



Crawley Homes

Stock Condition Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This stock condition policy sets out how we will assess the condition of our housing stock to ensure the wellbeing and safety of residents and maximise the efficiency of our maintenance investment programmes.
- 1.2. At Crawley Homes we recognise that our housing assets are integral to providing happy customers and healthy homes. It is vital that we proactively monitor and manage the condition of our homes to uphold our commitment to quality housing provision.
- 1.3. Reference within this policy to residents includes both council tenants and leaseholders.
- 1.4. A list of key definitions and acronyms is set out in Appendix A.

2. Background and Legal Context

Legal Framework:

- 2.1. Our Stock Condition Survey programme operates within local, regional, and national legislation governing housing standards; landlord obligations; and tenant rights. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Building Safety Act 2022
 - Housing Act 2004: Establishing minimum standards for residential properties, including safety, amenities, and maintenance requirements.
 - Landlord and Tenant Act 1985: Outlining the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, including the provision of safe and habitable living conditions.
 - The Decent Homes Standard: Sets a minimum standard for all social housing. Ensuring a property is in a reasonable state of repair, having reasonably modern services, providing a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. The standard defines a decent home as being free from most serious health and safety hazards, such as fall risks, fire risks, or carbon monoxide poisoning.
 - Health and Safety Regulations: Ensuring compliance with health and safety standards to safeguard residents against hazards and risks including The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
 - HHSRS: Risk assessment procedure that is the statutory element of the Decent Homes Standard.
 - Data Protection Laws: Safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of tenant information collected during the stock condition survey, in accordance with data protection regulations. To be read in conjunction with Crawley Borough Council's associated policies and procedures.

Regulatory Compliance:

- 2.2. Our Stock Condition Survey policy aligns with regulatory requirements.

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023: Adhering to specific regulations and guidelines regarding property standards and tenant welfare.
- Housing Ombudsman Service: Committing to fair and transparent dispute resolution mechanisms in accordance with the principles outlined by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Tenant Rights and Engagement:

- 2.3. Central to our policy is the protection of tenant rights. We uphold the principles of:
- **Right to Information:** Ensuring tenants are informed about the purpose, process, and outcomes of stock condition surveys, promoting transparency and accountability.
 - **Right to Participation:** Providing avenues for tenant involvement in survey planning, implementation, and review processes, fostering a collaborative approach to property management.
 - **Right to Redress:** Offering accessible channels for tenants to raise concerns, lodge complaints, and seek resolution for issues identified during surveys, in line with regulatory requirements and best practices.

Ethical Considerations:

- 2.4. Beyond legal obligations, our policy is guided by ethical principles of integrity, fairness, and respect for human dignity. We pledge to:
- Uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct in all aspects of property management, including survey administration, data handling, and tenant interactions.
 - Prioritise the well-being and best interests of tenants, recognising their inherent right to dignified and safe housing conditions.

3. Policy statement

- 3.1. We will carry out Stock Condition Surveys, collecting asset data and resident information over a rolling three-year programme.
- This programme will help prevent minor issues from escalating into major problems, ultimately saving costs and resources overall. The data collected will be used to run a preventive maintenance model to upgrade component items before they fail.
- 3.2. We are committed to:
- **Comprehensive Assessment:** Conducting thorough and programmed surveys within this cycle.
 - **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Using survey findings to inform strategic decision-making, including prioritising maintenance activities, budget-allocation, and long-term asset management plans.

- **Tenant Engagement:** Engaging with tenants throughout the survey process to ensure their voices are heard, and their concerns are addressed.
 - **Compliance and Regulatory Adherence:** Ensuring full compliance with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, maintaining the highest standards of safety, accessibility, and sustainability.
 - **Continuous Improvement:** Continuously reviewing and refining our survey methodologies and procedures to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, and accuracy over time.
- 3.3. By implementing this policy, we demonstrate our commitment to providing happy customers and healthy homes, prioritising the well-being and satisfaction of our residents above all else.

4. Priority groups and areas

- 4.1. To ensure that preventative maintenance measures are implemented where they may be needed most, our stock condition survey programme will prioritise several target groups and areas:
- Households that include people with health, disability or other specific requirements
 - Homes where repairs are under-reported
 - Homes where there has been a high repair demand
 - Homes with reported damp and mould
 - Areas where decarbonisation funding could be available
 - Homes that have not had an asset or stock condition survey within the last three years

5. Survey content

- 5.1. Stock condition surveys will identify:
- Work that needs to be included in future planned works
 - Work that may be needed in the future
 - Repairs that need doing now
 - Items and areas to be checked include:
 - Smoke / heat alarms, carbon monoxide alarms
 - Extractor fans or ventilation systems.
 - Doors and windows
 - Kitchens, bathrooms
 - Roofs and loft spaces
 - To check any water tanks and fire breaks.
 - Exterior and internal walls
 - Communal areas in blocks of flats.
- 5.2. This list is not exhaustive.

- 5.3. Where a resident requests an inspection by a surveyor for major works, the surveyor will carry out a stock condition survey to the property at the same time to minimise appointments for resident and prevent duplicate visits.
- 5.4. Although this policy is aimed at assessing the condition of dwellings, wherever possible surveyors will also include communal areas in blocks of flats and garages in the area,
- 5.5. Photographs will be taken of the areas inspected.

6. Access

- 6.1. We want to ensure each property is inspected in a timely manner. We aim to work with our residents as flexibly as possible to make sure that appointments can be managed alongside their needs. This includes choice over the time that the survey will take place, but also the offer of direct contact details for customers to instigate a stock condition survey at their own convenience.
- 6.2. Methods of contact and procedures for no access are included in Appendix A.

7. Stock condition survey feedback

- 7.1. Feedback from the survey will be given in writing to residents setting out the main findings.
- 7.2. A satisfaction survey will be sent to each resident following the stock condition survey so we can gather feedback directly from residents to understand what we are doing well and if there any areas we can improve.

8. Partnership working

- 8.1. Internally, all Council teams have a role to play in ensuring that our homes are safe, well-maintained and issues are attended to. In particular, we will work closely with Housing Management, Cleaning and Clearance, Community Protection, Neighbourhood Services, and the Anti-Social Behaviour Team to resolve concerns found onsite that may not be strictly repairs-related.
- 8.2. We also work closely with external agencies such as West Sussex County Council, occupational therapy Connect and any other provider who may support customers in their homes should this need be identified.

9. Record keeping

- 9.1. As part of the principle of 'making every contact count' customers will be invited to update information about family composition, contact details and any individual needs, preferences or protected characteristics. Customers may decline to give this

information and opt to be contacted instead by a housing officer or other trusted member of Crawley Homes.

- 9.2. All data collected during the survey, whether customer details, photographs or notes of the customer contact will be stored securely on our housing management system and treated in line with Crawley Borough Council and Crawley Homes' Privacy Notices, the e Data Protection Act 2018 (the Act) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

10. Complaints or disputes about the policy

- 10.1. If you feel that this policy has been applied incorrectly you can escalate this through the council's complaints policy [Complaints | Crawley GOV.](#)

11. Equalities implications

- 11.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has identified some actions to ensure accessible communication about the process, expectations and access.
- 11.2. We will ensure that the font size is legible, and a braille option is available. For residents whose first language is not English, we will provide a translation service if needed. We will also ensure that we communicate with nominated third parties or carers to ensure that they are fully updated to ensure we can effectively communicate with the resident.
- 11.3. Despite these potential communication needs or preferences, the overarching intent to provide safe and well-maintained homes for all our residents and the prioritisation of target categories of residents will better ensure that needs are met.

12. Environmental implications

- 12.1. The data collected from the Stock Condition Survey Programme will form the basis of the future decarbonisation programme and the decarbonisation strategy for Crawley Homes.
- 12.2. Collecting asset data from stock condition surveys in local government can have several environmental implications, both positive and negative:
- **Resource Consumption:** Conducting surveys may require the use of paper, electronic devices, transportation, and energy, which can contribute to resource consumption and carbon emissions. Minimising paper usage and employing energy-efficient methods can mitigate these impacts.
 - **Data Accuracy:** Accurate data collection can lead to more efficient asset management, reducing the need for unnecessary maintenance and replacements, which in turn can minimise resource consumption and waste generation.

- **Long-Term Sustainability Planning:** Gathering comprehensive data enables Crawley Homes to develop sustainable asset management strategies, such as prioritising investments in energy-efficient programmes or implementing renewable energy solutions.
- 12.3. Overall, whilst there are potential environmental implications associated with collecting asset data from stock condition surveys, proactive measures can be taken to minimise negative impacts and maximise the benefits to both the environment and to residents.

13. Staff training, monitoring and review

- 13.1. Training required for the Surveyors undertaking the Stock Condition Surveys will include:
- Working at height
 - Lone working
 - Survey completion and use of the Council’s Housing Management System
 - All training identified as ‘core’ on Crawley Homes’ training matrix, including Equality and Diversity, customer care and safeguarding awareness.
- 13.2. Training requirements will be monitored and enhanced as required by the Council.
- 13.3. We will monitor the effectiveness of the programme by reviewing customer feedback via customer satisfaction surveys.
- 13.4. We will also monitor our approach through comments and complaints received, collating and reviewing feedback from residents.

14. Consultation

- 14.1. All policies are subject to resident consultation. As a minimum this includes each policy being placed before our Tenant and Leaseholder Action Panel (TLAP) for scrutiny, and drawing upon feedback gained through resident engagement activities. Wider consultation will also take place depending upon the nature, complexity or impact of a policy.
- 14.2. Details of consultation can be found in the Equality Impact Assessment relating to the policy and in consultation summary documents where consultation has been more wide-ranging.
- 14.3. All policies must also have agreement of Crawley Homes’ SMT (Senior Management Team) and Cabinet.

Appendix A: Definition of Terms

Decent Homes

Standard set by the Government regarding the quality of social housing. A home is considered decent if it meets certain criteria, including being in a reasonable state of repair, having modern facilities, being free from hazards, and providing a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

An assessment to identify whether there are any positive or negative impacts associated with the policy. If negative impacts are identified, then the policy should say how these will be addressed.

Fit for human habitation

Refers to the condition of a residential property being suitable and safe for people to live in. It encompasses various factors such as structural integrity, sanitation, cleanliness, ventilation, heating, and protection from hazards like dampness or fire.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

It is a comprehensive data protection law enacted by the European Union to regulate the processing of personal data of individuals. GDPR aims to strengthen data protection and privacy for individuals, giving them more control over their personal data and imposing strict obligations on organisations that handle such data.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)

A risk-based evaluation tool used in the UK to assess potential health and safety hazards in residential properties. The system helps local authorities identify hazards that could affect a resident's health or safety, such as dampness, fire risks and structural defects.

Net Zero

Refers to achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gasses produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. This balance is typically achieved by reducing emissions and offsetting any remaining emissions through measures like carbon capture or investments in renewable energy projects. The goal of net zero is to mitigate climate change by preventing further accumulation of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere.

Appendix B: No Access Protocol – Stock Condition Surveys

We will offer appointments between 08:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday.

We will offer a morning or afternoon appointment, or the opportunity of a specific appointment time slot if necessary.

If these appointment times are unsuitable, under special circumstances we may make an appointment outside of these time frames.

We will initially write to residents with an overview of the stock condition survey programme and email and telephone details to request an appointment if preferred. Otherwise we will write to tenants offering them an appointment. This letter will include the appointment date and time slot plus contact details to change the appointment time if necessary.

Communication ahead of the stock condition survey

A phone call will be made to confirm the appointment before the survey.

A text will be sent 24 hours before the appointment reminding the resident of the appointment.

If no access is provided

If no access is provided to the property, a second letter will be issued with an appointment date and time slot.

The letter will provide details to reschedule to an alternative time should they require. The letter will inform the resident that if they fail to give access, this could lead to injunction proceedings. We will work with colleagues in housing management to ensure a sensitive and appropriate approach.

If no access is made from the second appointment, a third and final appointment time slot will be arranged, and a letter sent. This will warn of potential injunction proceedings if access is not granted.

If access is still not given, then legal proceedings will be issued, an injunction warning letter will be sent to enforce access.

Where residents have support needs, health conditions, communication needs or other factors underpinning the lack of access, a sensitive approach will be taken. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and further support, if required, will be assessed with the housing officer.

Where access is not provided, we will liaise with the gas service team to try and arrange a joint appointment for access for both the stock condition survey and the gas service to ensure compliance.

If legal proceedings are issued, an Equality Act 2010 assessment will be completed with the housing officer for that area.