

STOKE-ON-TRENT REGISTERED PROVIDER CHARTER



Context

The city is served by a broad range of organisations who provide and enable social rented homes for local residents in housing need, with those registered with the Regulator of Social Housing known as 'registered providers'.

Some c.27,000 social rented homes are managed in the City of Stoke-on-Trent through nearly 40 registered provider landlords, including c17,000 properties through the council in its role as landlord, enabler and place shaper.

The Regulator of Social Housing sets out how these providers must operate and be regulated, through 'consumer standards', including an expectation that landlords should collaborate to enable the provision of safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods where tenants feel secure in their homes.

This Registered Provider Charter therefore aims to reinforce the roles that registered providers play in promoting environmental, social and economic wellbeing; delivering a quality of service to all social housing tenants in the city that matches the expectations of Government and the city council's Housing Strategy.

Councillor Chris Robinson
cabinet member for housing and planning



Our Vision

That all Registered Providers who manage homes within Stoke-on-Trent work together to ensure that tenants live in a safe, secure and well-maintained home and to make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods and communities.

Our Values

Every Registered Provider signing up to this charter agrees that every tenant and leaseholder should have a right to:

- A safe, secure and well-maintained home that is kept free from damp and mould.
- Receive a good standard of customer service that is accessible, responsive, personalised, professional and effective.
- A voice and involvement in determining the solutions to their own issues, and the opportunity to shape services.
- Influence services through awareness of how to provide feedback, and receive a fair and timely response to complaints.
- Be listened to, treated with respect, feel that their experience is valued and not be stigmatised through being a social housing tenant, nurturing a relationship of equals.
- Have access to information, advice and services in an accessible format and, where appropriate, through a knowledge-sharing and partnership approach.
- Access early intervention that seeks to maximise tenants' income and prevent the escalation of arrears.
- Early intervention and ongoing support for those affected by hate crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.
- Eviction only being considered as a last resort where all other alternatives have failed.
- Continuous support and readily available advice to help sustain their tenancy and to promote tenant wellbeing.
- Fair and transparent allocation policies that take tenants' needs into account, with nominations to assist the city to fulfil their housing need duties and make best use of homes in the city.
- Access shared community spaces across the registered provider partnership.

Our Pledges

In supporting this new Registered Provider Charter, we commit to:

Your Housing Group

- To work in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent council as we continue to provide quality extra care accommodation, maintain our three PFI extra care schemes to a high standard.
- Deliver excellent customer service through cross collaboration and participation in working groups, provider forums
- Take part in any learning/training opportunities to benefit YHG customers and the wider community.
- Deliver events and social activities on schemes to reduce isolation and promote positive health outcomes for residents



Action

We call on all Registered Providers of Social Housing in Stoke-on-Trent to sign this charter and make a pledge setting out what you will do to help achieve our vision.

Our Pledges Continued...

Clarion

- Provide you with 24/7 on line access to report repairs and request other services
- Reply to your emails and online enquiries to our central contact centre within 5 working days on average
- Publicise ways to make a complaint if things go wrong and what to do if you're unhappy about the outcome of your complaint
- Resolve your complaint within 15 working days on average
- Retain and publicise our contact centre phone number for those who prefer to contact us this way
- Update you at least every 15 working days for enquiries that remain open
- Use your feedback to improve our services
- Be clear and transparent about your service charges



Honeycomb Group:

Julie Guildford-Smith, chief executive at Honeycomb Group, said: "We are committed to supporting the Charter and want to take it forward. We want to share good practice and make sure that the customer is at the heart of everything that we're doing while providing consistent services across the city."



Safe, secure, and well-maintained homes

Every tenant shall have access to a great quality affordable home, that is economical to run, free from damp and mould, safe and a place they can feel proud of.



Great customer service

We vow to provide a high standard of customer service that is accessible, responsive, personalised, professional, and effective, ensuring that every tenant feels they are treated fairly and with respect.



Tenant voice and involvement

Tenants shall have a voice and active involvement in determining solutions to their own issues, shaping services, and participating in decision-making processes.



Effective feedback mechanisms

We shall promote awareness of feedback channels and ensure that tenants receive fair and timely responses to complaints, fostering a culture of accountability and improvement.



Respect and dignity

Every tenant shall be treated with respect, dignity, and equality.



Access to information and support

Tenants shall have access to information, advice, and services in accessible formats, facilitated through knowledge-sharing and partnership approaches.



Early intervention and support

We are committed to providing early intervention to maximise tenants' income, prevent arrears escalation, and offer ongoing support to those affected by hate crime, anti-social behaviour, and domestic abuse.



Continuous support for tenancy sustainability

We pledge to offer continuous support and readily available advice to help sustain tenants' tenancies and promote their overall well-being. Eviction shall only be considered as a last resort after exhausting all other alternatives.



Fair and transparent allocation policies

Allocation policies shall be fair, transparent, and considerate of tenants' needs, with nominations aimed at fulfilling housing duties and optimising housing resources.



Access to community spaces

We aim to build partnerships to achieve our aim of creating and sustaining thriving, well-designed and connected communities that are well-managed and sustainable. As part of this we will ensure that our shared community spaces are available across the registered provider partnership, fostering a sense of community cohesion.



Epic Housing:

EPIC Housing CEO Tracey Johnson added: “We’ve been working with Stoke-on-Trent City Council on its Registered Provider’s Charter since the end of last year (2023) and we are delighted to be involved. We want to work together with other registered providers to make Stoke-on-Trent a better place for our tenants and the communities they live in.”

The core of our own strategic objectives match beautifully with the essence of the Charter:



Working alongside tenants, ensuring that their tenancy is sustainable, supported and enjoyable.



Ensuring that tenants’ homes are accessible, right size, safe and well maintained and there is clear and timely communication in place.



Making the most of our geography and place in the community for the benefit of all, driven by deep knowledge of every tenant, their community and partners.



Making the best use of technology available and be confident in the integrity of the data held to inform decision-making.



Developing our culture to enable a great employee experience and opportunities to fulfil everyone’s potential, for the benefit of the individual and our tenants.

Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society:

- Providing safe, secure, and well-maintained homes that comply with the decent homes standard and all regulatory health and safety requirements, including the Building Safety Act 2022.
- A zero-tolerance to damp and mould that complies with legal requirements (Awaab's Law) and uses our Home, Household and Hardship approach to identify causes and resolve the problem at its source.
- Continuing to provide professional customer service, that is local and accessible to our residents, evaluating its effectiveness through a range of measures including tenant satisfaction, quality checks and first contact resolution.
- Providing a wide range of meaningful tenant involvement opportunities and tenant-led activities to help influence and scrutinise our services, policies, and plans. Our approach is simple - listen, respect, value, and act. Social stigma will not be tolerated.
- A complaint handling process that operates in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Statutory Complaint Handling Code and dispute resolution principles, that learns from outcomes and feeds back to residents.
- Providing advice and information to residents about our services and others in a range of accessible formats, sharing knowledge and working with partners where appropriate.
- Our policy of early intervention to prevent rent arrears rising, encouraging tenants to pay their rent to prevent arrears. Our staff will be knowledgeable with access to quality advice and support in relation to income maximisation, benefits, and financial support. Eviction will be a last resort where other approaches have failed.
- Ensuring our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy and approach is in accordance with the legal and regulatory framework for tackling ASB and includes hate crime and domestic abuse. We will use early intervention tools to establish clear standards of behaviour and to reinforce the message that anti-social behaviour is not tolerated, whilst supporting victims to get the necessary support.
- Through our annual tenancy visit program and hardship fund, supporting our residents to live more sustainably, manage their household budgets, keep warm and well, and to tap into local assets.
- Providing residents with information on how to access shared community spaces operating in their local area.
- Ensuring everyone has fair and open access to our homes and that our tenant's needs are considered via our Allocation Policy. We will work with the Local Authority and other social landlords to identify and meet housing need in the Stoke-on-Trent area and to maximise and simplify access routes into our housing.

With thanks to registered providers Aspire Housing, Brighter Futures, EPIC Housing, Heylo Housing, Hildale Housing, Midland Heart, Places for People, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Stoke-on-Trent Housing Society, Teachers Housing Association, Your Housing Group, Honeycomb Group and Sanctuary Housing.

