.

Reading Borough Council has measures in place to mitigate the risks in void properties.

Cold water systems safety Management

Where premises share predominantly stored cold water supplies, such as blocks of flats, the Council will engage a suitable water hygiene contractor to undertake the works, as identified in the risk assessment's written scheme of control.

These include:

- 6 monthly communal tank inspections
- Annual tank cleaning and or system disinfections
- Regular sampling on communal tanks if required in the risk assessment.

The water hygiene contractor will carry out surveys as necessary to establish whether these shared facilities are in full use. If recommended, Reading Borough Council will organise works to remove storage water tanks and convert to mains feed water supply where there is no further need for the storage water tanks.

Sheltered Housing premises water systems

Where there are communal heating and hot water systems in sheltered housing accommodation, these are locally managed separately by the sheltered Housing Team under their Legionella Control procedure.

Where premises share predominantly stored cold water supplies, such as blocks of flats, the Council will engage a suitable contractor to undertake the works, as identified in the risk assessment's written scheme of control.

These include:

- 6 monthly communal tank inspections
- Annual tank cleaning and or system disinfections
- Weekly temperature checks on water outlets furthest from the hot water plant room.
- Regular sampling on communal tanks if required in the risk assessment.

Incident Management and Response

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case of Legionnaires' disease, Reading Borough Council will take the following actions:

- **Notification:** The Council will promptly notify the relevant authorities, including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and cooperate fully with any external investigations.
- **Immediate Action:** Any affected water systems will be isolated, cleaned, and disinfected immediately to prevent further contamination.
- **Risk Review:** The risk assessment will be reviewed and updated, and additional control measures will be implemented as necessary to prevent further incidents.
- **Tenant Support:** Affected tenants will be provided with health advice and relocation assistance if required.

Training and Awareness

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that its staff, contractors, and tenants are fully informed about Legionella risks and control measures. Our approach for this is:

- **Staff Training:** All relevant staff and contractors will receive training on the risks of Legionella, how to maintain water systems, and how to respond to potential issues.

- **Tenant Information:** Tenants will be provided with clear and accessible information on how to reduce the risk of Legionella during the start of a new tenancy agreement, including the importance of reporting concerns and maintaining water systems. Reading Borough Council will also provide this information to existing tenants through the Housing Compliance Team. This information will also be available on the Council's website.

Communication with Tenants

The safety and well-being of tenants are a priority for Reading Borough Council. To ensure clear communication with tenants:

- **Information and Guidance:** Tenants will receive regular information on Legionella risks, how to spot potential issues, and how to report them to the Council by the Housing Compliance Team. This information will also be available on the Council's website.
- **Updates on Maintenance:** The Council will notify tenants in advance of any planned maintenance, testing, or repairs to water systems.
- **Ongoing Support:** Tenants will have access to support and advice if they have concerns about Legionella or water system maintenance.

7 Fire safety

Fire Risk Assessments and Mitigation Measures

- **Fire Risk Assessments:** These are conducted in line with fire safety statutory requirements in all our residential buildings with the flat entrance door opening into a communal area. The council works closely with the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) to ensure that risk assessments are suitable and sufficient. The frequency at which a Risk Assessment is carried out, is determined based on risk. The frequency can be changed based on the assessment outcomes.
- **Fire Safety Measures in High-Rise Buildings:** These are buildings over 7 floors or 18 metres. The council has implemented several key fire safety measures, including weekly inspection of communal fire doors, sprinkler systems control panels, fire staircase escape routes, passenger lift inspections, bins collection three times a week and external area housekeeping.

- **Tenant Engagement:** Regular fire safety communication with tenants in High rise buildings that include information of their front doors ensures they understand their role and responsibilities in maintaining fire safety.

Monitoring and Review

The Council will continuously review Fire Safety Risk arrangements to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and reflects the latest fire safety standards and Industry best practices. The Council will continuously assess fire risks and review the effectiveness of implemented measures. Any changes to fire safety procedures or the introduction of new technology or regulations will be incorporated into the policy.

Fire Safety Measures

Reading Borough Council will ensure:

- Fire safety systems are monitored and maintained, including fire detection and warning systems, emergency lighting, fire resisting doors, fire suppression systems in line with British Standards, published government guidance, and best practice.
- Compartmentation will be maintained and, where possible, inspected regularly to ensure it remains intact. If for any reason there is suspicion the compartmentation has been compromised, we will take appropriate action to identify any breaches and take appropriate remedial action.
- All communal areas are maintained as sterile, in accordance with published government guidance, to ensure they always remain clear and accessible by operating a zero-tolerance policy.
- Evacuations strategies are established according to the known building construction and actual occupancy. These strategies will be automatically reviewed following a near-miss, actual fire event, or if any information suggests the viability of the strategy.
- Fire Risk Assessments are carried out according to the identified risk within each building. Known higher risk buildings of over 18 metres and those where vulnerable people are housed, are carried out annually. General needs buildings are generally carried out every three years.
- As part of the fire risk assessment, the assessor will consider the current time schedule and make a recommendation if that is satisfactory and should be maintained or changed, based on the risks identified. The council will also

monitor the building for any changes in risk and react with additional FRA's or decrease the time between subsequent FRA's.

8 Gas Safety

Access to Properties

As part of the annual gas safety check, tenants must allow access to their property. If access is not granted for the safety check, we will take appropriate action to ensure the check is carried out. This may include:

- Sending three reminder letters and phone calls to schedule the appointment.
- Requesting Housing Officer visits to schedule appointments
- Enforce the tenancy agreements in place to enter the property to complete the safety checks, in conjunction with the tenants Housing Officer
- Any costs reasonably incurred as a result of enforced access may be recharged to the tenant in line with tenancy conditions set out in the Tenancy Agreement and Rechargeable Repairs Policy.

Gas Emergencies

In the event of a gas emergency, tenants must follow the instructions provided by Reading Borough Council, including:

- Immediately call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.
- Turn off the gas supply at the meter if it is safe to do so.
- Extinguish naked flames.
- Avoid operating electrical switches or appliances.
- Open doors and windows to ventilate the property.
- Evacuate the premises if necessary and not re-enter until declared safe.
- Contact the council's emergency number for a gas engineer to attend.

Reading Borough Council will operate a 24-hour emergency response service for gas-related incidents and will ensure that appropriately qualified Gas Safe registered engineers attend within emergency response timescales.

All gas emergencies will be recorded and investigated where necessary.

Service Delivery

Reading Borough Council will ensure that gas safety checks and servicing are carried out by qualified Gas Safe registered engineers who are experienced in working with gas installations. We will ensure that:

- Only approved contractors or in-house qualified operatives will carry out gas inspections, servicing, and repairs. All staff who work on gas appliances or systems, will have qualification checks carried out to ensure that they are Gas Safe Registered to enable them to work on Gas Appliances. This includes Council staff and all contractors allocated work related to gas systems.
- Gas safety checks are completed within 12 months of the previous check in compliance with Regulation 36.
- A copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Certificate is provided to tenants within 28 days of the inspection.
- Gas appliances and installations are maintained in line with legal requirements, safety standards, and industry best practices.
- Detailed records of all gas safety checks and servicing are maintained and are available for review upon request by tenants or regulatory authorities.
- Gas Safety Checks on communal heating systems, will be displayed in communal areas of buildings where appropriate.
- New tenants receive a copy of the current Gas Safety Record before occupying the property.

Where an appliance is classified as Immediately Dangerous (ID) or At Risk (AR), action will be taken in accordance with the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure (GIUSP). This may include immediate disconnection to ensure safety.

Gas appliances, pipework, and flues will be maintained in accordance with:

- Manufacturer instructions
- Current Gas Safe guidance

- Industry standards and codes of practice

Record Keeping and Documentation

Reading Borough Council will maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all gas safety checks, servicing, and repairs. These records include:

- Gas Safety Certificates
- Warning Notices
- Repairs records
- Installation records
- Records of access attempts and enforcement action

These records will be made available to tenants upon request and will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation.

9 Electrical Safety

Electrical Inspection and Testing

Frequency of Inspections

- Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) will be carried out on all properties at a minimum of every five years unless specified otherwise by the EICR (we reserve the right to challenge if deemed necessary). This condition check will ensure that electrical installations are safe and compliant with the relevant standards.
- Routine checks will be conducted as needed or in response to reported faults or tenant concerns.
- Portable appliance testing (PAT) will be carried out on any portable electrical appliances provided by Reading Borough Council to ensure they are safe for use (this predominantly relates to RBC sheltered sites and is carried out by a third party contractor).

Electrical Repairs and Maintenance

- **Reactive Repairs:** In the event of an electrical fault or issue, Reading Borough Council will ensure that it is dealt with promptly to minimise risks to tenant safety and the property. Emergency repairs will be carried out in line with the Council's Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

- **Preventative Maintenance:** Regular maintenance will be carried out to ensure electrical systems continue to function properly. This includes ensuring that systems are up to date and compliant with any new safety regulations.
- **Upgrades and Replacements:** Where it is Identified that an electrical system does not meet current safety standards or are nearing the end of their useful life, Reading Borough Council will carry out necessary upgrades or replacements.

Reporting and Communication

- **Tenant Communication:** tenants will be informed about the scheduled electrical inspections and provided with information about how to report any electrical concerns.
- **Record Keeping:** Reading Borough Council will maintain accurate records of all electrical inspections, testing, repairs, and maintenance activities for each property.
- **Emergency Response:** tenants will be provided with contact information to report electrical emergencies, and we will respond in line with emergency repair procedures however, if the emergency is a significant risk to life and the emergency services are required, tenants should not hesitate to call 999.

Record Keeping and Documentation

Reading Borough Council will maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all Electrical safety checks, servicing, and repairs. These records will include:

- EICR – Electrical Installation Condition report for each property
- EIC – Electrical Installation Certificates for any new electrical circuits
- Electrical Minor Works certificate(s) for small electrical works and component changes
- Repairs records

These records can be made available to tenants upon request and will be retained in accordance with data protection legislation.

10 Building Safety Management

Reading Borough Council will implement a robust building safety management system including:

- Safety Case Reports and Tenant Engagement strategies for each higher-risk building.
- Use of digital record systems to maintain the golden thread.
- A reporting culture that encourages staff, contractors and tenants to raise safety issues without fear of blame.

Communication with Tenants

Tenants will be provided with building-specific safety information, including:

1. Evacuation procedures
2. Information on the design and systems that operate in the building to help keep them safe
2. Safety contact details
3. Works and inspections schedule
4. The role they play to keep the building safe.

Updates will be shared through letters, noticeboards, tenant meetings, and the Council's website or digital platforms. Tenants will be invited to shape safety plans and participate in regular safety reviews.

Training and Culture

The Council will:

- Ensure all relevant staff receive training on the Building Safety Act, fire risk awareness, and emergency procedures.
- Promote a safety-first culture among all contractors and service providers.
- Regularly review and refresh training as legislation or policy evolves.

Performance Monitoring and Review

Building safety will be monitored through:

- Annual building safety audits completed by the Housing Compliance team and relevant authorities such as the fire and rescue service.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) reporting (e.g., Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) compliance, tenant complaints, completion of actions)
- Tenant feedback and satisfaction surveys

- Oversight from Housing leadership and scrutiny committees

This policy will be reviewed every year, or sooner if legislation or internal processes change.

11 Lift Servicing and Maintenance

Inspection and Maintenance

Planned Maintenance

All passenger/platform lifts will be serviced monthly or as per the manufacturer's guidance and lift risk profile.

Maintenance includes checking mechanical parts, control systems, alarm/emergency equipment, and overall operation.

Lift Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) Inspections

All lifts carrying people will be inspected every 6 months by an independent, qualified engineer (not carried out by the maintenance contractor).

LOLER certificates and findings will be logged and any defects addressed promptly according to their legislated categories

Emergency Repairs and Response

A 24/7 emergency call-out service is in place for trapped passengers and critical failures.

The contractor response times are:

- Entrapment: within 1 hour
- Safety-critical faults: within 4 hours
- Non-urgent repairs: within 24–48 hours

Communication with Tenants

Written notice of planned lift maintenance will be given to tenants at least 48 hours in advance, except in emergencies. Signs will be added in communal areas where applicable.

In the event of a breakdown, updates will be displayed in communal areas and via the Council's online channels.

Vulnerable tenants will be offered temporary support or alternative arrangements during prolonged outages (over 24 hours).

Tenants can report lift issues via the Council's Customer Fulfilment Centre.

Monitoring and Performance for Lifts

The Council will monitor lift maintenance performance through:

- Monthly KPIs (e.g downtime, response times, entrapments).
- Monthly contract review meetings. (subject to performance)
- Annual audits of compliance with LOLER and service schedules.
- Tenant feedback and satisfaction surveys. (We encourage all tenants to take these up when contacted for feedback as this will enable us to make informed service improvements to the benefit of tenants)

13 Performance Monitoring

A robust performance monitoring framework helps ensure that our repairs and maintenance services are effective, transparent, and focused on continuous improvement. This includes monitoring service standards, customer feedback, compliance, and contractor performance. Key features of our approach include:

- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** monitoring performance across areas such as response times, customer satisfaction, completion rates, and compliance.
- **Monthly and Quarterly Reviews:** Service areas and contractors are subject to formal reviews, with escalation pathways for underperformance.
- **Periodic Reporting:** Progress against the strategy and regulatory compliance is reported to elected members every 3 months to the Housing, Neighbourhood, Leisure (HNL) Committee and every 3 months to the Cross-Party Working Group. The HNL reports are published for public scrutiny.
- **Benchmarking:** Performance is compared with peer local authorities and housing associations through sector bodies such as Housemark.

14 Governance and Performance Monitoring

To ensure accountability, transparency, and delivery of strategic objectives, Reading Borough Council has a clear governance structure for asset management. This includes:

- **Elected Members:** Set political direction and approve key investment decisions, budgets, and strategic updates.
- **Director for Housing Landlord Services:** Holds overall accountability for housing services, including compliance and capital programme delivery.
- **Housing Repairs and Property Services Team:** Oversee day-to-day planning, procurement, and contract management aligned with strategic priorities.
- **Strategic Housing Board:** A cross-departmental body responsible for overseeing performance and risk across repairs, safety, and investment.
- **Tenant Engagement and Scrutiny Panels:** Provide tenant input into decisions about capital works, service delivery, and prioritisation.

14 Equality and Accessibility

Reading Borough Council recognises the critical role of lifts for older and disabled tenants. Where lifts are out of order:

- Alternative arrangements (e.g. home visits, assisted services) will be considered.
- Communication will be provided in accessible formats upon request.

15 Monitoring and Review

The combined compliance policy will be reviewed every 2 years or sooner if legislation changes. Monthly KPIs, annual audits, and tenant feedback will be used to monitor compliance.

16 Communication

Tenants will receive advance notice of planned maintenance, updates during outages or emergencies, and accessible formats are available upon request. Signage will also be used to inform tenants.

Effective communication is essential to managing tenancy breaches and maintaining good relationships between tenants and Reading Borough Council as the landlord.

Reading Borough Council commits to:

- **Clear Information:** Providing tenants with accessible information about their responsibilities under the tenancy agreement, and how to report concerns.
- **Responsive Contact:** Acknowledging complaints regarding tenancy breaches promptly and keeping complainants informed of the progress and outcomes of investigations.
- **Neutral and Respectful Dialogue:** Ensuring all communications with tenants are handled impartially, respectfully, and confidentially.
- **Engagement:** Encouraging open dialogue and, where appropriate, facilitating mediation between parties to resolve any disputes amicably.
- **Staff Communication:** Ensuring all staff involved in tenancy management are kept informed of procedures and updates to policy.
- **Multi-Agency Coordination:** Communicating effectively with internal and external agencies such as Environmental Health, the police, and social services when their involvement is required.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Providing tenants with opportunities to influence and give feedback on how their tenancies are managed to support continuous service improvement.

This policy is accessible to all tenants including lessee's, as well as Reading Borough Council (RBC) staff, and stakeholders via the Reading Borough Council website and will be updated to reflect any changes. [Accessible Information and Communications Policy - Reading Borough Council](#)

Internally, this policy will be available to all staff and stored on the Reading Borough Council SharePoint site for easy access.

17 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring equal and fair access to our services by considering the individual needs of our tenants, their families, and other members of their household. Whilst working with tenants we will consider these needs and make reasonable adjustments where necessary. We will always treat people with fairness, dignity, and respect.

This policy will be implemented in a way that:

- **Treats all tenants fairly and without discrimination** on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy

and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

- **Recognises and respects the diverse needs** of tenants, ensuring communication and support are accessible to everyone, including those with language barriers, disabilities, or other vulnerabilities.
- **Ensures reasonable adjustments** are made to accommodate tenants with specific needs or disabilities in relation to tenancy breach investigations and interventions.
- **Provides equal access** to complaint reporting mechanisms and support services for all tenants.
- **Promotes cultural awareness and sensitivity** among housing management staff to support positive and respectful interactions.
- **Monitors and reviews** the policy's impact on different tenant groups to ensure it does not disproportionately affect any particular community.

All our staff are regularly trained in Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion to help them understand when and where we may need to adapt our standard policies, procedures, and working practices to accommodate the unique needs of our residents.

Our policies sets out how we seek to meet the specific needs of vulnerable residents, ensuring they receive the appropriate support and adjustments that they need to sustain their tenancies.

18 Reasonable Adjustments

Reading Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all tenants, including those with disabilities or specific needs, can fully access and benefit from this policy.

To achieve this, we will:

- **Identify and respond to individual needs** by offering reasonable adjustments in communication, investigation, and resolution of tenancy breaches.
- **Provide information in accessible formats** such as Braille, audio, or translated versions, depending on tenant requirements.
- **Offer alternative methods of communication**, including email, text message, or face-to-face meetings, to suit the preferences and needs of tenants.
- **Adjust appointment times or locations** to accommodate tenants with mobility, health, or caregiving needs.

- **Work closely with support workers, advocates, or family members** where tenants require this assistance to facilitate a move.
- Ensure appropriate sensitivity and tailored support when dealing with tenants with **health conditions or disabilities**.
- **Train staff** to recognise and respond appropriately to requests for reasonable adjustments in relation to tenancy management issues.

19. Complaints

Reading Borough Council is committed to handling complaints fairly, promptly, and effectively. We use complaints, comments, and compliments, to help us review and improve our services. If a tenant has a complaint about any policy or procedure this can be raised through the Council's Complaints Procedure. Further information, including how to make a complaint, is available via the Council's webpages [Housing complaints procedure - Reading Borough Council](#).

If there are specific concerns about safety in a high-rise building (a building 7 storeys or at least 18 metres high) then tenants can also contact the Building Safety Regulator on 0300 7906787 or fill out a form on their website 'Complain about a building safety risk in a high-rise building' - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

20 Implementation and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or when there are changes to best practice or statutory requirements, to ensure the policy achieves its objectives and continuously improve services and performance.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Repairs and Property Services to ensure that implementation of the Compliance is monitored. All staff involved in compliance have the responsibility to read, understand and implement this policy.

Appendix A – Principal Legislation & Standards (consolidated)

- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**
- **Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012**
- **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)**
- **HSE Approved Code of Practice L8 & HSG274 (Legionella control)**
- **Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998** (as amended, incl. 2018)
- **Building Regulations 2010** (e.g., Part J – Combustion; Part P – Electrical)
- **The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989**
- **Wiring Regulations BS 7671 (current edition)**
- **Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 and GS38 Guidance Note**
- **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005** and relevant fire safety regulations/guidance (including external wall/fire doors/evacuation)
- **Building Safety Act 2022 (as amended)** and associated regulations
- **Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998**
- **Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998**
- **British Standards** (e.g., BS EN 81 series; BS 7255 for working safely on lifts)
- **NICEIC Codes of Practice and guidance** (where applicable)
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Consumer Protection Act 1987**
- **National/regional Fire & Rescue Service guidance (RBFRS) and building specific requirements**
- **Gas Safe Register** (competency/registration requirements)
- **LEIA guidance** (Lift & Escalator Industry Association)

Appendix B – Minimum Service Standards (summary)

- **Gas Safety:** Annual LGSR (Landlord Gas Safety Record) for all properties with gas; immediate response to gas emergencies; Gas Safe only.
- **Electrical:** EICR ≤5 years (or per last EICR); PAT where the Council supplies appliances.
- **Fire Safety:** Risk based FRA programme; action plans tracked to closure; routine testing/maintenance of doors, alarms, detection and suppression; clear communal areas; agreed and communicated evacuation plans.
- **Asbestos:** Management surveys; R&D surveys pre-works; up to date register; licensed removal where required; emergency procedures; tenant information.
- **Water Hygiene:** Risk assessments (≤2 years); temperature control and flushing regimes; void controls; communal schemes per written scheme of control; incident notification and remediation.
- **Lifts:** Monthly (or risk based) servicing; 6monthly LOLER; 24/7 emergency response; KPIs, audits and tenant communication.

Appendix C – Records and Retention

- LGSRs, EICRs, FRAs, Asbestos Registers/Plans, LOLER TE reports, Legionella records: retain per statutory minimums and the Council's Records Retention Schedule; ensure secure storage and availability for audit/regulator inspection.