

Housing

Ombudsman Service



**Spotlight
report**

Repairing Trust



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Introduction

Recently I met Sarah. After her home flooded, she asked the landlord for help, but the repairs are still not completed. Unclear when she can move back, Sarah lost personal belongings, and the landlord gave her the wrong insurance details. She told me it left her feeling unable to get up in the morning. Her job is complaint handling in a different sector. Sarah said she could not imagine speaking to the people she helps in the way she has been spoken to.

It reminded me of Alan who is seriously ill. He told a recent public meeting of his determination to get repairs completed so his wife is not left handling them once he is no longer around to chase the landlord. At one point an operative turned up in the middle of the night but only to get his tools for another job the next day. For both residents, the experience has fractured their relationship with their landlord.

Trust can be fragile

Repairs are the single biggest driver of complaints and determining factor of resident trust. This reflects how home is an emotional place, and a repair is more than a job.

For the millions of repairs done successfully each year, clear and consistent failings are apparent in our casework as maintenance becomes more complex and costly.

We investigated 474% more complaints about poor living conditions in the last budget year compared to when I started

as Ombudsman in 2019-20, with poor practice found in 72% of cases. This is despite almost £9 billion spent on repairs and maintenance in 2023-24.

Our report examines why

The report shows a significant risk to the government's vital housebuilding ambitions is the current unsustainable model for maintaining existing social homes.

We have seen some social landlords struggling to balance building and maintaining homes, undermining the unique benefit of their long-term stewardship.

Nor have policy expectations kept pace with living standards, with bathrooms and kitchens not requiring replacement for 30 or 20 years respectively – a statement absent of aspiration from the world's sixth wealthiest nation.

Without change we effectively risk the managed decline of one of the largest provisions of social housing in Europe, especially in areas of lowest affordability. To replace these homes would take more than 60 years at recent building rates.

It also risks the simmering anger at poor housing conditions becoming social disquiet.

Recent history shows this is neither fanciful nor alarmist – modern tenant activism has its roots in the 1960s, with concerns about the design and quality of new estates. The Cave Review, under the last Labour government, raised concern over resident dissatisfaction about repairs. The shock of Grenfell Tower and Awaab Ishak's death resonate still.

The human cost of systemic failures

The consequences of this system failure are uneconomical, inefficient, and ineffective. The human cost is greater, with long-term impacts on community cohesion, educational attainment, public health, and economic productivity.

Faced with this situation, on the ground our casework reveals some landlords adopting wholly inadequate coping mechanisms.

Crucially, this includes key repairs being deferred for major works that may be years away. We have seen a child's bedroom windows boarded up for 4 years rather than replaced or collapsed ceilings containing asbestos left unrepaired for 2 years, with a mother and her kids taping bin bags over the holes.

It has also led to landlords effectively rationing repairs services – whether implicit through missed appointments, delays, or endless inspections without works being raised – or explicit with one landlord's policy referring to doing some repairs when 'resources are available' and others reverting to emergencies only.

These systems pressures can also lead to behaviours which are irrational. Most concerning is the practice of closing repairs to fix a health hazard if an appointment is missed, even if the appointment was not pre-arranged, leaving the resident exposed to the hazard. Or providing residents with DIY kits to remove mould themselves.



What should change?

Our report proposes both service and system change.

For government, this includes reviewing a flawed national funding settlement for social landlords and empowering residents.

For landlords, it means modernising maintenance and repairs by moving to a predictive rather than reactive model, as well as strengthening local complaint handling, by addressing shortcomings which go beyond policies, processes, and systems to culture and attitudes towards maintenance.

Both the sector and government could unite around a single goal that no one lives in an unhealthy, hazardous home, especially children. And this goal can be achieved through maintenance, not moving households.

While policymakers' commitment to quality is clear, a modern maintenance model remains elusive. But finding one is pressing given a home that takes an average of 2 years to build creates a 60-year maintenance requirement.

Government considerations

We ask that government consider:

- introducing a sustainable financial settlement
- reviewing barriers to maintenance modernisation
- establishing a national resident body to increase accountability

Central is addressing a flawed funding settlement that has eroded capacity. An independent review of funding which balances fair rents with long-term certainty is essential to deliver a new,

more ambitious Decent Homes standard. This includes support for landlords to accelerate the refurbishment of estates instead of temporary fixes.

In return, further tests should be applied to landlords accessing government grant to build to ensure growth is sustainable against future maintenance costs. There could be a universal vacant home (or 'void') standard before relet as well addressing large multi-tenure blocks where challenges addressing building safety could extend to general repairs.

Government could also review other barriers to modernising maintenance, together with the opportunities for greater collaboration to improve services. There has been a move towards landlord merger or transfer of homes to produce more efficient, resilient services. But our casework suggests this is no 'quick win' for improved outcomes for residents, who also commonly say the landlord relationship can become more remote. Equally, skills, logistics, and high density can be challenges shared by many landlords and create 'hotspots' where repairs are difficult.

This review could also propose a maximum time for non-emergency repairs, given the present 'postcode lottery' which sees landlords proposing widely different timescales to undertake similar repairs that residents have little option but to accept.

And addressing the imbalance of power between tenant and landlord should come through a national, statutory body for resident representation, created to protect and advocate tenant interests.

This would encourage a consumer-choice dynamic which is absent from social housing, benefitting from more transparent information on performance on repairs and ability to challenge landlords to address

poor performance. It should set codes of conduct for operatives to avoid poor behaviour and stigma, while also ensuring residents are aware of their responsibilities.

However, the benefits of a more realistic funding settlement will not be realised without service transformation by landlords.

This starts with culture change

Some landlords have embraced this, with visionary leadership to encourage empathic, people-focused services. But we still experience landlords being defensive, deflecting from the reasons for repeated service failure or comparing poor performance favourably to the worst. This creates an impression of not caring when most housing professionals do, leaving residents feeling invisible.

Communication also reflects culture – and residents repeatedly tell us how they can find landlord communication dismissive, derogatory, or even stigmatising.

Landlords also need to be transparent about the scale of the challenge – the difference in the proportion of non-decent homes reported to the Regulator of Social Housing compared to the English Housing Survey is stark and landlords need to understand what the true picture is.

Our casework highlights how complexity can challenge landlords. But complexity can exist even where the repair is comparatively simple. This can be driven by the building and ownership, resident circumstances, volume, and type. Landlord operations can also exacerbate complexity or lack agility. Weaknesses in policy, identifying resident vulnerabilities, poor communication or inadequate knowledge, and information management reoccur. Complaints teams can be too passive rather than resolution-focused.

Brexit, rising costs of labour and materials, skills shortages, and the cost of living have compounded rather than caused these weaknesses.

Our report also focuses on a tripartite relationship which is central to repairing trust: between landlord and resident but also landlord and contractor. It is important not to lose sight of the strong shared interest between resident, operative, and landlord of each repair visit being successful.

Our recommendations for landlords include:

- cultural change, including clear and empathetic communication, and changing the mindset on 'no access'
- moving towards predictive rather than responsive repairs, including reviewing knowledge management, transparency on major works, and interrogating repeat visits
- promoting quality, including better management of contractor exists, embedding removing hazards into policies, and developing effective quality assurance

This will help landlords fulfil existing and new obligations under Awaab's Law and navigate wider challenges. These challenges include landlords referring to unacceptable resident behaviour and residents to unprofessional landlord

actions. Here the breakdown in trust can be so extreme as to result in eviction. And where a property is coming to the end of its life and the landlord considers the repair costs too high, landlords may not be transparent with the resident, clear about next steps, and how risks to the resident will be mitigated.

Embracing change

Learning from complaints means individual cases may not be isolated incidents so governing bodies should drive engagement with these recommendations. Some recommendations will appear practical. But it can be basic failings we see repeatedly, and that sit behind 1 in 4 repairs not being done on time.

The government's pending long-term housing plan is a welcome opportunity for change. We have seen shifts in health, for example, from response to prevention and alignment of incentives in aviation, where from passenger to pilot to provider there is a zero-tolerance approach to safety.

It is time to value the social housing we have today, as well as tomorrow.

Richard Blakeway
Housing Ombudsman



Summary of our findings

Repairs and maintenance within the housing sector faces many challenges. Millions can happen successfully, but some may become protracted. At the heart of these issues is trust, which is often missing between landlords, residents, and contractors.

Trust is the missing piece in the repairs and maintenance puzzle. This lack of trust shows in several ways, including the disconnect between policy and practice, the perception of a postcode lottery, and the misalignment of focus from procurement through to contract management. Issues such as incorrect recording of no access and poor-quality work further break down trust.

Our report highlights the need for significant changes to create a better working environment for both resident and landlord, treating a house as a home, rather than a property to be worked upon. For landlords and contractors, this can also include avoiding impersonal language such as 'stock' and 'decants' when speaking to residents.

1. A relationship of 3 parts: Landlords, residents, and contractors

Our research highlights the importance of trust between all parties involved – landlords, residents, and contractors. Each have unique perspectives yet there are common desires: respect, empathy, information, safety, and mutual trust. Given this alignment, it is vital issues which can drive tension in that relationship are identified and addressed: whether a failure to recognise the circumstances of the resident, inadequate

knowledge and information management, poor communication, or a breakdown in the landlord-contractor relationship.

2. Changes in perspectives can bring improvements

This report presents findings and recommendations to shift mindsets, policies, and practices to encourage mutual understanding and highlight current barriers, suggesting areas for improvement. We recognise many landlords and contractors work hard to provide timely, high-quality services within a challenging operating environment but also the right of residents to safe, warm, and decent homes, with their living environment, possessions, and time respected.

3. Building trust through effective communication and complaint handling

Landlords should assess the level of trust residents have in their repair and maintenance services. Recognising and addressing the factors that influence this trust is vital for improving service delivery and resident satisfaction. Respectful, clear, and accurate communication with residents is also crucial. In cases where trust is compromised, honest and open responses are necessary to repair the relationship. This report demonstrates how good complaint handling is vital and poor handling can severely damage trust. Analysing complaints can reveal early signs of trust breakdown, allowing for prompt corrective action.

4. Empowering staff and residents

Through our casework and call for evidence, we see how engagement and empowerment of landlord staff and repairs operatives is essential for delivering efficient services. Trust must flow both ways – landlords need to trust their teams and residents, who in turn must trust the landlord's ability to provide quality services. Frequent contact from residents may indicate a lack of trust in repair processes. Understanding this perspective can guide landlords in improving their services and communication strategies. Recognising the emotional significance of the 'home' for residents is equally important.

5. Strengthening contractor relationships

Trust also extends to the relationship between landlords and contractors/operatives, starting from procurement. Both parties need clear communication and stronger relationship management. This could include a range of approaches, with more in-person contact and informal discussions. Our research demonstrates that quality services must begin with clear expectations and post-work evaluations. Trust between landlords, residents, and operatives can help with access, speed up problem diagnosis, and make sure residents' vulnerabilities are considered when prioritising and carrying out repairs, minimising distress and inconvenience. Robust quality assurance practices may help evaluate performance and raise service standards.

6. Exiting contracts and comprehensive responses to complaints

Issues with contractor performance can sometimes see the arrangement terminated. It is possible this could have been prevented through a different approach to contract management. Moreover, the transition from one contractor to a different arrangement may not be smooth – this pain point can be reflected in complaints. Simply ending a contract in response to poor service is insufficient. New contracts must be accompanied by responsive and personalised complaint handling. Addressing the specific service issues experienced by residents is critical to maintaining and rebuilding trust. As is ensuring complaints arising because of contract performance issues are resolved and that the landlord 'owns' them – as it is the landlord is ultimately responsible.

7. Embedding the right values

Trust begins with organisational values and behaviours. These should translate into actions. During our investigation, we saw this reflected in both policy and practice. Aligning the values of leadership with those of front-line staff is crucial. Demonstrating the benefits of value-based policies and practices to staff and using respectful language with residents fosters a human-centric culture. Landlords play a crucial role in creating an environment where all residents, including those with additional needs or language barriers, feel empowered and are easily able to report repairs.

8. Combating the lack of control

Repairs and maintenance is an area where an imbalance of power between residents and their landlords can be starkly seen. When residents need a repair, they do not get to choose a tradesperson they trust to come into their home and carry out repair work. They are not in control of choosing the landlord's outsourced contractors. They do not get to decide the timeframe for the repairs, and they very often do not have the choice to spend more to get a better or longer-term solution.

Residents naturally have a vested interest in their home's quality and can offer invaluable feedback on its condition and the repair process. Incorporating this feedback into service development to build stronger relationships is crucial. This can include recognising when there is a need to make reasonable adjustments based on the circumstances of the household. Landlord services need to be agile enough to adapt to differing circumstances. When things go wrong, the feeling of a lack of control or of not being listened to can easily be experienced as dehumanising. Nothing will break a trusting relationship faster.

9. Opportunities and challenges: Awaab's Law

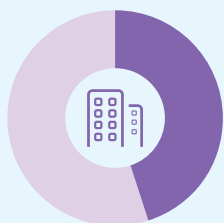
The introduction of Awaab's Law presents both challenges and opportunities for the sector to enhance service quality. Trust can be improved or rebuilt by building better relationships with residents as valued individuals and maintaining transparency and accountability. Effective planning, staffing, procurement practices, communication, and knowledge management are key enablers of this goal.

10. Changing the strategic operating environment

Issues with repairs and maintenance have been debated for decades. There have been long-standing concerns around resources and financing, processes and systems and resident empowerment. More recent challenges around Brexit, the 'cost of living' crisis and skills shortages have emerged. These are issues which need to be addressed on a national basis, with government playing a vital role in shaping the debate.

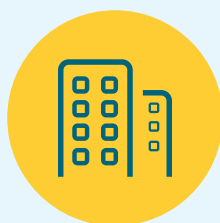


Data: The key drivers for dissatisfaction and complaints



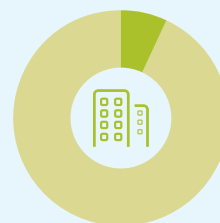
45%

of social homes built before 1964



431,142

number of non-decent social rented homes¹



7%

of social homes reported with damp and mould in 2023 compared to **4%** in 2019



English Housing Survey estimates

12.1%

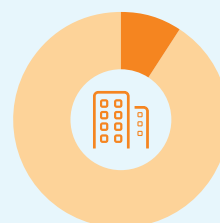
of council homes are non-decent compared to **9.1%** reported to the Regulator – **35%** more than reported to the Regulator



English Housing Survey estimates

1.5 million

children in England live in a non-decent home in 2023, **19%** of those live in social housing



English Housing Survey estimates

9.3%

of housing association homes are non-decent compared to **0.6%** reported to the Regulator in 2023/24 – **1,698%** more than reported to the Regulator²



3%

of housing association homes contain hazards compared to **0.2%** reported to the Regulator



1 million

children live with a serious hazard, **18%** of these live in social housing



£8.8 billion

spent on repairs and maintenance in 2023-24 – **60%** more than 2019

¹ 2023-24 English Housing Survey Annex Table 1.4: Non-decent homes, by tenure, 2006 to 2023

² The English Housing Survey contains estimates of non-decent stock for both local authority landlords (which overlaps with the LAHS figures) and housing associations (which overlaps with the SDR figures for PRPs). The local authority landlord and PRP landlord figures for non-decent homes are based on the number of properties that local authorities are directly aware of, which will vary depending on the number of stock condition surveys completed, and do not include cases where tenants have refused improvement work. In contrast, the EHS figures are based on a physical inspection of a random sample of the whole housing stock. Landlords may not be aware of properties identified by EHS surveyors as non-decent. Reported rates of non-decent homes have therefore been consistently lower in LAHS and the SDR than in the EHS.

Casework Data

Complaints analysis:



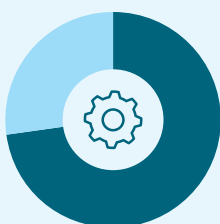
Repairs and maintenance
accounted for
45%
of complaints
in 2024-25



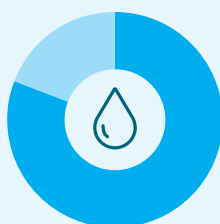
474%
increase in repairs
and maintenance
investigations between
2019-20 and 2024-25



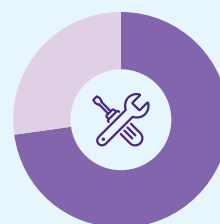
43%
of repairs and
maintenance cases
assessed as high risk
in 2024-25



73%
maladministration
in 2023-24 compared
to **37%** in 2019-20



81%
maladministration
involving leaks, damp, and
mould in 2024-25



73%
of severe maladministration
findings involved repairs and
maintenance in 2024-25



6,380
findings in 2024-25 on
repairs and maintenance,
an average of 25
every working day



12,063
orders to put things right
following investigation into
poor conditions in 2024-25,
plus 2,919 recommendations



2,418
apologies by the landlord to
resident for poor conditions
ordered in 2024-25



£3.4 million
in compensation orders
made relating to poor
conditions in 2024-25

Determinations on repairs and maintenance by region in 2024-25

Region	Count of cases with relevant categories determined 2024-25
East Midlands	200
East of England	399
London	2,182
North East	82
North West	331
Scotland	3
South East	574
South West	240
West Midlands	278
Yorkshire and The Humber	195
Total	4,484

Decisions broken down by landlord size

Landlord size	Count of cases with relevant categories determined 2024-25
Fewer than 100 units	29
Between 100 and 1,000 units	45
Between 1,000 and 10,000 units	727
Between 10,000 and 50,000 units	2,141
More than 50,000 units	1,542
Total	4,484

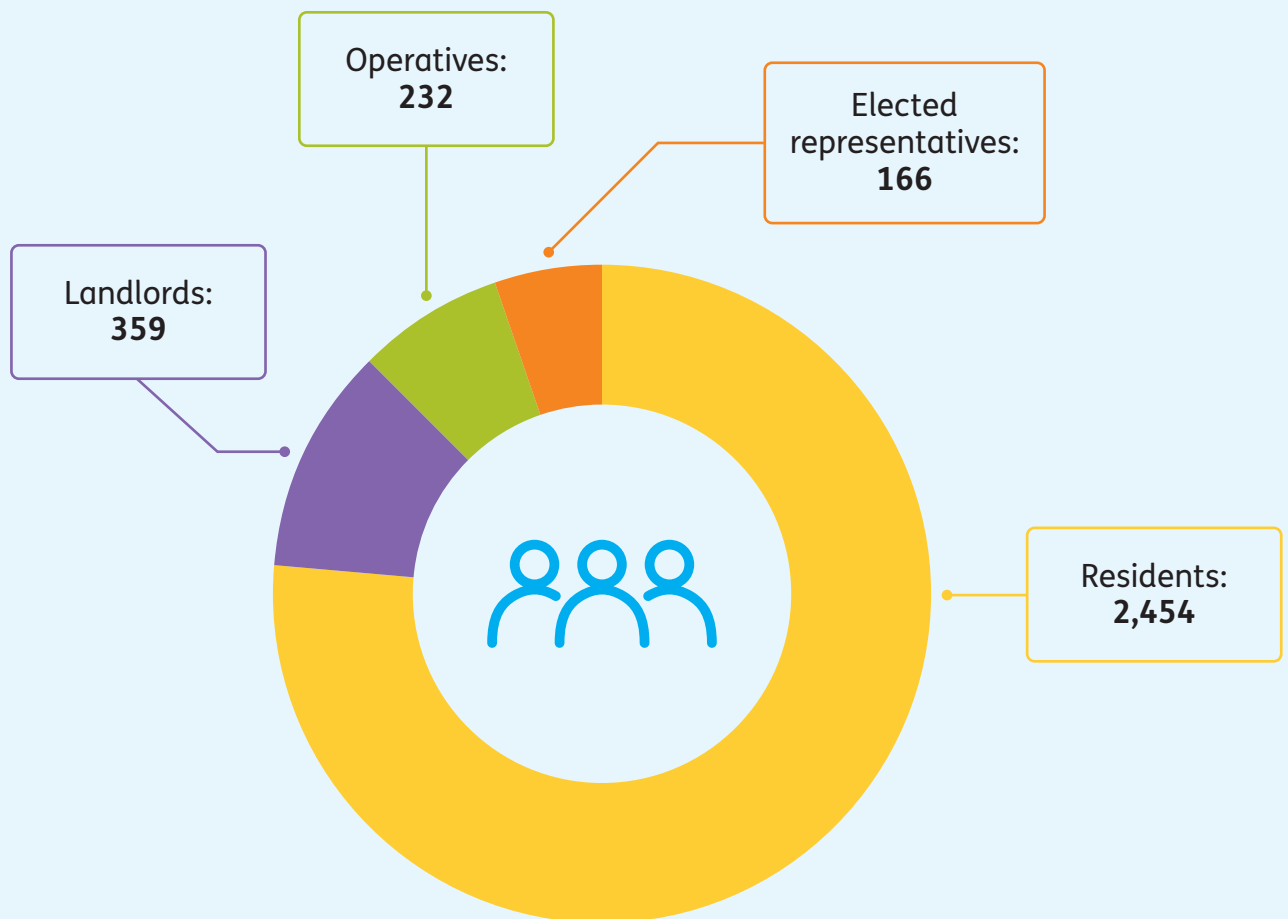
Decisions broken down by landlord type

Landlord type	Count of cases with relevant categories determined 2024-25
Housing association	3,023
Local authority / ALMO or TMO	1,438
Other	23
Total	4,484

Key data from our call for evidence

We collected feedback from a wide range of participants through surveys, receiving a total of 3,177 responses. These responses came from landlord staff, residents, contractors, and elected representatives. We received a further 34 written responses from residents. Additionally, we engaged in one-on-one discussions, fieldwork, and roundtable discussions.

Respondent demographics



Resident perspective

Regional satisfaction

% relates to the number of respondents that rated their landlords as good or excellent

North West

Operative behaviour: **38%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **21%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **19%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **14%**
Standard of work completed: **22%**

West Midlands

Operative behaviour: **46%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **26%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **20%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **12%**
Standard of work completed: **29%**

South West

Operative behaviour: **41%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **27%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **23%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **12%**
Standard of work completed: **24%**

South East

Operative behaviour: **30%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **16%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **11%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **8%**
Standard of work completed: **10%**

North East

Operative behaviour: **33%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **18%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **15%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **10%**
Standard of work completed: **17%**

Yorkshire and the Humber

Operative behaviour: **50%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **31%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **27%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **17%**
Standard of work completed: **34%**

East Midlands

Operative behaviour: **50%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **20%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **23%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **14%**
Standard of work completed: **23%**

East of England

Operative behaviour: **46%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **26%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **24%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **9%**
Standard of work completed: **26%**

London

Operative behaviour: **25%**
Appointments kept and attended on time: **11%**
Informed about changes to appointments: **10%**
Information about progress of repairs requests: **5%**
Standard of work completed: **10%**

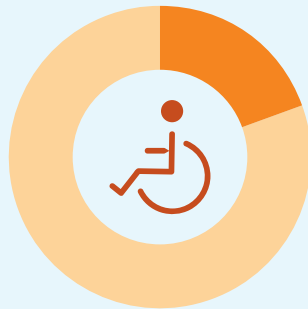
Resident perspective

Health concerns



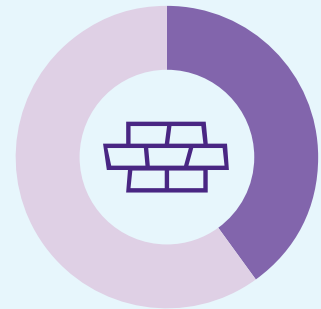
45%

of residents in our call for evidence survey told us they are living with conditions that affect their daily lives



19.5%

felt reasonable adjustments for disabilities were made



Over 40%

dissatisfied with work standards



Landlord perspective

Outsourcing practices



More than
60%
of landlords said they
outsource some or
all of their repairs

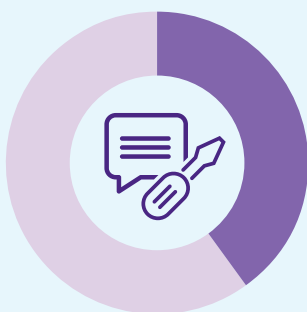


20%
of landlords who outsource
some or all of their repairs also
outsource some complaint
handling responsibilities.

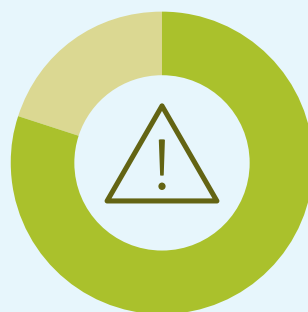


Only
60%
of landlords have
an operative's
code of conduct

Elected representatives' perspective



40%
report increased
repair-related
contacts



80%
feel concerns
are not handled
appropriately



2/3
have a negative experience
of communicating
with landlords
and/or contractors

Findings

Part 1: Building empathic relationships and understanding

Empathy and access

Building empathic relationships with residents involves understanding the emotional significance of their homes and addressing access challenges with sensitivity. Recognising this emotional connection is crucial when dealing with issues related to housing and resident interactions.

Accessing residents' homes has become a significant topic in discussions with landlords and contractors. It is a sensitive issue that raises many concerns for everyone involved. While landlords and contractors aim to fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure property safety, they often encounter difficulties in determining the best approach.

One significant challenge arises from a lack of awareness. Residents might not prioritise being home for repairs or safety checks if they are not informed about the visit or its importance. This lack of awareness can lead to missed appointments, disrupting necessary maintenance work. Efforts to improve communication have been observed through our [Spotlight evaluation report on Knowledge and Information Management](#), yet a more empathetic approach is needed to understand why access issues arise and how to address them effectively.



“Social landlords are increasingly adopting practices used by private landlords to force tenants to voluntarily give up possession of their home through bullying, harassment, and threats. This behaviour is directed at those considered ‘problems’ because they dare to complain about repairs.”

**Feeling silenced and intimidated:
Resident call for evidence quote**

Our casework has shown how communication errors impact access to homes. Incorrect information or recording errors can disrupt repairs and safety checks. Poor communication about repairs and maintenance visits, contractors arriving late or on the wrong days, ‘cold calling’, and the inability to prove attempts to gain access is common.



“Home is more than just a physical space; it’s a sanctuary where people find safety, comfort and a sense of identity. When this private space is intruded upon by an outsider, even for legitimate reasons, it can trigger a range of emotional responses.”

– Absalom, H. (2024)

Elsewhere, our casework shows landlords failing to respond to resident circumstances which may be relevant for a successful appointment, including medical conditions or mental health needs, with some of these unfairly recorded as no access.

Contractors told of us some of their frustrations, such as being turned away by residents as they could not provide a job reference number or any identification. It is understandable in those circumstances why residents would refuse access. These are issues which can be addressed through effective contract and relationship management.

One landlord told us the use of automatic calling and texting system to confirm appointments ahead of time had helped to almost halve its no access rate for gas, electrical safety, and scheduled works.

Further illustrating the importance of this approach, as well as the need for ensuring accurate contact details and preferences are recorded and updated.

Access issues are particularly concerning in gas safety, posing risks to both resident safety and legal compliance. The financial cost of these issues is substantial. [The Association of Safety and Compliance Professionals \(ASCP\) estimates](#) failed access attempts for gas safety checks cost between £49 to £65 million annually. Addressing access problems can lead to significant cost savings and enhanced safety.

Our [December 2024 'Learning from severe maladministration' report](#) revealed many repairs remain incomplete due to access problems. Despite these challenges, landlords remain responsible for completing repairs.



Casework example: Consequences of poor communication

A landlord's contractor sent Mr H automated letters to schedule an annual gas safety check. Despite Mr H rescheduling, he continued receiving letters, culminating in a hand-delivered notice threatening forced entry unless an appointment was booked.

This caused Mr H significant anxiety and confusion, as he had already arranged a new date. Unfortunately, the contractor missed the rescheduled

appointment, and the landlord notified Mr H of an impending forced entry the next day. Mr H requested the visit be post-5pm for personal access, yet the contractor, accompanied by a locksmith, forced entry before 5pm. Mr H's complaint about communication failures and forced entry was met with the landlord's assurance of adequate access efforts.

While automated communication can be effective, it is crucial for landlords and contractors to actively listen to residents, maintain accurate records, and adhere to policies to build trust and avoid similar failures.



Case study – cold calling leads to repeated access issues and prolongs resident distress

The landlord planned to rewire the property under its major works programme. There were several other repairs required to Miss C's home, including remedies for damp and mould and adaptations as she experiences mobility, sight, and hearing problems, as well as breathing issues.

When Miss C complained about repairs not being completed, the landlord said she had not provided access on several occasions nor rebooked the work.

Following our intervention the landlord acknowledged its contractor had attended the property on several occasions without making a prior appointment (or cold calling) which had caused a high level of cancelled jobs. It apologised and applied a note to Miss C's file advising staff that she needed prior notice of contractor visits.

Our investigation found that despite being aware of Miss C's vulnerabilities, the landlord itself made no attempts to prioritise the works, arrange access, and provide appropriate support to the resident. Nor was there a schedule of work provided to the resident, so Miss C was not aware of which repairs the landlord intended to carry out or by when. This led to a piecemeal, uncoordinated and unclear repairs service.

Neither the landlord nor its contractor considered the resident's vulnerabilities when deciding how to approach repairs at the property. The contractor was not provided with the information needed in order to consider these circumstances. The landlord's policy did not consider whether it needed to provide notice or arrange an appointment before trying to access the property, despite the legal duty to give tenants at least 24 hours' notice before attending and entering the property.

Innovative approaches

We have seen some positive approaches which included combining safety checks with other works, increasing the value and convenience of the visit to residents, and lessening the burden of providing access. This may involve bringing checks forward by a few months and requires flexibility.

One landlord told us they had carried out an "invisible need" campaign for residents to highlight the importance of granting access for safety checks, and that not all repairs and maintenance issues can be seen. It said it had seen a decrease in no access as a result. Another told us about a successful resident liaison service – a personal approach, with an officer working with the resident and seeking to understand any issues that may affect allowing access in advance of the appointment, sharing these appropriately with the contractor, and looking at possible measures to alleviate these.

Addressing residents' concerns and building trust

Landlords also talked to us about looking at what fears and concerns residents might have about granting access. For example, if a resident is in arrears, they might fear an operative is aware and will raise it with them or treat them less favourably as a result. Some landlords have found providing reassurance that these functions are separate can be effective.

Some landlords have taken this even further and considered the resident perspective from a financial point of view, such as concerns about cost implications of operatives needing to turn the heating on to carry out repairs or maintenance.

They have offered residents vouchers towards these costs and explained this prior to the visit, increasing the likelihood of the appointment going ahead.

Hoarding was another consideration cited as to why a resident might feel reluctant. Landlords acknowledged the sensitivities around this issue, with some saying they refer such cases to safeguarding or tenancy sustainment teams.

Some landlords told us that some residents are open about not being home for the appointment. For example, one landlord reflected: “I think that sadly, because [residents] have waited in so many times themselves and no-one turned up, they now think it is OK for them to do the same.” The landlord was treating this as an exercise in rebuilding trust and confidence, rather than one of simply recording it as no access.

These examples and approaches show the complex range of human emotions that can sit behind the loaded, and often reductive, term no access. They are also in keeping with the human-centric service provision as set out in our report on [Attitudes, Rights and Respect](#).

Making Every Visit Count

The The National Housing Federation’s (NHF) report [‘Making every contact count’ \(2024\)](#) outlines the importance of using routine and planned interactions with residents as opportunities to gather information about the condition of their homes, as well as their needs. The report recognises this approach can require a cultural shift, towards one where contractors are included and permitted to take responsibility for identifying and flagging any major concerns when they visit residents’ homes. This includes training staff to ask for any relevant personal information with confidence, respect and awareness.

One of the key messages from the NHF report is that “landlords cannot simply assume that residents are OK until they say they are not” (page 8). It highlights examples and case studies of where this is being done well, such as the use of “actionable insight”, with shared motivation and responsibility for these by landlords and contractors.

Further considerations for landlords

This theme is further explored in the University of Birmingham’s report, [‘Home Encounters - Understanding and Improving the Emotional Impact of Home Visits’](#). Residents may see visits to their homes as an invasion of privacy; may fear they and their home will be judged, particularly in visits which involve assessing the condition of the property; and feel discomfort about having someone seeing the intimate areas of their homes.

This research sets out key considerations for landlords when planning a visit to a resident’s home. These include making the purpose of the visit clear, co-designing property inspections with residents, offering alternatives to home visits where practical, respecting personal boundaries, and providing social and emotional training for staff. An earlier report, by the same author, [‘Home as an Emotional Place’](#), sets out how landlords can move toward emotionally-informed policy and practice.

The [Stop Social Housing Stigma](#) campaign also encourages landlords to involve tenants in monitoring repairs services and acting on any behaviours which may stigmatise vulnerable residents. This includes issues relating to vulnerability, accessibility, language barriers and other additional needs, cold calling, and subsequent claims of non-access.



“The disrepair issue becomes secondary to dealing with the claim itself. The resolution to the disrepair gets forgotten and you are piggy in the middle. Especially if told you are not allowed in.”

– Contractor

Disrepair claims

In some cases, the issue of no access is due to third party involvement, such as when a resident instructs a solicitor in a disrepair claim.

Residents may seek solicitor involvement out of desperation. Social housing residents are also a target of so-called ‘claim farmers’ – individuals or organisations which encourage pursuit of legal claims and compensation, regardless of the legitimacy of such a claim. Often, the resident does not get the compensation they are entitled to, and the issues remain unresolved. We have seen examples of landlords taking vigilant approaches to tackling this problem and raising awareness amongst residents.

We expect a landlord’s internal complaints procedure to have been exhausted before we will investigate a complaint. Similarly, the courts will look to see that alternative dispute resolution, such as the landlord’s internal complaints procedure and the Ombudsman’s investigation process, have been attempted or at least considered by the parties before starting litigation.

Relationship management

One of the strongest themes from the contractor feedback was the need for, and a distinct lack of, overall relationship management. Contractors spoke of the “race” to secure the contract itself, and then a shift to little or no communication afterwards. This lack of regular communication can lead to avoidable delays, issues with work quality, misunderstandings, and multiple appointments. It can also result in defensive practice.

Some of the feedback we received included contractors not getting the assistance they need “until compliance is coming to an end, and then they are under massive pressure to get in when they have been asking for help for weeks”. Some of the contractors spoke with sadness about what they described as a lack of “loyalty”. One told us, “We have been on long-term contracts, done amazingly well, been compliant, within budget, and then out comes the next tender. It’s a race to the bottom for jobs that just can’t be completed on lower prices. We get overlooked, despite previous proven success.”

Contractors spoke of “strained” relationships with some of their clients and the knock-on effects. Some said issues with relationships are particularly pronounced when landlords merge. We were told it is challenging where the contractor has a good relationship with one of the clients, but not the other. One told us: “Both relationships then sometimes break down and you go from having a good relationship with one, to no relationship at all.”

Relationship management works both ways. It is also important contractors approach the working relationship with a collaborative mindset. In some of our

contractor conversations, there was a clear theme around long-term and short-term contracts and how they can change a relationship. One example of this was summed up as: “We are happy to put the work into the relationship if it’s a long-term contract.” There was less importance placed on this in short-term contracts. It would be worth both parties looking at what elements of successful long-term contracts and relationships could be translated into shorter contracts.

The NHF and Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) [Rethinking Repairs and Maintenance Project](#) sets out the importance of “genuine partnerships”. It mentions the importance of agreeing communication protocols and practices, the need for contract managers to be able to manage relationships, as well as the technical, legal and financial aspects, and importance of both agreeing and reviewing the relationship outlines.



“Relationship management to us means, are we being asked to do the right thing? Has the right information been provided?”

– Contractor



Good practice example – Relationship management in action

Landlord X faced issues with its repairs contractor, not due to work quality, but poor customer care. Residents disliked the contractor’s approach and tone. As a result, Landlord X told the contractor that it would terminate the contract. The contractor requested feedback and a chance to improve. Landlord X reflected and realised it had not shared its concerns with the contractor before putting it on notice of termination. Landlord X agreed to ‘pause’ the contract, allowing the contractor to make necessary changes. The contractor improved significantly, becoming one of the landlord’s top performers.

Landlord X learned the importance of open dialogue, constructive feedback, and balancing negative and positive remarks. They emphasised being approachable for discussions beyond just Key Performance Indicators or costs, ensuring contractors receive praise for good performance too.

The above focuses on the landlord-contractor relationship, and following sections will discuss the resident-landlord and resident-contractor relationships. However, the following casework example – which is built on a foundation of a good landlord-contractor relationship – sets out how all three sides of the relationship can work together to repair trust.



Good practice example – positive relationship management between the landlord, resident and contractor

Miss G reported damp and mould to her landlord. She also informed them she is disabled, has learning disabilities and several health conditions.

The landlord carried out inspections of the property and issued works orders to its contractors. Miss G complained that the damp and mould had not been resolved. In its complaint response the landlord acknowledged there had been service failures resulting in delays. It apologised and offered compensation.

Miss G escalated her complaint and said the landlord had not provided any detailed information about the works. As a result, she had not been able to speak to the repairs team to discuss matters and it had not

taken her disabilities and health conditions into account.

The landlord apologised again for its poor communication and the delay to her repairs.

As part of its complaint response, the landlord organised a joint meeting with Miss G and its contractor at the property. The meeting provided an opportunity for the landlord to explain its work plan in more detail and provided an opportunity for Miss G to explain her health issues and disabilities. As a result of the discussions, the parties agreed it would be appropriate for Miss G to move out during work.

In this case, the meeting addressed the issues without the need for protracted back and forth communication, in which misunderstandings or miscommunications could have arisen.

Crucially, all 3 parties (landlord, resident and contractor) met, which meant there was clarity on an agreed way forward.



Behaviours and trust

The trust between landlords and tenants is essential and requires ongoing care and, at times, repair. The [Phase 2 report of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry](#) highlighted the severe consequences that can occur when these relationships break down and are not actively resolved.

“

“Housing is so important and represents the very foundation of people’s ability to build a life for their families. If only the landlord cared as much for where we live as we do.”

– Resident

The report emphasised that it is the responsibility of the landlord’s representatives to maintain this trust. The inquiry noted that the landlord failed to remember residents depend on them for a safe and dignified home environment.

While most day-to-day repairs happen without issues, there are instances where residents may behave unreasonably towards workers, which is unacceptable. This issue has been observed in both our casework and discussions with landlords, with behaviours including aggression, abuse, harassment, and excessive demands. The Ombudsman does not tolerate unreasonable behaviour, which can hinder staff from performing their duties effectively.

However, our findings indicate that staff and operatives are sometimes not trained or supported to manage challenging resident needs, leading to unnecessary escalations and loss of trust. It is crucial these isolated incidents of unreasonable behaviour do not lead to a negative stereotype of social housing residents. Landlords must strive to prevent situations where residents become so frustrated they resort to such behaviour.



Root causes of frustration among residents

Residents can sometimes become frustrated, and this can lead to undesirable and unacceptable behaviour. It's important to understand the root causes of this frustration to attempt to prevent it from happening.

Here are some key reasons why residents might feel this way:

The state of the home

When a home is in poor condition, it can greatly affect how residents feel. Problems like leaks, dampness, and mould can make people feel embarrassed or ashamed of their living situation. This is especially true if these issues have been going on for a long time without being fixed.

Expectations of service

Residents told us they often have certain expectations about how quickly and well repairs should be carried out. If landlords do not clearly communicate what service standards to expect, residents may hope for faster or better service than what is possible. This expectation might be influenced by how quickly other services, even unrelated ones such as food deliveries, are provided. If a landlord cannot meet these expectations, it can lead to disappointment and frustration.

Trust from past experiences

Trust plays a significant role in how residents feel about their housing service. If they have had bad experiences with repairs or maintenance in the past, they might already feel uneasy. If landlords do not take steps to repair or build trust, the relationship can become even more strained. This strained relationship can result in increased tension and frustration.

Additional frustrations

Between reporting a repair and the repair being done, other issues can add to a resident's frustration. These include:

- avoidable delays in communication with the landlord or contractor
- missed appointments, which can waste residents' time and patience
- the home's condition potentially getting worse while waiting for repairs

Contractor and operative behaviours

Landlord and their operatives behaviours are just as complex and nuanced as residents. Where it is a contractor engaging with residents, they are acting as an extension of the landlord.

When residents make allegations about contractor behaviour, it is common for landlords to refer these to a manager or supervisor, rather than showing evidence of any investigation. This is inappropriate and can lead to the complaint escalating. It is necessary for landlords to keep the details of any disciplinary action private. However, in the interest of fairness, it is appropriate for complaint handlers to refer to any relevant policy when explaining how they have reached a decision in a complaint about contractor behaviour. This may include a code of conduct, although we are aware that around half of landlords told us they do not have a code. This is covered later in the report.

We have also seen examples where the landlord has advised the resident to contact the police rather than investigate the matter themselves with reference to their code of conduct. Of course, this may be appropriate in cases where the resident alleges a crime has taken place, but even so the landlord should satisfy itself as to the conduct of its operatives rather than wait for contact from the police.

Whilst opening the door to allow an operative in can be an emotive act for a resident, the same is also true for an operative, who may feel at a disadvantage for any number of reasons.

These include:

- not being provided with sufficient information about the repair or previous attempts to complete it
- not knowing the resident or their needs, expectations, or relationship with/view of the landlord
- not knowing whether there is any risk to their health and safety presented by the property or the resident

In our fieldwork, we heard this causes concern for operatives. Once the door is opened, a lot of things need to go well – and quickly – to ensure trust is built and maintained on both sides. Therefore, it is important landlords and contractors ensure operatives are supported and empowered to be as effective as possible.

Adequate information sharing between teams and with operatives is key to solving these problems. This needs to include contact details and preferences, including reasonable adjustments. Those visiting resident homes also need to be aware of any ongoing or outstanding complaints or related actions, so they are not caught unaware and unable to answer for the landlord. Regular interface and open lines of communication between operatives and the landlord's complaints team is crucial.

Values and behaviours are also key to ensuring trust when visiting a resident's home. Trust issues can arise when residents feel 'othered' or stigmatised by visitors. We have seen many cases where residents felt they were "treated like an idiot" by an operative and had an adverse reaction to this attitude, perceived or otherwise. Ensuring a values-led culture of respect at all levels of the organisation can help prevent such attitudes or perceptions.

Codes of conduct

Where complaints about operative behaviour arise, it is important to know what expectations to measure behaviour against. Whether in-house or outsourced, there should be a code of conduct that operatives are expected to follow. These codes often include specifics about operative conduct inside homes: prohibiting unnecessary noise, use of facilities without the occupant's permission, leaving the property clean and tidy and so on.

In our [Spotlight report on Attitudes, Respect and Rights](#) we noted several instances of landlords not enforcing their contractors' code of conduct. This has continued to be a theme in the cases we have analysed for this report.

In our casework and wider research, we found only some of these codes are published on landlord websites. Some landlords have bespoke codes specific to operatives, while others are buried in the contracts themselves and not accessible to residents, operatives, or complaint-handlers. Contractors we spoke with presented a mixed picture of these codes. Some say they are in place but not used, some noted significant variations between codes used by different providers, and another said they were talked about during tendering and negotiations but not discussed any further. This suggests they may be seen as a paperwork exercise, rather than a useful framework for upholding agreed standards.

Case study – resolution focused, carried out an investigation and reference to code of conduct

Mr L made a complaint to the landlord regarding the conduct of the caretaker of the estate.

Following the landlord's initial response, Mr L responded saying he felt the landlord was continuing to allow the caretaker to get away with harassment. In the landlord's final response, it awarded Mr L with £100 for the distress, confirming it had now removed the caretaker from working on his block, and passed on his

concerns about how the estate was cleaned to the relevant team.

Mr L raised a further complaint with the landlord about the conduct of the caretaker, providing video evidence and stating he would like the caretaker to be fired or removed from cleaning the block opposite. The landlord said it did not have sufficient evidence to say that the caretaker had acted in a way to breach its employee code of conduct. The landlord moved the caretaker to a separate block to reduce the potential for contact between the 2 parties. The landlord also spoke with the caretaker about the situation. Overall, the landlord considered all evidence provided and took Mr L's concerns seriously.





Case study – landlord ignorance of contractor performance and conduct

Miss V complained about damp and mould, including its damage to belongings and effect on her and her daughter's health. Part of her complaint was that the landlord's contractors had told her during a telephone call that their inspection of her property had been a "mistake", and that the contractor had unreasonably terminated the phone call. Miss V also complained that contractors had attended without appointment, without identifying themselves, and had behaved inappropriately. The landlord invited Miss V to submit a claim for damages and later apologised for delays, but did not investigate or respond to the concerns about the contractor's conduct.

We found the landlord often had to ask its contractor whether it had booked in any work and what it was doing, indicating it had little or no information or oversight of its contractors' actions.

The landlord demonstrated no ownership or management of the service provided by its contractors. The landlord's ignorance of its contractor was at the root of its failure to deal with a potential health hazard in its resident's home. This attitude led to poor communication and absent record keeping. Its failure to consider the resident's complaints about the contractor caused avoidable damage to the landlord/tenant relationship.

This case shows the importance of complaints about operative conduct being discussed as a regular part of contract management meetings. These discussions can provide opportunities for monitoring and service improvement and help ensure the service provided to residents matches the conduct expected.

There are cases where there are allegations from both the resident and the contractor. This can cause difficulties when investigating, especially if one or the other is reluctant to engage with the investigation. Landlords should still ensure allegations from any and all parties are appropriately investigated and any relevant evidence gathered, assessing the evidence against the tenancy agreement and any code of conduct.



Case study – allegations made by both sides

Mrs H complained after a visit from a landlord's contractor, claiming the contractor blocked her from closing her door, making her feel scared and threatened. She said he was a danger to women and should not visit homes. She asked for him not to return and wanted to know when her tap would be fixed.

The contractor reported that Mrs H refused entry, was aggressive, shouted, and pushed him out. The landlord added a warning to her account, requiring staff to visit in pairs, but did not investigate the incident. Mrs H was unhappy, accusing the contractor of lying and stating she had a recording proving her side. She felt the landlord did not contact her or notify her of the allegations and was worried that needing 2 operatives would delay repairs.

The landlord admitted it had not discussed the claims with her before adding the warning and said it could not comment on the incident due to the lack of evidence. The landlord reviewed this warning in its complaints response and resolved the issue for the resident.



“You could knock on the door and not know who lives there.”

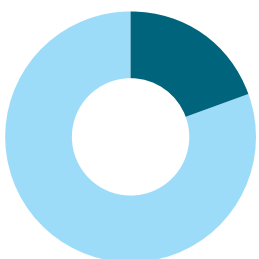
– Contractor

Understanding individual circumstances

Landlords should be aware of who lives in their properties and any additional support they may need.

We frequently see in our casework that a lack of sensitivity and tailored communication can result in a breakdown of trust. In some cases, this may present itself as what the landlord or contractor experiences as unacceptable behaviour. Moreover, landlords and contractors frequently fail to consider how repairs or maintenance work relate to residents' unique situations. A seemingly minor repair could be urgent if it significantly impacts a resident's health. Given the high number of disabled social housing residents, this understanding is crucial for effective service delivery.

We also see too many examples of landlords and contractors failing to relate the repair, hazard, or maintenance work to residents' individual circumstances. For example, failing to carry out risk assessments. What might seem like a non-urgent repair could require more swift action as the impact could be greater, such as if a health condition is present. Repairs and maintenance processes need to have this understanding built-in.



Our [Spotlight report](#) on relationships indicated only

19.5%

of residents felt their landlords made reasonable adjustments.



“Perhaps we are not supposed to get any updates, and we have fulfilled our role once we report. It would be helpful to know what the expectations are.”

– Contractor

45% of residents in our call for evidence survey told us they are living with conditions that affect their daily lives, highlighting how this is a key consideration when delivering repairs and maintenance services.

Key components for responsive service

We identified 2 key components for providing a responsive and sensitive service. First, contractors need information about the residents' circumstances. Second, they need to act on this information and be prepared to do so. Managing agents of supported housing have expressed concerns about contractors' insensitivity to residents' needs. For instance, an unannounced visit by a male contractor to a women's refuge was cited as inappropriate. Some landlords have implemented initiatives like a password system to reassure vulnerable residents of the contractor's identity.

Contractors have expressed frustration over poor information sharing. They often lack basic details about residents, which hampers their ability to provide effective service with one saying, “we're lucky if we get a contact number, let alone anything else”. They are also uncertain about their roles, especially regarding raising concerns about vulnerable residents or safeguarding issues.

While 84% contractors told us they are generally comfortable reporting safeguarding concerns, they can receive no feedback, leaving them unsure of what is expected of them.

Trusting contractors' professional judgement

Contractors have an important role in planning, managing and monitoring their work to ensure any risks are controlled.

It is important landlords and contractors work together and coordinate their activities, to make sure the work can be done safely and without risks to health. Involving contractors in decision-making can help to make better decisions on the actual risks and the measures to mitigate them. Contractors have a duty to report anything they see which is likely

Case study – failing to act on contractor recommendations

The landlord's contractor wrote to Ms D saying it would erect scaffolding at the property to carry out various works over the course of 6 to 8 weeks. Several months later, Ms D complained to the landlord that the scaffolding had been up for much longer than she was originally told and that paving slabs had been damaged during this work. She also complained that contractors had not repaired a roof leak which was still allowing water into her home. Evidence showed the contractor had recommended a roof replacement, but neither they nor the landlord attempted any temporary repair in the meantime.

After almost 3 months, the landlord responded to the complaint. It apologised for the delays with the works, said it intended to complete roof repairs and remove the scaffolding within the next couple of days, and said it would replace paving slabs during the following month. Roof repairs were completed shortly afterward.

Two months later, Ms D complained that the scaffolding remained in place and the paving

to endanger either their own or others' health and safety (HSE, 2015).

It is vital landlords can evidence they have given due regard to contractors' professional opinion and that if any recommendations are not implemented, there is a clear rationale and evidence base as to why.

slabs remained in disrepair. She also raised concerns that the scaffolding had been unsafe, or at least not checked for safety, whilst it was in place.

The landlord delayed unreasonably in repairing the roof, left the scaffolding in situ for far longer than necessary, and there was no evidence that the landlord had acted on her complaint about the paving slabs. We also noted that the landlord had not addressed Ms D's concern that the scaffolding had not been subject to any safety inspections. It also delayed unreasonably in responding to the resident's complaint at both stages.

The landlord failed to act on its contractor's recommendation in a timely manner. When it was found that the roof would need replacing, the landlord delayed unreasonably by not ordering any temporary repair, and in not instructing the contractor to act as it had recommended, all the while leaving the resident with water leaking into the property from the roof. The contractor could perhaps have attempted a temporary fix, providing a tarpaulin or similar, but did not.



“Empowering operatives with the tools, resources, and decision-making authority is crucial for improving service delivery.”

– CIH





Challenges and barriers in service delivery

The [Disability Support and Social Housing Resident Panel report](#) emphasises the need for better awareness and training for social housing contractors regarding disability. Residents have reported issues like building materials left as hazards and incorrect home adaptations due to contractors not listening. Residents also desire quicker repair times, particularly disabled individuals whose health may depend on timely repairs.

The [Better Social Housing Review](#) panel identified dissatisfaction with repairs as a significant resident concern. Barriers such as disability, language, and mental health issues can prevent residents from being heard. Disabled tenants are particularly likely to be dissatisfied with their homes, according to these surveys.

Contractors told us they face challenges with repair times for vulnerable residents, often due to landlords prioritising these cases as urgent, which can disrupt their performance targets. Overuse of the 'urgent' label can devalue its meaning, leading to inefficiencies and potentially delaying truly urgent repairs. Contractors suggest reordering jobs once reclassified as urgent, with deadlines adjusted accordingly. However, operatives have expressed frustration over unequal service, noting that repair urgency can be influenced by who is most vocal and "shouts the loudest", diluting the terms 'emergency' and 'urgent.'

Some contractors noted that not all landlords revisit the service level agreement once the job is changed from standard to urgent, rendering the change in status meaningless in practice.

Case study – failing to consider a resident's autism and physical disability

Ms K informed the landlord about her autism and serious mobility issues at the start of her tenancy. Although this was recorded on its system, the landlord later told us it was unaware of any vulnerabilities.

Ms K reported an issue with her toilet cistern leading to damp and mould. The issues were unresolved after repairs and were impacting her autism.

The landlord raised an emergency repair but the operative was unable to gain access because Ms K was unaware of the appointment.

Another operative telephoned at 2:15am. Ms K raised issues with her disabilities which made a nighttime appointment challenging. The operative said he was unaware of her disabilities and said: "The tenant refused access as she is disabled."

Ms K reported her upset at how the appointments had been handled. Two more operatives attended: one identifying a leak and the other claiming the issues were the result of Ms K's lifestyle. Four months later multiple parts of the toilet were replaced after further complaints from Ms K and the issues resolved.

In response to our decision the landlord said the resident should have been notified of the emergency appointment, which was out of hours because of resourcing issues. It had also made system improvements to record vulnerabilities.

Better communication: Improving procurement practices

Procurement is a crucial part of managing housing effectively. As one contractor put it: “Get it right from the start, and everything else follows.” However, our discussions found that poor procurement practices can lead to negative experiences for all.

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“Relationships with contractors are combative by design. Contractor focus is always on profit... which results in the customer becoming a second fiddle.”

– Landlord

The issue of false promises

Contractors often expressed concerns about these practices, particularly the issue of false promises. During the tendering process, contractors believe landlords often prefer contractors who claim the work is achievable, even when they know the costs or timeframes are unrealistic. This creates an ethical dilemma for contractors who want the job but know they might not be able to deliver as promised. The consequences of these false promises can be severe, leading contractors to face challenges when they cannot fulfil what was agreed upon.

Landlords are aware of this issue too. They understand some contractors may accept work beyond their capacity to complete. One landlord commented: “Don’t try and sell us an amazing service that isn’t realistic. We want to know what is realistic, not what’s ideal.” To ensure more realistic planning, they suggested asking contractors: “What is reasonable for you to achieve?”

Reputation-based procurement

We heard from some landlords about a desire to move towards a reputation-based procurement approach rather than focusing mainly on costs. However, social housing procurement specialists are concerned about how to measure reputation. They believe contractors should focus on understanding bidding criteria and improving their bid-writing skills. They argue that “good contractors sell themselves.” Nonetheless, others feel that bid-writing skills do not necessarily equate to effective delivery. Some organisations prefer an interview-based approach alongside written submissions, emphasising the importance of conduct and values in performance assessment.

A common concern is that false promises are driven by rising costs and a lack of central government funding. Contractors emphasised that profit should be a by-product of doing things well. We were told about the need to be selective about partners, choosing those with shared values concerning people and direct delivery.

Contractors we spoke with stressed the importance of having clear roles, responsibilities, expectations, and processes from the procurement stage onwards. Procurement should not just be about the sourcing of and negotiation with suitable suppliers, but should encompass these important aspects of relationship management.

The CIH and the NHF [Rethinking Repairs and Maintenance Project](#) advises landlords to share their vision, values, and purpose with potential bidders. This helps ensure compatibility. When setting up an in-house repairs team, landlords can promote core values and ensure alignment with organisational goals.

The project recommends including colleagues and residents in the procurement process. Resident involvement in procurement also came up in our conversations with contractors. One spoke of the need for a set of golden rules, which are resident-led and agreed from the outset. We heard some positive examples of residents being involved in the procurement process

– such as being part of the assessment and interview panels and involved in decision-making, which one contractor described as “true consultation in line with the Consumer Standards.”

In January 2021 Tpas and Fusion21 published research highlighting the benefits of resident involvement in contractor procurement. While involving residents in large procurement exercises may not always be feasible, their input can influence decisions. A Tpas survey revealed 73% of residents wish to scrutinise their landlord’s strategies and plans. Improved information sharing between procurement and service delivery teams is also crucial for effective service delivery.

Case study – inadequate procurement resulting in poor quality of repairs and delay

Miss P complained to her landlord when they replaced her front door. The new door was poorer in quality, and the lock didn’t work, leaving her locked out multiple times. The landlord agreed the door wasn’t the same quality due to supply issues and recognised their contractor was careless. They had a ‘contractor knows best’ attitude, which needed questioning. Miss P asked for

an independent survey. The landlord’s original contractor was asked to fix the problems, but Miss P was unhappy. A new contractor was chosen, but there was a long delay. Miss P complained again, finding the delay unreasonable and feeling the landlord poorly managed the contractors. A third and fourth contractor withdrew. Eventually, a fifth contractor finished the work after more than a year and a half. The investigation found the landlord’s procurement and management were poor. The main lesson was that the landlord knew the problems but didn’t act to improve, repeating mistakes due to its failure to address core issues in procurement.



Knowledge and information management

All landlords we visited during our fieldwork spoke about how crucial good [knowledge and information management \(KIM\)](#) is to provide an excellent repairs and maintenance service. This was echoed by staff at all levels.

Many interviewees spoke about the information technology (IT) used by operatives and the importance of getting this right. Staff were positive about technology that makes their jobs easier. For example, operatives told us it was useful to have information on previous and upcoming jobs at a property and the value of being able to upload photos or additional information to help diagnose issues correctly. The rapid evolution of technology in areas such as artificial intelligence will create innovation and opportunities.

A key concern is incomplete or inaccessible data on contact notes, leaving operatives at risk. External contractors report receiving outdated or incomplete information through IT systems.

Landlords are wary of sharing personal data with contractors, causing frustration. However, sharing information about residents' vulnerabilities and necessary adjustments is legally allowed under GDPR if both parties comply. Successful data sharing involves collaboration between landlords and contractors, with data protection experts ensuring safe practices.

Digital tools and challenges in technology

Shared digital platforms between landlords and contractors show promise, especially with a unified data strategy. However, issues arise when partners lack access

to the same digital tools. A centralised dashboard for property reporting is an effective solution, aiding in monitoring and prioritising work.

Contractors suggest improving information sharing, particularly for repeat repairs analysis. They advocate for a preventative approach by scrutinising trends to reduce repeat jobs. Clean data is essential but often lacking, complicating the process.

Advancements in technology, like self-diagnosing boilers, highlight the benefits of technology and data sharing. These boilers communicate the issues to the repair operatives, who then know prior to the visit what the repairs or maintenance issue is and can prepare for the visit accordingly.

Our [follow-up report on the KIM Spotlight](#) suggests some landlords are redesigning their repairs and maintenance procedures, such as bringing forward stock condition surveys and inspecting the quality of homes for outstanding repairs or damp and mould.

Landlords must use stock condition data to ensure safe, well-maintained homes under the Regulator's Safety and Quality Standard. Accurate record-keeping and sharing are vital for compliance. Investigations reveal common KIM failings, like incorrect job closures and inadequate records, causing delays and confusion.

There is also a financial risk to poor KIM. Some of the more concerning feedback we received from direct labour operatives included receiving work jobs by WhatsApp to their personal mobile phones outside of any IT systems used by the landlord. This meant there was no way of tracking related or follow-up jobs or applying the correct costings to work undertaken.

They told us this means there are millions of pounds unaccounted for because of the lack of systems. Jobs are not being costed to the work, and there are also missing paper trails, causing difficulties in evidencing what further work is required and their cost.

Using KIM to understand repairs

It is vital landlords and contractors are clear of the specifics of the repair or maintenance issues from the outset, a clear record of this is created and kept up to date, and any supporting documents or reports are shared and uploaded onto the relevant record.

In one example from our casebook, a landlord instructed a roofing contractor

to investigate the cause of a leak. The roofer attended, thinking he was there to fix the tiles. Both he and the resident were frustrated by this, as it was clear a plumber was required. This resulted in a wasted visit and delay, as the landlord then had to instruct a plumber and arrange an appointment around both parties' availabilities.

In another case, the landlord sent a plasterer to a resident's home, without first ensuring the originating leak had been addressed, rendering the plastering appointment redundant. The resident expressed annoyance that he had lost a day's wages for staying home to facilitate the appointment. The landlord's internal emails record its own frustrations, asking why there was no record about the leak and that it was "in effect [...] paying twice for one job".

Case study – poor KIM, resulting in poor hazard management and loss of trust

Ms S told her landlord about damp and mould in her home that had been a problem for 17 years, affecting her health and damaging her belongings. Despite her complaints, the landlord couldn't show any proof of actions taken to fix the issue. There was some evidence of inspections and repairs, but it wasn't clear what was done or why. The landlord mentioned they might

call an environmental health officer to inspect, but there was no evidence this ever happened. When Ms S asked for an update on a recent inspection, the landlord said they were not aware of any and could not confirm if the person who did it was qualified. In this case, the landlord had no system in place to effectively monitor what actions its contractors took when it instructed them to carry out inspections or repairs, which was a significant failing.

This approach undermined the resident's trust in the landlord, particularly when it was unable to confirm whether the inspection had been carried out by a suitably qualified person.





Good practice example – landlord shares information appropriately with contractors

Ms N was disabled and had mental health difficulties. She complained to the landlord about damp and mould, and about damage caused by neighbours.

The landlord raised repair jobs to its contractors, but Ms N refused access on multiple occasions saying she did not request the repair or that it was not needed. The landlord believed the resident's actions to be a result of their vulnerability.

The landlord's complete records meant it was able to provide relevant information to its contractors, including that Ms N was disabled and may refuse access. These records also meant the landlord did not ask its operatives to force access to the property to complete the repairs as it could cause further distress. It also allowed operatives to make more attempts than usual to complete repairs.

When Ms N was hospitalised, the landlord was able to arrange the repairs to be completed in her absence. This was a good example of information sharing to reduce detriment to residents and using discretion to avoid causing distress.



Good practice example – communication and joined up working with contractors and call centre

The landlord identified an issue with guttering jobs. They were struggling to get these resolved at the initial appointment due to the fact contractors do not carry lots of different types of guttering with them.

The landlord decided to trial a system where at the initial call centre stage, staff ask the resident what colour guttering they have currently. This information

is then recorded and made available to the contractors. This has resulted in an increase in successful initial appointments and customer satisfaction. The landlord told us: "It's such a simple, but effective fix."

One contractor told us it offers its landlord clients access to its IT systems so both parties can see job IDs and track progress. They told us this shared interface model works well. They told us building maintenance systems are seen as low priority but are crucial, pointing out: "The wrong contact number on a system can lead to not being able to send a reminder, resulting in refused access."

Awaab's Law and forthcoming Social Tenants Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) will also require KIM improvements, allowing tenants to access housing management

information. Effective communication is vital as poor communication leaves residents uninformed, sometimes placing them as intermediaries between landlords and contractors.

Part 2: Operational excellence and accountability

Performance and contract management: Blame and accountability

Poor management of contractors and failure to monitor works in progress can erode the trust between resident, contractor, and landlord. Inadequate information sharing can severely reduce a landlord's chances at meeting residents' needs. We have also seen examples of landlords blaming contractors for failing contracts, without recognising their own failures to proactively manage those contracts. This 'blame game' does not foster trusting relations.

A contractor said to us: "For us, it's a job. For them, it's their home." This highlights the importance of contracts being more than just paperwork. They should be actively monitored and managed. Contracts should clearly state what is expected and what happens if those expectations aren't met.

The [Procurement Act 2023](#) specifies the important work on procurement does not stop once a contract has been awarded. Part 4 of the Act sets out the steps that must be taken to manage a contract.

This includes new requirements to assess and publish information about how suppliers are performing. The new Act requires landlords to report annually and give ratings. The Act sets out the circumstances in which a supplier may be excluded from procurement due to "unacceptably poor performance".

Contractors also spoke of the additional pressures from the Tenant Satisfaction

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*“For us, it’s a job.
For them, it’s
their home.”*

– Contractor

Measures, with one telling us: “There are higher expectations, but this is then not always reflected in the contractual terms.”

With more focus on how well contractors perform, there's a greater need for effective contract and relationship management. Without this, performance reports might not accurately show the genuine issues, making them seem unfairly critical instead of aiming to improve standards.

Our records show many cases where landlords failed to manage contractors properly, causing problems for residents. Poor management leads to frustration, inefficiencies, and communication breakdowns. When multiple contractors are involved or landlords are merging, these issues can get worse.

Other feedback we received about positive relationship management included quarterly reviews between landlords

and their contractors. These are an opportunity to discuss non-KPI related issues, including recruitment and training, in addition to issues such as problems with products, gaining access, or handovers. One contractor told us there might be manufacturing or installation issues, rather than contractor-specific issues, and the contractor may be unfairly blamed for these. These reviews are also used as

a way of looking at any themes and trends such as manufacturing issues and taking a pre-emptive approach.

Residents with disabilities and health conditions often suffer the most from poor performance management. It is crucial for landlords and contractors to be sensitive to these needs, with processes to identify and address them flexibly.



Case study – unfair blame on contractors

Mr U complained that his windows were not being cleaned and a fire alarm fault often stopped the lifts and heating from working. Although the landlord eventually organised window cleaning, Mr U was unhappy with the quality and continued to raise the fire alarm issue. The landlord apologised but did not offer solutions.

In their final response, the landlord admitted only part of the window cleaning was completed, blaming contractor availability and backlog. They ignored the fire alarm issue. We found the landlord wrongly blamed contractors instead of managing the situation. There was no evidence they tried to resolve the problems with the contractor or fire alarm.

The case highlights the landlord's failure to take responsibility, damaging trust with Mr U and potentially with contractors.



Terminating contracts early / changing contractors

Where a landlord repeatedly looks for external solutions for what are essentially internal failings, the outcome has a sense of inevitability. We repeatedly see landlords focus their attention on changing contracts, and that alone, without considering the infrastructure needed to make such change a successful one. Furthermore, we often see landlords respond to residents' repairs and maintenance complaints by saying they are in the process of or have changed contractors. This approach suggests there is a belief this explanation of action taken is sufficient, and no further actions are required.

In the hundreds of cases considered for this report, we did not see any examples of landlords considering their infrastructure – such as their procurement processes, their service level agreements, information sharing practices, or systems – when changing contractors to solve a problem. The landlord's actions are crucial in managing these difficult or failing contracts.

Without crucial infrastructure in place, landlords, contractors, and residents are placed in avoidable situations where seemingly no-one is clear as to what the repairs and maintenance issues are, who is responsible for them, and when they will be carried out.

In this respect, changing contractors in isolation can be seen as essentially a singular solution to a complex problem with no single answer.

Case study – poor contract monitoring affecting a disabled resident



Mr R, who has a physical disability, needed a folding shower chair reattached after contractors finished work in his bathroom. Despite his requests, they refused, claiming it was not their responsibility, leaving Mr R unable to use his shower for over 3 weeks. When the landlord finally had the chair reinstalled, it was done poorly. The chair detached, injuring Mr R and damaging the bathroom wall. Marked as urgent, repairs were delayed, forcing Mr R to travel far for bathing facilities. Over 5 months of missed and cancelled appointments left the issues unresolved, compromising Mr R's independence. The landlord blamed the contractor's workload and complexity for the delays, but failed to ensure the contractor was qualified or informed of the work's scope. The landlord did not plan for potential capacity and sickness issues, neglecting to consider alternative solutions. Consequently, Mr R endured 7 months without proper facilities, affecting his dignity. The landlord's poor contract and performance management exacerbated the situation, highlighting the need to incorporate capacity and sickness considerations into service level agreements.

Planning

For operatives, having a well-planned schedule is crucial for their daily work. They rely on good infrastructure and careful planning, both for their daily tasks and the larger projects involving property repairs. We talked to landlords across England, and each faced unique challenges depending on their location and the distribution of their properties.

Rural landlords often struggle with poor roads and long distances between homes, making it difficult to plan reactive repairs. Bad weather or road closures can make travel times longer, creating frustration for operatives who find it harder to access properties. Additionally, phone signals can be weak in remote areas, causing further issues with communication and accessing necessary IT systems.

Urban landlords, on the other hand, face different issues such as parking problems and low-emission zones. Some landlords use a localised 'patch' system that divides areas for repair teams. This allows operatives to become familiar with residents and their needs while reducing travel time.

Operatives benefit from receiving their schedules a few days in advance, allowing them to adjust for realistic travel times and job proximity. This flexibility helps save time and effort. Some operatives feel that office-based planners may overlook factors like traffic and parts availability, so having the ability to amend schedules can lead to a better service.

However, operatives often lack complete information about previous and upcoming works at a property. For instance, attending a property where plaster is not dry yet means they can't complete their scheduled task. Effectively planning and coordinating these works is an ongoing challenge for repairs teams.

Planning complex works

Where a problem at a property is more complicated than a single responsive repair, we often find failures could have been avoided if there had been a clear plan or schedule of works from the outset or diagnosis of the problem. These failures often lead to a breakdown in communication and trust amongst all parties – landlord, contractor/operative, and resident.

In one case we reviewed for this report, a resident was given 2 days' notice of major works, scheduled to last 10 days. In another case, the landlord sent the resident a schedule of works which provided no indication of when the work would start or finish. We have also seen a lack of schedule of works resulting in the landlord not knowing who was responsible for which remedial works. In another case, the diagnosis identified 19 different repair jobs, but there was no clear plan for carrying them out. This resulted in excessive delays, multiple repeat contractor visits, and a finding of maladministration.

Project management

Landlords use various project management approaches for complex repairs triggered by factors such as cost, number of trades involved, and projected time. These approaches often lead to successful outcomes. Complex work can be stressful for residents, so some landlords employ resident liaison officers to keep residents informed and connected with the contractors. While such roles are more common during major works projects (replacement kitchens, bathrooms, and so on.) those landlords reported the positive effects of using this approach for single-property repairs, with residents feeling more informed and less alone.

Digital platforms can help share information and plan complex works more effectively. Making sure these IT systems function well is essential.

Landlords often use a mix of in-house and outsourced services. While outsourcing can offer value for money, it can also reduce control over service quality. In-house teams are seen as more aligned with the organisation's values and customer-focused. Some landlords prefer in-house teams for better oversight and VAT savings.

Outsourcing challenges often relate to contract management. Issues can arise from subcontracting, leading to poor outcomes due to inadequate information sharing and quality monitoring. Regular communication with contractors is crucial to avoid outsourcing issues.

When bringing services in-house, landlords might face challenges related to culture change, which can be addressed with values-led training.

Resident concerns and trust

Residents appreciate when landlords act on repairs, whether done by in-house or external operatives. Some landlords ensure outsourced operatives have branded vans and uniforms to show their association. While these steps are welcome, issues of trust go far deeper.

The condition of a home is important to residents' wellbeing, and poor repairs can lead to feelings of shame. Maintenance is often emotional, as seen in the [‘Disobedient Buildings’ research](#). Residents shared frustrations with the quality of repairs and the perception that non-essential repairs are ignored. Where repairs or ‘improvement’ works involve installing lower quality



“Social landlords are increasingly adopting practices used by private landlords to force tenants to voluntarily give up possession of their home through bullying, harassment, and threats. This behaviour is directed at those considered ‘problems’ because they dare to complain about repairs.”

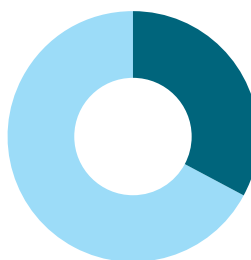
– Resident

products – perceived or otherwise – this is experienced by residents as representing a lowering of their value and worth (Daniels, 2024). A repair considered “non-essential” (or “cosmetic”) may have great significance to the resident and may grow into more serious problems if ignored.

Assurance and oversight

Quality assurance is vital in managing repairs and avoiding problems like fraud. Landlords should monitor work quality closely, as recommended by the [Rethinking Repairs and Maintenance Project](#).

One of the strongest themes we found in our casebook was concerns regarding the standard of contractors' and operatives' work, often exposing a lack of clear landlord and contractor quality control processes, or consideration of the possible emotional and well as physical effect on the resident.



33%

of residents perceive a lack of quality assurance activities being carried out by the landlord during and after works, and **40%** believe social housing landlords carry out a poor standard of work.

Casework examples of poor work include putting new flooring over damp without removing it first, causing more damage during the process of trying to fix the reported issue and the requiring further repairs. We have also seen contractors attempting to carry out work they are not skilled or qualified in, leading to dissatisfaction with the quality of the repair and ultimately complaints.

We found a lack of monitoring and oversight by the landlord especially in checking the quality of the work. Quality assurance is an integral part of performance and contract management. Inadequate quality assurance and a lack of managerial

insight are common weaknesses which, in extreme circumstances, may even create opportunities for fraud. Checking quality of work is listed as one of the key considerations in the Rethinking Repairs and Maintenance Project's guidance, [What is an 'excellent' repairs and maintenance service?](#)

Damage to belongings

Residents often complain about damage to belongings caused during works, which was referred to in several responses to our call for evidence and is a prevalent theme in our casework. We have seen cases where



Case study – destroyed items without consent

Contractors working for Mr F's landlord carried out extensive works, including the ceiling reinstatement, plastering, redecoration, mould treatment, and electrical work.

They conducted an environmental clean at the end and informed the landlord they had disposed of "low value" kitchen items.

When Mr F queried this, the contractors said it was "self-evident" the items could not have been kept, but it acknowledged that items had been disposed of without Mr F's consent and that it could not provide an itemised list of what had been disposed of.

The landlord did not apologise to Mr F for this, or look at ways of resolving the issue, even after Mr F remarked the incident had damaged his trust in the landlord and its contractors.

The landlord could not demonstrate it took appropriate action regarding the disposal of Mr F's belongings. Although the contractors' view was that the reason for the disposal was "self-evident", it was not their decision to make. Furthermore, a personal judgement of something being evident does not negate the need for evidence itself.

Although some items may appear to be of low financial value, they may be of sentimental or personal value to the owner, and this should not be overlooked.



neither landlord nor contractor have been able to verify what condition the items were at the start of the process and consequently, not able to say with any certainty whether they are responsible for the damage.

In some cases, we have seen landlords accept responsibility, and compensate for, the damage caused without there being supporting evidence their contractors were responsible. Although this approach is good from a relationship perspective, landlords may be paying out money unnecessarily which is not a fair or effective long-term approach to take.

In other cases, there has been a protracted back-and-forth exchange between resident, landlord, and contractor about the damage and responsibility. Such an approach often causes animosity, suspicion, and delay in resolving the issue.

Where items are damaged or identified as needing discarding, it is vital landlords have a clear evidence base for this, and the resident's consent is sought. Keeping personal belongings safe and respecting these, and the resident's home, are the cornerstone of trust.



Case study – damage to property and belongings managed well

Mrs C's home was flooded, and her landlord arranged for her family to stay in a hotel while repairs were made. Before they returned, a gas check revealed a leak, delaying their return by 3 weeks. Upon returning, Mrs C found her sofa stained with paint and her freezer turned off, spoiling food.

The landlord compensated over £200 for the food and the landlord cleaned the sofa but did not investigate the damage, leaving Mrs C unhappy. She was also worried about contractors having keys and asked for the locks to be changed. The landlord agreed but took 6 months to do so, later apologising and offering compensation. A meeting at Mrs C's home led to an offer for a professional sofa cleaning, but she remained unsatisfied as the sofa still seemed damaged. The landlord apologised, acknowledging the contractors' failure to protect the sofa, and offered £250 plus a new sofa through a hardship fund.

We recommended the landlord consider carrying out a 'settling in visit' when residents return home after an extended period away from the home because of an extended temporary move or refurbishment. This might provide an opportunity for issues to be identified and resolved at an earlier stage. This is something for other landlords to consider introducing.

Part 3: Safety, risk, and complaint management

Safeguarding and vulnerabilities

Staff visiting homes can often act as ‘eyes and ears’, identifying safety and wellbeing issues. Reliable reporting systems are crucial. Some landlords have improved this by adding a mandatory safeguarding question to workers’ devices which prompts a response.

We heard about the ‘soft skills’ operatives need when working in residents’ homes. Operatives told us how talking to residents helps uncover additional issues and to reassure them about the progress of works, offering a tangible improvement in resident satisfaction. Some landlords are offering training to improve operatives’ confidence in this area and integrating resident feedback into management processes. Operatives expressed appreciation for leadership taking the time to listen to their ideas and feedback, while acknowledging it won’t always be possible for that to be acted on immediately. They shared that they valued being trusted to take initiative where appropriate to do so, for instance in getting social care involved when safeguarding concerns are presented or in raising new work orders for follow on works.

In order for these approaches to be effective, staff need to be given the necessary training and guidance. It needs to be as straightforward as possible to raise concerns, and for there to be feedback and reassurance so operatives know they acted appropriately. Ultimately, operatives need to be able to trust their feedback will be valued and acted upon, thereby creating a ‘virtuous cycle’ where they will feel confident about raising future concerns.



Casework example: Landlord and contractor provide a sensitive and responsive service

Ms D and her child moved to supported housing after escaping domestic abuse.

On arrival, she reported leaks, mould, and cleanliness issues, and expressed concerns about discrimination. The landlord promptly inspected, documented, and repaired the issues, offering free cleaning. They also addressed her discrimination concerns thoroughly.

During repairs, a contractor noted the absence of furniture and toys, informing the landlord, who arranged for these items.

The communication between the landlord and contractor demonstrated empathy, building trust and ensuring Ms D and her child received necessary support. The contractor’s confidence in raising their concerns indicated a trusting relationship with the landlord.



Certain landlords have teams dedicated to ensuring concerns reach the right people. Clear structures lead to more responsibility, accountability, and reports from workers. However, not all landlords provide feedback on what happens after a concern is reported. Encouraging workers to voice concerns is essential.

Some landlords conduct risk assessments when services are requested, considering residents' history and vulnerabilities to prioritise tasks. Others include safeguarding training in staff development.

Large landlords face challenges interacting with multiple local authorities who often have different procedures. However this also brings opportunities for information sharing and valuable professional relationships. Workers stressed the importance of soft skills to uncover issues and reassure residents, improving satisfaction. Training helps



“There is a lack of training/skills on client side around safety. Sometimes we receive risk assessments/surveys”

– Contractor

build confidence, and resident feedback is integrated into management.

Landlord staff told us they value when leadership listens to their ideas, even if immediate action is not possible. They appreciate being trusted to take initiative, like involving social care when necessary.

For these strategies to be effective, staff want proper training and a straightforward reporting processes. Feedback is important to assure workers their input matters, providing a good communication cycle.

Good practice example: Resident found in distress

An operative from a landlord's gas team visited a property for an emergency boiler repair. When the resident did not respond, he called through the letterbox and learned she was unwell and unable to reach the door. He immediately informed his team leader and contacted emergency services. While waiting, he reassured her through the letterbox. Emergency services arrived, forced entry, and discovered the resident had suffered

a suspected stroke and broken hip. The operative completed the boiler repair, ensuring the resident would have heating and hot water upon her return from the hospital. The landlord praised the operative's empathetic response, noting it would have been easy to mark the job as no access and leave, but his actions ensured the resident received urgent medical attention.

This case highlights the importance of empathy and a holistic approach in property maintenance, resulting in positive outcomes for both the resident and the landlord.



Preventing future deaths – Awaab’s Law

Residents must have confidence in their landlords to maintain a safe living environment.

Awaab’s Law marks the most significant change in landlord repair legislation since the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. It mandates landlords to investigate and report on emergencies and damp and mould issues within set timescales, with plans to expand this to other hazards in 2026 and 2027.

During fieldwork, landlords discussed preparations, including IT system improvements, training, and collaborations with service providers. Feedback was mixed. Some landlords were confident in addressing category 1 hazards, while others questioned the feasibility of managing some hazards under the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System](#) (HHSRS). Adjustments

in hazard report triaging and home condition assessments are being made, with digital systems playing a key role in prioritising repairs.

Although most landlords found inspection and remedial timelines achievable, concerns about workforce strain and the timescale to produce the written statement were expressed. Training was identified as crucial, with some landlords expanding damp and mould training across housing services and developing in-house expertise to reduce external consultation costs.

Potential challenges include temporary resident relocations and issues like fuel poverty which can make hazards worse. Landlords outsourcing repairs are working closely with contractors, making Awaab’s Law a regular topic in meetings to ensure readiness. However, the prioritisation of damp and mould might lead to neglect of other repairs, highlighting the need for a hazard prevention approach.



Safety risks to residents and operatives

There are 3 components to risk management:

1. the risk present in the property that the contractor and landlord both need to be aware of
2. any potential risk to the contractors which the resident or the resident's situation may cause
3. the safety risk to residents

Landlords are required to meet the Decent Homes Standard, proactively identifying and mitigating risks using data on asset conditions, repairs, and safety assessments. Our casework has highlighted issues with scaffolding safety concerns, illustrating the need for balancing planned and responsive repairs and following safety guidelines.

Landlords told us about some of the steps they are taking to improve in this area. Examples given included ensuring risks are kept up to date, with any markers being reflective of the current situation. One landlord gave us the example of not reviewing a marker that said the visit required 2 people. This caused problems for the contractors when they attended as the resident felt the approach was heavy-handed and unfair. Another example given was ensuring processes are in place for situations such as contractors attending a visit and it not being safe for them to attend, such as if the resident is under the influence. Landlords recognised the importance of not just recording the risk(s) and sharing appropriately but also setting out what the risk mitigation measures are.



“Some clients only keep a risk register for 6 months, so you can’t trust the information a landlord keeps on the residents. We’ve had some really serious incidents, including our staff threatened with violence and the client [landlord] aren’t supportive.”

– Contractor



Case study – delay in identifying unsafe boiler

Mrs G reported a boiler leak and yellow water from the taps. The landlord’s heating contractor investigated multiple times, and 3 months later condemned the boiler due to over-pressurisation, a potential danger.

Mrs G was left without heating and hot water for 4 weeks. While we cannot confirm if the boiler posed a significant risk, it is concerning it took so long for the contractor to identify the boiler’s pressure issue, which was evident from a visible gauge. Additionally, neither the landlord nor contractors provided alternative heating or hot water after condemning the boiler.



Timeliness and quality

Residents prioritise timely and high-quality repairs. All the landlords we spoke to expressed ongoing challenges with recruitment and retention, affecting both contracted services and in-house delivery.

All landlords, and especially those operating in rural areas, told us they were recruiting from a limited pool of skilled operatives. Some of this is driven by the available workforce being older and reaching retirement age, without an adequate pool of tradespersons entering the workforce or having the relevant skills or experience. Landlords also feel they are competing with private providers and other councils or housing associations to recruit from that limited pool.

To respond to this shortage, landlords are developing 'grow your own talent' initiatives such as apprenticeships schemes and recruitment drives focused on appealing to women. We heard these were successful and had a high number of applicants for the landlords we interviewed. However, others noted apprenticeships can be hindered by short contracts, with successes seen when these are considered as longer-term investments.

Salary remains an issue when recruiting tradespeople in competition with other providers. One landlord told us they had developed a separate salary scale for operatives to address the issues they were seeing in recruitment. However, competition on salary offered is likely contributing to the wider problems the sector is seeing around recruitment, given that smaller landlords and local authorities may not be able to match salaries.

LiveWest – women in construction, apprenticeships, flexible approach to contracts and working hours

LiveWest saw the changes during COVID-19 as a chance to get more women into construction through their "women in trades" project. They hosted taster days at a local college, offered mentoring, and ensured mentors were well-trained. They found that having more female workers encouraged even more women to join. LiveWest provides flexible work options like part-time hours (at least 30 a week), job shares, and is testing seasonal hours. They aim to remove barriers for those interested in repairs and maintenance, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Their apprenticeship program has grown from 300 to 500 applicants annually, offering a salary of £26,000 for a 2 to 3 year commitment, with hopes of permanent positions. They emphasise the importance of good training providers and offer 30-hour a week apprenticeships. The program's popularity is partly due to its support scheme and local promotion, highlighting that apprenticeships aren't just for teens. Applicants are initially screened using values-based recruitment and go through four-hour assessments, including customer service tasks. As of September 2024 tenant satisfaction with repairs is at 81.5%, with improved timeliness and fewer ongoing repairs. While these initiatives are successful, LiveWest notes that their success is not just due to the schemes but also to creative and collaborative thinking.

Once operatives are recruited or developed, landlord staff told us they felt retaining operatives is important for keeping a high level of familiarity with policy and procedure throughout the organisation, as well as developing specific knowledge and skills in repairs and maintenance.

Availability of operatives is clearly a problem which requires a wider solution than landlords can necessarily achieve on their own. Although one approach in isolation will never be the answer, there are strands from these approaches landlords and contractors may wish to consider adopting.

Procure Plus – 'ex offender' programme

[Procure Plus](#), established in 2006, helps 'hidden communities' like ex-offenders, care leavers, young people in alternative education, and those using homelessness services, reintegrate into the workforce, especially in social housing roles. One of its initiatives, [Clean Start](#), created with Trafford Housing Trust, employs ex-offenders for tasks like void works, grounds maintenance, and communal repairs. Trust is crucial in their work, with transparency about candidates being key to maintaining landlord confidence.

Procure Plus not only shares relevant candidate information but also helps landlords with risk assessments and supports contractors in managing diverse staff. Although not all placements succeed, Procure Plus stresses that no job is entirely without risk. They advocate for the construction industry to engage more with hidden communities and highlight their [Women in Manual Trades](#) initiative. Since its inception in 1975, women's participation in trades has grown from under 2% to 5%. A recent effort involved offering construction courses to female prisoners, aiming to broaden workforce diversity, though the outcomes are still being assessed.



Predictive versus reactive maintenance

Proactively maintaining homes is crucial in preventing disrepair and reducing complex repairs. Residents expressed concerns that a lack of proactive or cyclical maintenance leads to more urgent repairs. Elected representatives and over 100 local authorities, including Southwark Council, have advocated for increased investment in maintenance,

standardised home surveys, and more tradespersons.

Proactive maintenance, such as biennial 'Property M.O.T.s,' have positively impacted resident satisfaction. However, as housing portfolios grow without increased staffing, maintaining such programmes becomes challenging. Landlords are encouraged to find ways to implement proactive maintenance within their resource constraints to mitigate disrepair.

Complaint handling

Landlords and contractors face challenges in handling complaints which has caused backlogs and heightened resident expectations.

We were concerned to hear the COVID-19 pandemic is still affecting complaints. There are still backlogs remaining, meaning operatives are being allocated work which is already delayed and therefore, more likely to generate complaints. Some operatives felt resident expectations are changing, and they are more likely to complain if they feel they are not met.

One large contractor told us they had to create their own complaints team with the advent of the new [Complaint Handling Code](#). This was because its landlord clients pass the complaints over to the contractor to investigate and respond to. Although this model was not shared by the other contractors we spoke with, many commented on a mixed understanding of the Code

by landlords. The distinction between a service request and a formal complaint was a common example. Contractors told us some landlords now treat all matters as a complaint, which can have a knock-on effect for the contractor.

Landlords and contractors should communicate with the resident respectfully, clearly, and accurately. If something goes wrong, there is a need to be honest and open. Landlords should not deflect, shift blame, or provide responses that aren't evidence-based and hope the resident won't notice. Landlords should recognise that when things go wrong, this will have impacted trust and it will take additional work and time to repair that trust.

Good complaint handling is crucial in such circumstances. Bad complaint handling can erode or even destroy trust. Proper analysis of complaints can show at an early stage where trust is beginning to break down, and proactive steps taken to reverse any worrying signs.

Communication and expectations

Contractors also mentioned the challenges of dealing with multi-trade complaints and dealing with complaints where a lot of the underlying causes are out of their control, such as sourcing the labour and materials. Some felt timescales were sometimes outside of their control as well. These complaints are seen as particularly hard to manage.

Contractors spoke of the desire to avoid complaints, sometimes at the expense of being direct with the landlord or the resident about the repairs and maintenance issue. Examples given included a resident with several large fish tanks against the wall, leading to damp. The contractor told us

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“We do get it wrong, and we do cause complaints. However, we are also sometimes unfairly blamed when things go wrong. The bigger the landlord, the bigger the target on our back.”

– Contractor



“We are going into properties to do damp repairs [but] it’s not solving a problem, just pushing it further down the street.”

– Contractor

they knew this was the cause, but there is a fear of “upsetting the resident and dealing with a complaint.” In this specific case, the contractor was asked to put a vent in, which they did, but against their professional judgement.

Contractors feel an education piece is missing, particularly around maintenance. They acknowledged the tone of this education is key and were conscious of not blaming residents’ lifestyles but feel there is a balance between acknowledging what might be contributing to repairs and maintenance issues, and assuming the solution is always a repair or a maintenance job.

With the latter, contractors told us this often leads to frustrations on both sides due to mismanagement of expectations and repeated follow-up visits, ultimately leading to complaints.

A group of contractors told us that by their estimation, there would be an 80% reduction of repairs and maintenance complaints if a housing officer still attended to help with some of the basic property checks and advice giving.

Challenges in complaint management

Contractors expanded on their frustrations around not undertaking preventative work or tackling underlying issues, especially when they know this is likely to lead to a complaint.

A constant driver of complaint escalation is a failure to complete actions committed to in a complaint response. We saw examples of how this might be resolved through good KIM and performance monitoring. One landlord we spoke to logs

the necessary repairs and any other actions promised on its complaints management system. It uses the system to report on and discuss progress on all outstanding actions weekly. The relevant complaint handler has responsibility and ownership for seeing actions through and communicating progress to residents, also on a weekly basis.

Another frustration for front-line operatives and staff arises when senior staff or leaders respond to complaints and accept a resident’s demands when the operative or staff member has previously declined this based on the landlord’s policy or their professional judgement about the appropriate solution to the issue. This can lead to those operatives and staff feeling undermined and adopting a negative view toward complaints and complainants.

It is important landlords and contractors see complaints as opportunities to recover repair failings. Commitments made in the complaints process need to be completed, otherwise it compounds the breakdown of trust. Appropriate redress should be provided. We too often find low levels of compensation being offered, which furthers the resident sense of disrespect.

Structured learning from complaints could help the landlord transition to a preventative maintenance model, provides important intelligence on people, processes and systems, and improve overall service delivery.

This will be essential to repair trust in maintenance.

Conclusion

Trust is essential to landlords, residents, and contractors. Our investigation has enabled us to understand the perspectives of all 3, including the commonalities. These include the desire to be treated respectfully and with empathy; to be given accurate and timely information; not to be exposed to risk or harm, and to be trusted. When thought about in terms of similarity, rather than differences, the gulf between the parties feels more hopeful.

It was evident from this investigation that the vast majority of landlords and contractors want to provide a speedy and high-quality repairs service, with residents given as much choice and power as possible. We recognise the challenging operating environment. Equally, that landlords, contractors and residents cannot rely on the landscape dramatically changing or hoping it might improve.

The advent of Awaab's Law presents enormous challenges but also brings a huge opportunity for the sector to improve the timeliness and quality of baseline service provision. If trust is the missing piece, how can it be 'found'? How is trust built?

Strategic solutions for improvement

The vital housebuilding goals proposed by government underscore the urgency to modernise maintenance. The long-term sustainability of social housing involves both increasing the number of social homes together with improving existing ones. This balance between

new and old has sometimes proven challenging for some social landlords. Overcoming this requires a better strategic operating environment. This encompasses exploring sustainable funding solutions; identifying and removing barriers to sector collaboration; addressing structural challenges, such as skills; and strengthening resident representation to promote accountability, given the clear imbalance of power. While some of these challenges are decades old, the government's long-term housing plan offers a fresh opportunity to address them. We encourage government to use its convening power to find solutions.

Building trust through communication and action

Landlords must avoid making a bad situation worse. Treat the resident as a human being of equal worth, while remaining alive to the way that the power imbalance can be experienced by the resident. Do what they say they are going to do. Putting in place good planning, adequate staffing, procurement and contract management practices, high-quality knowledge and information management, and communication skills are all enablers to achieving this end.

Communicate with the resident respectfully, clearly, and accurately. If something goes wrong, be honest and open. Don't deflect, shift blame, or provide responses that aren't evidence-based and hope the resident won't notice. Recognise that when things go wrong, this will have impacted trust, and it will take additional work and time to repair that trust.

Using complaints as an early indicator

Good complaint handling is absolutely crucial. Bad complaint handling can erode or even completely destroy trust. Proper analysis of complaints can show at an early stage where trust is beginning to break down, and proactive steps taken to reverse any worrying signs.

Landlords must trust their teams and their residents who, in turn must have faith in the landlord's ability to provide the services both parties aspire to. Residents also need to believe the landlord understands the concept of home as an emotional place and that they are treated as deserving of a safe, comfortable and well-maintained home.

This starts with the attitudes and behaviours within an organisation, which are then reflected in both policy and practice. Although not across the board, we were told by some landlords about initiatives and policies that sounded positive, but then we heard resentment about residents' lifestyles from operatives. In such situations, it is hard to see how truly trusting relations can be cultivated.

Strengthening trust

Language is important in showing the values of the organisation. Avoiding impersonal language such as 'stock' and 'decants' when speaking to residents is a starting point. While different landlords have different approaches to language, using respectful language supports a human-centric culture.

It is important to note these points extend to the relationship between the landlord and contractors. This starts from the procurement stage, which is fundamentally an exercise in trust: can you, and can we, achieve what we are asking, by the time specified?

Both sides spoke of an absence of relationship management, and the desire for more in-person contact, as well as informal performance conversations outside of the KPI sphere.

There is also more to be done on quality assurance of work. This needs to start with clear expectations, as well as clear frameworks for post-works quality checks.

Ultimately, residents, landlords, contractors, and the new government clearly share common goals for positive change. By working collaboratively and adopting our recommendations, they can strengthen trust, as well as rebuild it where it appears to have been lost.



Recommendations

We acknowledge the diverse landscape of the social housing sector, which includes a wide range of landlords, each with unique practices and approaches. We recognise some landlords may already be implementing some of the recommendations outlined in this report and others may not be applicable.

However, we encourage all landlords, regardless of their current practices, to carefully review the following recommendations. By doing so, landlords can identify and adopt the recommendations that best fit their specific context and needs. This approach should be discussed with the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) and wider governance.

These recommendations are designed to highlight key actions landlords can take to enhance trust and collaboration in social housing repairs and maintenance. Our aim is to ensure services are not only efficient and transparent but also centred around the needs and experiences of residents.

Government



1. Independent funding review

Government should commission an independent review to find a sustainable financial settlement for the social housing sector. This should:

- a. balance fair rents with long-term certainty to deliver a new, more ambitious Decent Homes standard
- b. support to accelerate the refurbishment of estates rather than temporary measures
- c. propose universal maximum repair time to reduce postcode lottery
- d. enhanced tests for accessing affordable homes grant to ensure growth is sustainable against future maintenance costs and takes into account the landlord's track record on safe and decent homes

2. Review barriers to modernising maintenance

Government should examine barriers to modernising maintenance, from skills and training to procurement, alongside exploring opportunities for greater collaboration to improve services.

3. Establish a statutory resident advocacy body

Government should create a national resident representative body to enhance accountability. This body should be placed on statute to protect and advocate for tenant interests. It should benefit from grant-funding, transparent information on landlord performance on repairs and support local resident groups and/or board members. It should also be able to set codes of conduct for operatives responsible for repairs.

Systems



4. Implement advanced information management

Landlords should ensure they know their residents as well as their homes and use this information to manage service delivery. This includes considering the information needed to support the core objectives of a high-quality, modern repairs and maintenance service. This may include allowing residents to track and reschedule appointments.

Data and analysis



5. Collect and analyse service-impacting data

Gather qualitative and quantitative feedback to better analyse their repairs service and share with governance and MRC periodically.

6. Leverage insights for service improvements

Use insights gained from data analysis to drive meaningful changes that enhance the repairs and maintenance service for residents. This should help identify any underlying factors stopping a high-quality repairs service. This may include issues such as failure to gain access, repeated resident contact for reassurance, or exceeding reasonable repair timescales and appointment frequencies.

7. Conduct learning exercises post-contract termination

When a repairs or maintenance contract ends, conduct an in-depth learning exercise. Use the insights gained to improve future contract management practices or inform any reprocurement. This includes how the complaints team will support recovery of any repairs backlogs.

Policy and procedures



8. Collaborative policy review

Involve residents in reviewing repairs and maintenance policies to ensure alignment with the recommendations in this report.

9. Develop and review a code of conduct

Create and promote a Code of Conduct for all staff and contractors visiting residents' homes. Regularly review this code with resident involvement and consider any relevant national or sector guidance, especially by any future national resident body.

10. Involved procurement design

Engage residents in designing the procurement criteria and process for selecting repairs and maintenance contractors.

11. Establish a damage compensation procedure

Implement a clear procedure to determine responsibility for replacing or compensating damaged items.

12. Clarify repairs procedures

Ensure repairs policies include:

- documented justification, adhering to legal obligations, including around hazards, for deferring responsive repairs in anticipation of planned works
- a detailed schedule for complex works, including anticipated timelines, shared with residents before commencement

Quality assurance



13. Implement robust quality assurance processes

Develop comprehensive quality assurance processes to evaluate completed works, ensuring they meet established standards.

Communication and relationships



14. Communication strategies

Review communication to ensure it is timely, transparent, tailored, and the tone is respectful of residents.

15. Publicise maintenance and improvement plans

Regularly publish and update planned maintenance and major improvement programmes as they evolve.

16. Address communication gaps

Consider mandatory communication training for operatives or contractors and test effectiveness via feedback.

17. Facilitate feedback sharing

Establish mechanisms for sharing feedback about performance outside the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) process. Include discussions on successes, emerging issues, and potential improvements.

18. Develop trust recovery plans

When a repairs or maintenance contract is terminated, implement a recovery plan to rebuild trust among affected residents.

Training

19. Invest in operative training

Commit to a cyclical training programme for operatives, ensuring they remain informed about evolving technologies. Encourage contractors to adopt similar training practices.



Positive actions taken by landlords to improve empathy and understanding

We have met and spoken with many landlords who have good relationships with residents built on trust and understanding. They follow these steps to make sure repairs are handled smoothly.

Proactive maintenance

They keep homes and shared spaces in good condition to help prevent bigger problems later.

Clear communication

They let residents know what to expect regarding repairs and maintenance. This includes:

- clear agreements outlining landlord and tenant responsibilities
- easy-to-find repair policies and timelines.
- codes of conduct for staff and contractors

Appointment communication

They provide a clear schedule for repair visits so residents know what to expect.

Consider resident experience

If past issues exist, these landlords consider appointing a liaison officer to help manage repairs smoothly.

Access to information

They ensure staff have information about the resident and property history, including any individual needs of the household or ongoing repairs.

Ensuring quality work

After repairs, they gather feedback from residents and contractors, and conduct inspections to ensure the work is satisfactory. This is crucial, especially if the repair was part of a complaint, to avoid further issues and build trust.

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[believe housing](#)

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[Coastline Housing Ltd](#)

[Eastlight Community Homes Limited](#)

[Efficiency North Holdings Limited](#)

[Havebury Housing Partnership](#)

[Institute of Health Equity](#)

[The Law Society](#)

[LiveWest Homes Limited](#)

[Mid Devon District Council](#)

[National Federation of ALMOs](#)

[National Housing Federation](#)

[National Housing Maintenance Forum](#)

[Platform Housing Group Limited](#)

[Procure Plus Holdings Limited](#)

[Regulator of Social Housing](#)

[Shepherds Bush Housing Association](#)

[Torus62 Limited](#)

[Tpas](#)

[Vantage Business Solutions Consulting Ltd](#)

[VIVID Housing Limited](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

Our report is based on a review of over 750 cases we determined between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2024. We have also included data from determinations made between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

We conducted a call for evidence which received over 3,000 responses between 1 August and 25 October 2024. This was open to residents, landlords, contractors and operatives, and elected representatives. We asked a range of questions about:

- residents' experiences of repairs and maintenance operatives visiting their homes
- landlords' reasons for and against outsourcing repairs and maintenance services
- what the barriers to working effectively with repairs and maintenance operatives are, from both sides of the contract
- what issues are raised by constituents of MPs and councillors and whether there has been an increase in recent years

We visited several landlord offices to speak with senior leadership teams and repairs and maintenance staff. We spoke with contractors, attended 'round table' discussions, and met with several industry bodies to discuss the themes of the report and gather evidence.

We also reviewed research carried out by several sector organisations and academic institutions, and data published by Government.

Appendix 2: Our jurisdiction

The Housing Ombudsman can consider complaints from the following people:

- a person who has a lease, tenancy, licence to occupy, service agreement or other arrangement to occupy premises owned or managed by a landlord who is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme (the Scheme)
- an ex-occupier if they had a legal relationship with the member at the time that the matter complained of arose
- a representative or person who has authority to make a complaint on behalf of any of the people listed above

This means that, as well as considering complaints from tenants, we can also accept complaints from leaseholders and shared owners. The only category of homeowners who are not eligible to bring a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman about a member landlord are those who own the freehold of their home.

However, we cannot consider complaints where:

- the landlord/managing agent is not a member of the Scheme
- the complainant does not have a landlord/tenant relationship with a member landlord/managing agent
- the landlord complaints procedure has not been exhausted
- they concern matters that are, or have been, the subject of legal proceedings and where the complainant has or had the opportunity to raise the subject matter of the complaint as part of those proceedings
- they concern matters that involve the level of service charges or costs associated with major works
- they fall within the jurisdiction of another Ombudsman, regulator or complaint handling body

Appendix 3: Background legislation and standards

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

In accordance with the [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#), landlords must give tenants written notice at least 24 hours before entering the property unless it's an emergency. The Regulatory Standards 2024 state that landlords are obliged to provide tenants with accessible information about this right ([Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#), paragraph 2.3.2).

The Cave Review 2007

The [Cave Review 2007](#) highlighted the importance of trust between residents and landlords. One of the key insights from the review was the expectation from residents that their landlords would provide timely and high-quality repairs and maintenance services. This expectation is pivotal to ensuring that homes remain in good condition, contributing to tenant satisfaction and overall wellbeing.

The Disability support and social housing resident panel report (2023)

The [Disability support and social housing resident panel report](#) (2023) stresses the importance of enhancing awareness and training among social housing contractors about disability. This is to ensure they understand the needs of disabled residents when accessing homes for work. Residents have reported issues such as contractors leaving hazardous building materials and not listening to their concerns, leading to incorrect home adaptations. There is a strong call for

shorter repair wait times and prioritising repairs for disabled residents, as their health depends on timely maintenance.

The Better Social Housing Review (2022)

The [Better Social Housing Review \(2022\)](#) also highlights that dissatisfaction with repairs and maintenance is a significant concern. Barriers like disability, ethnicity, language, communication impairments, and poor mental health often prevent residents from being heard. Surveys indicate that disabled tenants are more likely to express dissatisfaction with their housing conditions.

The Procurement Act 2023

The [Procurement Act 2023](#) specifies that procurement responsibilities continue beyond awarding a contract. Part 4 outlines the necessary steps for contract management, including new obligations to evaluate and disclose supplier performance. It also details conditions under which a supplier may be excluded from procurement due to “unacceptably poor performance”.

Social Housing regulator standards

The Regulator's [Safety and Quality Standard](#) requires landlords to utilise stock condition data to ensure homes are safe, well-maintained, and meet health and safety legal standards. Compliance with the [Decent Homes Standard](#) and effective delivery of repairs, maintenance, and planned improvements is essential. Landlords must also provide tenants with accessible information regarding home maintenance. Failure to accurately record and share this data results in non-compliance with the standard.

Government's Decent Homes Guidance

Landlords are required to ensure homes meet the standards outlined in section 5 of the [Government's Decent Homes Guidance](#) and maintain them unless exempted by the regulator. They must adopt a proactive approach to identifying and mitigating risks to residents' safety. This includes using data on property condition, safety check deadlines, repairs, complaints, health and safety assessments, energy performance certificates, and resident vulnerabilities, as per The [Regulator's Safety and Quality Standard](#).

The Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard

This standard emphasises the importance of treating tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect. Landlords should ensure all interactions are transparent and residents feel valued and heard. This approach can foster trust and improve relationships between landlords and residents.

Proposed Competence and Conduct Standard

In February 2024 the Government initiated a consultation for a new regulatory standard called the Competence and Conduct Standard. This proposal requires landlords to develop or adopt a code of conduct for their staff, ensuring it is integrated throughout the organisation. This standard aims to ensure all relevant individuals conduct themselves professionally and ethically, thereby enhancing trust and accountability.

Tpas Contractor Resident Engagement Standards

Tpas, a membership organisation focused on tenant engagement, has developed standards for contractors to ensure effective interaction with residents. These standards are part of an accreditation process and include a customer charter and monitoring process.



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