

Tenancy Audits

Resident Services

Tenancy Audits

Ensure the right people are in the right homes

Prevents fraud, misuse, and wasted resources

Builds trust through fairness and accountability

We carry out tenancy audits for a number of reasons, these include:

- **Fraud Detection:**
Tenancy audits provide direct visibility into what is going on in our properties – uncovering tenancy fraud, unauthorised sub-letting, abandonment and also helps us to ensure that tenant contact details are up to date.
- **Tenant Well-Being and Support:**
The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires landlords to know their housing stock and their tenants. Audits can help to identify health and safety hazards, such as damp and mould, disrepair and also uncover tenant's support needs. When concerns are raised during an audit, safeguarding referrals can be made and support offered from other teams such as, tenancy sustainment and SADA.
- **Collaborative Working:**
The audit findings can prompt close collaboration with internal teams such as Repairs, Damp and Mould, Asset Management, ASB and Tenancy Sustainment as well as external colleagues within the mental health team, social services and the Police.

Legislation



The implementation of The Social (Regulation) Act 2023 the RSH has gained stronger powers to proactively inspect and enforce standards.



The introduction of new consumer standards, such as the Safety and Quality Standard, requires us to ensure tenant safety, service delivery and quality – this directly aligns with our target to complete tenancy audits on all of our properties over a 3 year period.



Additionally, part of this Act includes Awaab's Law, which mandates swift remedial action on hazards such as damp and mould – our tenancy audits help to identify issues promptly so that we are able to comply with these stricter deadlines.

Carrying out a Tenancy Audit

Housing Officers send an appointment letter to the tenant advising them of the time and date the audit will take place – the letter sets out what the audit is for and that the tenant needs to be present.

A few days ahead of the visit, the Housing Officer will contact the tenant to ensure that they will be available for this.

The visit will then be conducted at the tenant's address, the tenant must provide ID for themselves as well as other household members, photos should be taken by the Housing Officer of each room and outdoor spaces, any repairs raised can be done via Rapid at the visit.

The Housing Officer will then update the housing file, save the tenancy audit document and follow up on any issues raised at the audit.

Outcomes and follow ups

Tenancy audits give Housing Officers an opportunity to gain a clear picture of our tenants and our housing stock. Some audits will not require any further action, however, there are a lot of times where follow up work is required of the Housing Officer. This can include:

Referrals to Tenancy Sustainment, Welfare Benefits Team, SADA (Stevenage against Domestic Abuse) and Fraud. R&E meet regularly with these teams to review cases and best practise.

Complex repairs and damp & mould issues that may require the tenant to be decanted. Depending on the severity of the repair or damp & mould, this can be from over night to a few weeks. We have seen a rise in decants, in the last 18 months and now have 4 ex warden properties that we can use and a dedicated decant officer that supports tenants and works with internal teams to minimise the impact on tenants going through the process.

Complex cases in which hoarding or other mental health issues impacting the living conditions are identified and we work with other agencies at safeguarding individuals to receive the right support.

Tenancy audit stats

- We have set a target for 160 tenancy audits per month to be carried out – a further look into the data reveals that of the 1280 audits which should have taken place between January 2025 and August 2025, 15% were unable to be carried out as access was not granted.

Gaining access

- As 15% of our tenancy audits are not being completed due to the tenant not allowing access, it is important that the Housing Officers have a clear process to follow to ensure that we are gaining access into all of our properties to complete a tenancy audit.

Access and Enforcement Process

- No access given on first attempt.
- Leave a calling card for the tenant to contact Housing Officer
- Send a 2nd appointment letter and follow the usual audit process of calling the tenant ahead of the scheduled visit.
- If still no access, leave a calling card and send a 3rd letter, following the process of contacting the tenant ahead of the visit.
- If still no access, a fourth letter is sent which warns that if access is not given a Notice of Seeking Possession (NSP) will be served.
- If we continue to not gain access the NSP will be served with a covering letter setting out that an injunction will be applied for access to the property.
- At this point, if no access is provided, the Housing Officer should then work alongside their senior & legal team to apply for an injunction and to take any necessary enforcement action against the tenant.

Trends

"Tenancy audits offer a valuable opportunity to identify emerging trends across the borough, enabling us to adopt a targeted and strategic approach in addressing any evident issues or gaps."

Some of the trends which we have spotted include:

- Unauthorised works carried out by tenants. This has resulted in a rise of requests for retrospective planning permission.
- Household details not being up to date - tenants should ask for permission for someone to join their household, instead, a large amount of residents are not requesting this until there is an audit carried out.
- Queries relating to new windows, doors, bathrooms and kitchens.

Case A:

During a tenancy audit, the Housing Officer identified unauthorised works carried out by the tenant, a high volume of waste in both the garden and inside the property.



Case A:

The Housing Officer made several attempts before the tenant allowed access. The tenancy audit uncovered extensive, unsafe and unauthorised works to the property as well as poor living conditions.

What we did:

- A structural engineer visited the property and following their advice, we temporarily decanted the tenant out of the property so that works could be carried out to rectify the unauthorised works and make the property safe.
- A Notice of Seeking Possession Warning served and the legal team consulted. The cost of works recharged to the tenant.
- When they return to the property- regular visits scheduled to monitor the condition of the property – if any further works without permission completed, legal action to be taken.

Case B:

A tenancy audit was carried out, no concerns raised. A further audit will be scheduled in 3 years time.



Windows
unable to open

Bathroom
door hinges no
longer
attached.

Missing banister,
smoke alarm not
working,
bathroom tap
not working

Leak under
bath

Repairs Raised at a Tenancy Audit

At almost 100% of tenancy audits, Housing Officers are raising repairs via Rapid. Currently, we are looking into whether these repairs have already been raised by the tenant prior to the audit or whether they are waiting to raise them with the Housing Officer.

Challenges

As we approach the colder months, we typically see an increase in seasonal issues such as boiler faults and damp or mould. However, in 2024, access rates declined sharply in December.

We believe this reduction is linked to school holidays, tenants' reluctance to disturb Christmas decorations, and changes in availability. A similar dip is observed during summer holidays.

To address this, our no-access process will support efforts to gain entry where needed.

Next Steps.

Our Tenancy Audit Process and Procedure was launched in March 2024. Following the initial audits, key findings relating to property access and condition have highlighted the need for a more robust framework. In response, we are currently developing a Tenancy Audit Policy to underpin and support the existing process.

This policy will clearly define expectations regarding property standards and outline the actions to be taken where issues are identified. These actions may include, but are not limited to, the application of recharges and the potential refusal of property transfers where conditions fall below acceptable thresholds.

Tenant Satisfaction Surveys to be rolled out, this will help to identify any tweaks needed to the process and could also help to identify whether the repairs being raised are duplicates.

Further empowerment and training for Housing Officers to increase confidence and knowledge to take enforcement action when needed.

Work with the Communications team on providing “How To” guides for tenants, starting with; “How to raise a repair” and “How to add someone to my household”.

Introduction of additional performance management targets around the tenancy audits, which will in turn provide further data and stats on outcomes and follow on work coming from these.