



Regulator of
Social Housing

Annex 4

Consumer standards – Equality impact assessment

Part 1: Introduction and scoping

1.1 Summary and scope

Policy overview

The consumer standards set out our regulatory requirements that registered providers must meet. We set these in line with our revised objectives, which have been expanded by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (the Act) to include safety, transparency, and energy efficiency.

The Social Housing White Paper, (the White Paper) set out the government’s intention to create a proactive consumer regulatory regime. The Act implements the regulatory measures in the White Paper. Following extensive engagement with tenants, landlords and other stakeholders, we intend to introduce a revised set of consumer standards. As part of our work to develop draft new consumer standards, we have considered how our existing consumer standards could be revised and strengthened to deliver a set of standards that are robust, up to date and fit for purpose. In doing so we have sought to meet commitments set out in the White Paper, deliver on our expanded objectives, and address issues impacting the social housing sector that are within our remit.

In developing the proposed consumer standards, we have been guided by the three tests we have set ourselves for developing our approach to consumer regulation:

- It must make a meaningful difference to tenants.
- Landlords must be able to deliver its expectations.
- We must be able to regulate against it.

In developing the standards, we have been mindful of:

- our statutory duty to exercise our functions in a way that minimises interference and (so far as is possible) is proportionate, consistent, transparent, and accountable (section 92K(5) of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008)
- the Government's Regulators' Code
- our statutory duty, in setting consumer standards, to have regard to the desirability of registered providers being free to choose how to provide services and conduct business (section 193(3) of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008).

We have also been mindful of our duty to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The broad aim of PSED (also known as the general equality duty) is to integrate considerations of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public authorities, so that when exercising their functions, they have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The general equality duty covers the following protected characteristics: age (including children and young people), disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Marriage or civil partnership is also a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, although this is only relevant to the first aim of the general equality duty (eliminating discrimination etc.)

Scope of the Equality impact assessment

This Equality impact assessment (EQIA) has continuously shaped our thinking as we have developed the requirements in our proposed standards. We have considered the impacts (positive, negative, neutral and none) of the proposed requirements on tenants who share different protected characteristics and will continue to do so.

The Act has given the regulator the power to issue a Code of Practice on the consumer standards, to help tenants and landlords understand how compliance with the new standards might be achieved. We are publishing a draft Code of Practice alongside the revised consumer standards, and its contents have also been shaped by this assessment.

The consumer standards include areas where we are directed by government. The wording of the directions has been reproduced in the standards. Where this is the case, we have not assessed the equality impacts of those requirements as they are fixed. This EQIA does not include an assessment of our revised approach to regulation.

Our intention is that the diversity requirements in the revised consumer standards will act as a driver for change, by influencing the sector to better understand their tenant base, including in relation to the protected characteristics, which may provide a better baseline of evidence in the future.

1.2 Who are the main stakeholders that may be affected by these proposals?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RSH colleagues	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tenants	<input type="checkbox"/> Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Registered providers
<input type="checkbox"/> Sector organisations	(Please specify)		

1.3 Could the proposal(s) have a cumulative impact on people who share more than one protected characteristic?

The analysis of potential impacts in section 3 reflects areas where evidence shows cumulative impacts where protected characteristics intersect.

1.4 Do the proposals relate to RSH’s equality objectives?

Our current equality objectives are to:

1. ensure that where equality and diversity concerns are raised through our enquiries process, they are considered in line with our statutory objectives
2. review our methods of communicating to ensure that we do so in an inclusive way
3. provide a supportive and inclusive working environment for all.

The proposed standards are most relevant to objective two. We will need to consider how to ensure that our communication methods to promote the new consumer standards are inclusive.

We have recently consulted on a revised set of equality objectives:

1. We will encourage the sector to better understand the diversity of the communities that they serve and that measures are in place to promote equity in relation to their service delivery.
2. We will be respectful and inclusive in our engagement and communication.
3. We will provide a supportive and inclusive working environment for all.

Proposed equality objective one relates closely to specific expectation 2.1.1 in the proposed Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

Part 2: Information gathering

Summarise below what existing data/ evidence you have used to undertake the assessment. Are there any gaps in evidence and if so, how do you plan to collect this as the process develops?

2.1 Existing data/ evidence

A range of information taken from open-source research, data and evidence has been considered as part of this assessment, influencing the proposed requirements so the consumer standards support us in considering our PSED, as well as helping to assess where any potential mitigation may be required. To avoid duplication, rather than set out the evidence in this section, we have referenced it in section 3 below.

DLUHC's recently published English Housing Survey 2021/22 data has not been considered as part of this assessment. This information will be considered before the final Equality impact assessment is published.

With regard to English Housing Survey data referenced in this document, please note that, in response to the COVID pandemic, internal inspections of properties for the English Housing Survey were suspended for a period of time. This may impact housing quality data from the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 fieldwork periods. Further information on the impact of COVID on the English Housing Survey can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-housing-survey-quality-report> .

2.2 Data gaps

We did not find any statistical data about the following in relation to social housing tenants:

- the number of social housing tenants who are married or in a civil partnership or their specific experiences of social housing
- the specific experiences of social housing tenants from different religious groups. We found data on anti-social behaviour (ASB) and hate crime victims broken down by religion which helped to inform this assessment
- the number of social housing tenants who are pregnant or who have recently had a baby or their specific experience of social housing.

We have not attempted to fill these information gaps ourselves, due to the time and resources it would demand. Where new equality data becomes available that may be relevant to the consumer standards, including in relation to the identified gaps, we will consider reviewing the EQIA.

Part 3: Assessing the impact

This is our assessment of the potential equality impact of the proposed consumer standards.

We have rigorously considered equality considerations and relevant evidence throughout the development of the proposed consumer standards. Where we have identified aspects of the current standards that might benefit from being strengthened or amended to address any potential negative equality impact, or where we have identified an opportunity to create a positive equality impact through our proposed standards, we have taken the opportunity to do so. Because of this approach, we have not identified any potential negative equality impact at this point.

Safety and Quality: Stock quality

Potential impact on different protected characteristics

Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	

There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.

Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informs their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.1.1 Registered providers must have an accurate record at an individual property level of the condition of their stock, based on a physical assessment of all homes and keep this up to date.</p> <p>2.1.2 Registered providers must use data from across their records on stock condition to inform their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants including:</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor quality, hazardous accommodation can contribute to reduced mobility, social isolation, and depression for older people.¹ Social renters in one person households or couples with no children were more likely to live in a non-decent home than lone parents with either independent children only or dependent children.² Social renters were no more likely to live in a non-decent home if the household reference person (HRP)³ was white or was from an ethnic minority background.⁴ Asset management databases were not always kept up to date. 26 per cent of housing association (HA) survey respondents said that adapted properties were not clearly identified within asset management databases.⁵ Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee's inquiry into social housing regulation heard evidence about the quality of social housing, which included examples of poor quality homes, disrepair and damp and mould.⁶ 10 per cent of households with a member with a long-term illness or disability live in a non-decent home compared to 13 per cent with none.⁷ Analysis of English Housing Survey (EHS) data by the Social Market Foundation forecasts a 25 per cent increase in social housing tenants over 65 years and with a long-term illness or disability living in non-decent homes between 2021 and 2031.⁸ 5 per cent of social rented homes had a problem with damp, at 198,000 households. This is a higher proportion than owner occupied homes (2 per cent or 335,000 households), but lower than private rented homes (10 per cent or 409,000 households).⁹ 10 per cent of dwellings in the social rented sector failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard. This is lower than the proportion of private rented (23 per cent) and all owner occupied (13 per cent) homes (970,000 and 2.1 million homes respectively).¹⁰ <p>Our proposed requirements We consider that PSED aim two is relevant to this requirement.</p> <p>Registered providers having a better understanding of their homes may help to improve the condition of social housing, which may have a positive impact on older and disabled tenants, who are more likely to be impacted by poor quality housing.</p>

¹ Communities and Local Government Committee [5 February 2018]. Housing for older people. [\[Online\]](#)

² Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. English Housing Survey, Social rented sector, 2020-21. [\[Online\]](#)

³ A "household reference person" is defined by English Housing Survey as the person in whose name the dwelling is owned or rented or who is otherwise responsible for the accommodation. In the case of joint owners and tenants, the person with the highest income is taken as the HRP. Where incomes are equal, the older is taken as the HRP. This procedure increases the likelihood that the HRP better characterises the household's social and economic position.

⁴ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. English Housing Survey Social rented sector, 2020-21. [\[Online\]](#)

⁵ Foundations. [March 2022] Housing associations and home adaptations: Finding ways to say yes. [\[Online\]](#)

⁶ Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee. [13 July 2022] The Regulation of Social Housing. [\[Online\]](#)

⁷ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. English Housing Survey, Social rented sector, 2020-21. [\[Online\]](#)

⁸ APPG Housing and care for older people. [July 2019]. Rental housing for an ageing population. [\[Online\]](#)

⁹ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. English Housing Survey, Social rented sector, 2020-21. [\[Online\]](#)

¹⁰ Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. [15 December 2022]. English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: headline report. [\[Online\]](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Compliance with health and safety legal requirementsb) Compliance with the Decent Homes Standardc) Delivery of repairs, maintenance, and planned improvements to stockd) Allocating homes with adaptations appropriately.	<p>We have taken the opportunity to make it clear in the draft Code of Practice that providers should use information in addition to that about stock condition to ensure they have a rounded view which includes the needs of individual tenants living in those homes.</p> <p>Overall assessment</p> <p>Overall, for the reasons stated above, we believe our requirements relating to stock quality may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics age and disability.</p>
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Safety and Quality: Decency				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>We have only assessed the proposed changes to the current standard as we are directed on the required outcome.</p> <p>Required outcome Registered providers must ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard unless exempted by the regulator.</p> <p>Specific expectations None</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <p>In 2021/22, 10 per cent of dwellings in the social rented sector failed to meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS), down from 11 per cent in the previous year's survey. This equates to around 400,000 homes. The proportion of non-decent homes in the social rented sector is lower than in the private rented sector (23 per cent), and amongst owner occupied dwellings (13 per cent).</p> <p>Predictive modelled data indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 per cent of dwellings in the social rented sector had a category 1 hazard under the HHSRS, compared to 14 per cent in the private rented sector and 10 per cent amongst owner occupied dwellings • 4 per cent of dwellings in the social rented sector had a significant degree of damp, compared to 11 per cent in the private rented sector and 2 per cent amongst owner occupied dwellings. <p>The 2021/22 EHS SAP¹¹ data showed that dwellings in the social rented sector had the highest mean SAP rating of the tenures with housing associations and local authorities both at 70, which means that social rented properties were more energy efficient than owner occupied properties (averaged a lower rating of 66) and private rented properties (rating of 65).¹²</p> <p>Ethnicity Facts and Figures from 2017/19 (nothing more recently available) showed variations between households from different ethnic groups living in non-decent homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 per cent of households in total in England lived in a non-decent home. • 18 per cent of white British households lived in a non-decent home. • The highest proportions from specific ethnic groups living in non-decent homes were mixed white/black African 33 per cent, Bangladeshi 24 per cent, and black Caribbean 20 per cent. <p>The same source showed differential rates amongst households living with damp, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damp in at least one room of the home appears to be more prevalent amongst certain ethnic minority groups – 3 per cent of households in England in total. • White British households 3 per cent, mixed white and black Caribbean 13 per cent, Bangladeshi 10 per cent, black African 9 per cent, and Pakistani 8 per cent. • Although households from Mixed white and black African (11 per cent) and black other (10 per cent) backgrounds were also more likely than white British households to have damp, findings for these groups are based on a small number of households and may not be reliable. <p>(From People without decent homes - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures)</p> <p>Overall, 10 per cent of social renter households containing a member with a long-term illness or disability were living in a non-decent home in 2020/21, a lower proportion than those with no member with a long-term illness or disability (13 per cent)¹³.</p> <p>The Institute of Health Equity's 2011 Marmot Review¹⁴ found that the established link between housing and health has implications for children. Significant negative effects of cold housing are evident in terms of infants' weight gain, hospital admission rates, developmental status, and the severity and frequency of asthmatic symptoms and impacts on the mental health of adolescents.</p> <p>Our proposed requirements We consider that PSED aims two and three are relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>We have simplified some remaining elements in our current Home Standard to avoid repetition with requirements in the Decent Homes guidance and in line with our approach to regulation. We have removed the requirement 1.1.b to meet the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built and were required as a condition of publicly funded financial assistance if these standards are higher than the DHS.</p>			

¹¹ The Government's Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is used to monitor the energy efficiency of homes. It is an index based on calculating annual space and water heating costs for a standard heating regime and is expressed on a scale of 1 (highly inefficient) to 100 (highly efficient, with 100 representing zero energy costs).

¹² Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. [15 December 2022]. English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: headline report. [\[Online\]](#)

¹³ [English Housing Survey, 2020 to 2021: social rented sector](#)

¹⁴ [Marmot 2011 review of health impacts of cold homes and fuel poverty](#)

We have also removed the requirement 1.1.c that in agreeing a local offer, providers should ensure that it is set at a level not less than DHS. The former will already be covered under contractual requirements, and we feel that the latter requirement is unnecessary as the requirement is that all homes must be maintained to DHS standard, and we have removed reference in the standards to local offers.

We considered whether removing the stipulation to meet design standards at the time the housing was built could lead to a reduction in accessible housing, where homes designed for disabled and older tenants are not maintained to appropriate standards, resulting in a negative equality impact for disabled and older tenants. However, where standards have been agreed over and above the DHS as part of funding agreements, including in relation to accessibility, registered providers in receipt of that funding will be contractually obliged to continue to meet those standards for a set period or in perpetuity in line with those contracts; therefore, we think that removal of this requirement is highly unlikely to result in a reduction of accessible housing.

Overall assessment

Taking the above into account, we consider that this requirement is likely to have a neutral equality impact on tenants who share different protected characteristics.

Safety and Quality: Health and safety				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.2.1 Registered providers must identify and meet all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas.</p> <p>2.2.2 Registered providers must ensure that all required actions arising from legally required health and safety assessments are carried out within appropriate timescales.</p> <p>2.2.3 Registered providers must ensure that the safety of tenants is considered in the design and delivery of landlord services and take reasonable steps to mitigate any identified risks to tenants.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social renters¹⁵ were no more likely to live in a non-decent home if the HRP was white or was from an ethnic minority background. • Overall, 10 per cent of social renter households containing a member with a long-term illness or disability were living in a non-decent home. This was a lower proportion than those with no member with a long-term illness or disability (13 per cent). • 5 per cent of social rented homes had at least one category 1 hazard, a lower proportion than both owner occupied (9 per cent) and private rented homes (13 per cent). • Within the social rented sector, dwellings rented from local authorities were more likely to have a Category 1 hazard (6 per cent) than dwellings rented from housing associations (4 per cent).¹⁶ • Poor quality, hazardous accommodation can contribute to reduced mobility, social isolation, and depression for older people.¹⁷ • Renters were more likely to feel unsafe at home (8 per cent for both private and social renters) than owner occupiers (4 per cent). Those from an ethnic minority background were more concerned than those from a white background (13 per cent compared to 5 per cent)¹⁸. • In both 2020 and 2010 local authority owned homes were more likely to have category 1 hazards than those owned by HAs (6 per cent and 4 per cent respectively in 2020)¹⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1088447/EHS_Housing_quality_and_condition_report_2020.pdf • The main types of older people's accommodation contain some form of communal area²⁰. <p>Our proposed requirements Based on the evidence, tenants within the sector who may be positively impacted by requirements relating to health and safety are those who share the protected characteristics of age, disability, and race. We consider that PSED aim two is relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>The new requirements set a more explicit expectation for registered providers to meet their legal health and safety requirements in respect of communal areas, which have expanded with recent legislation e.g., the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022, which may lead to a greater focus by providers on tenant safety.</p> <p>Requiring providers to consider the safety of communal areas may result in safer communal areas, which may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristic(s) age and disability. This is because individuals who share those protected characteristics are likely to have different (possibly additional) needs regarding the safety of communal areas compared to those who do not share these protected characteristics.</p> <p>Ensuring that registered providers carry out the actions from health and safety assessments in a timely manner may have a positive impact on tenants who are more at risk of a safety failure as a result of non-compliance because of their protected characteristic, namely age; older people and children and disabled people.</p> <p>2.2.3 requires registered providers to ensure the safety of tenants in the design and delivery of landlord services. We have taken the opportunity in the draft Code of Practice to exemplify actions that providers may take to ensure the wider safety of tenants; responding promptly and effectively to reports of ASB, including where the victim is vulnerable, and taking into account individual tenants' safety, security, and health when prioritising repairs.</p> <p>Overall assessment For the reasons stated, we believe that our requirements relating to health and safety may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics age, disability, and race.</p>			

¹⁵ This category includes households renting from Local Authorities (including Arms' Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and Housing Action Trusts) and Housing Associations, Local Housing Companies, co-operatives, and charitable trusts.

¹⁶ [English Housing Survey: Social rented sector, 2020-21 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1088447/EHS_Housing_quality_and_condition_report_2020.pdf)

¹⁷ [Housing for Older People 2017-2019 CLG Inquiry](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1088447/EHS_Housing_quality_and_condition_report_2020.pdf)

¹⁸ [English Housing Survey, 2020 to 2021: feeling safe from fire - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1088447/EHS_Housing_quality_and_condition_report_2020.pdf)

¹⁹ [English Housing Survey: Housing quality and condition, 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1088447/EHS_Housing_quality_and_condition_report_2020.pdf)

²⁰ [Government guidance on Housing for older and disabled people, 2019](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1088447/EHS_Housing_quality_and_condition_report_2020.pdf)

Safety and Quality: Repairs, maintenance and planned improvements				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient, and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.3.1 Registered providers must enable repairs and maintenance issues to be reported easily</p> <p>2.3.2 Registered providers must set timescales for the completion of repairs, maintenance, and planned improvements, clearly communicate them to tenants and take appropriate steps to deliver to them</p> <p>2.3.3 Registered providers must keep tenants informed about repairs, maintenance, and planned improvements to their homes with clear and timely communication.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us See evidence above under Decency relating to households from some minority ethnic groups being more likely to live in non-decent accommodation. There is a clear link between housing which is not compliant with the DHS, and the quality of the landlord's service on repairs, maintenance and planned improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EHS 2020/21 shows that 49 per cent of the households in social rented housing that had dependent children were lone parent households (compared to 34 per cent in the private rented sector, and 12 per cent in owner-occupation). With 90 per cent of lone parent households led by women, how flexible and timely repairs services are, can be of significant impact to women²¹. Evidence to the Levelling Up Housing and Communities Committee Inquiry on the Regulation of Social Housing from the Merton Centre for Independent Living and Action Disability Training and Consulting showed that having no control over when contractors are coming can create difficulties for disabled tenants who need to manage their routines and energy carefully.²² The main types of older peoples' accommodation contain some form of communal area²³. <p>Satisfaction with repairs and maintenance is lower among social renters (66 per cent) than private renters (75 per cent). The most common reasons for dissatisfaction with repairs and maintenance among social renters are the landlord being slow to complete repairs (29 per cent), the landlord not bothering to do the repairs (26 per cent), and the work being of poor quality (17 per cent)²⁴.</p> <p>Our proposed requirements Based on the evidence above, tenants who may be impacted by these requirements are those who share the protected characteristics of race, age, disability, and sex. We consider that PSED aim two is relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>We think that the following help to make our requirements more tenant and outcomes focused, which may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of race, disability, and age:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requiring providers to ensure repairs and maintenance issues can be reported easily may have a positive impact on tenants who experience communication barriers due to a disability or whose first language is not English. Requiring providers to keep tenants informed about repairs, maintenance and planned improvements may have a positive impact on tenants who experience communication barriers due to a disability or whose first language is not English. From our engagement with tenants, we have heard that good communication with them about the progress of repairs is a priority. Replacing the 'right first time' repairs objective with requirements to set and meet timescales and clearly communicate them to tenants. We understand from our stakeholder engagement that 'right first time' is measured and defined in different ways by registered providers and so does not provide a consistent performance target for services to tenants. Instead, we are proposing that landlords set timescales for repairs, which should provide registered providers with flexibility to meet tenants' different needs. This flexibility may have a positive impact on older tenants, those with young children and disabled tenants, with greater transparency on timescales so that tenants can hold landlords to account on delivery. Requiring providers to understand and fulfil their maintenance responsibilities in respect of communal areas may have a positive impact on older and disabled tenants, as most designed or adapted accommodation for people who share these protected characteristics has communal areas. This may help to ensure communal areas are accessible and safe to use both in terms of accessing and leaving the home as well as making use of communal areas. This may help to minimise the disadvantage disrepair or poor quality of communal areas could otherwise cause, particularly to tenants with reduced mobility. 			

²¹ [2020-21 EHS Headline Report Section 1 Households Annex Tables revised.ods \(live.com\)](#)

²² [The Regulation of Social Housing – Written evidence – Committees – UK Parliament](#)

²³ [Government guidance on Housing for older and disabled people, 2019](#)

²⁴ [English Housing Survey: Social rented sector, 2020-21 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<p>2.3.4 Registered providers must understand and fulfil their maintenance responsibilities in respect of communal areas.</p> <p>2.3.5 Registered providers must ensure that the delivery of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to homes and communal areas is informed by the needs of tenants and provides value for money, in addition to the requirement at 2.1.2.</p>	<p>Removing the specific reference in the current Home Standard to <i>offering choices to tenants</i> is likely to have a neutral equality impact. This is because we are requiring providers to ensure that the delivery of repairs, maintenance and planned improvements to homes and communal areas is informed by the needs of tenants, which may have a positive impact on all tenants. In the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, we require providers, working with tenants, to regularly consider ways to improve and tailor their approach to delivering landlord services.</p> <p>Elsewhere in the standards, we are strengthening requirements for registered providers to ensure that their services provide equitable outcomes for all tenants; and to meet the diverse needs of tenants in all their activities. This overall strengthening may provide an incentive for registered providers to address discrepancies in experiences and outcomes from repairs, maintenance and planned improvements services for tenants who share certain protected characteristics.</p> <p>We have removed reference to adaptations in relation to repairs, maintenance and planned improvements but we have set a separate requirement on adaptations under the Safety and Quality Standard. This may have a positive equality impact, as it makes adaptations more of a focus of our requirements.</p> <p>We have taken the opportunity in the draft Code of Practice to emphasise that providers' policies, procedures, and processes on this area should take into account tenant views and diverse needs, which may include, for example, increasing the priority of repairs for some older and disabled tenants, and installing extra locks and security lights for tenants experiencing domestic abuse, in order to safeguard them.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, we consider that the proposed requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics race, disability, and age</p>
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Safety and Quality: Adaptations				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence on the impact of the requirement on the other protected groups				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.4.1 Registered providers must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.</p> <p>2.4.2 Registered providers must co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority departments and other relevant organisations</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 per cent of social housing tenants are disabled, significantly higher than the national average (22 per cent).²⁵ • 56 per cent housing association tenants who have a long-standing physical or mental health condition lack the adaptations they need. • 25 per cent of LA tenants and 21 per cent of HA tenants that required adaptations said their home was unsuitable for their needs. • The most common group in the social rented sector were households with a HRP aged 65 or over (26 per cent)²⁶. • Disabled people can experience serious deterioration in their mental wellbeing due to living in unsuitable accommodation, but adaptations help to restore dignity and greater independence and help to reduce depressive symptoms. • Working age disabled people with an unmet need for accessible housing are four times more likely to be either unemployed or not seeking work compared to those with no unmet need. • Home adaptations can make a significant difference to the pressures facing households with disabled children where their circumstances are exacerbated by low incomes, isolation, and lack of support lead to high levels of family breakdown. • Ethnic minority households appear to have fewer adaptations than white households and are twice as likely to have no adaptations at all, even with evidence of higher levels of limiting long-term illness in ethnic minority households²⁷. • Accessing appropriate and timely adaptations can reduce the risk of emergency admission to hospital, speed up hospital discharge, improve independence and reduce the need for physical assistance for older people.²⁸ • Strong engagement and communication between LAs and private registered providers are important for successful coordination and delivery of adaptations to ensure the best outcome for tenants.²⁹ • While residents reported finding it easier to have adaptations installed in social housing than other tenures <i>“the process ... was described as lengthy, and participants often struggled to get the changes they needed”</i>.³⁰ <p>Government’s ambition is to give more people the choice to live independently and healthily in their own homes for longer.³¹</p>			

²⁵ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

²⁶ [EHS, Home Adaptations, 2019/20](#)

²⁷ [Foundations \(2022\)](#)

²⁸ [Care and Repair report 2021](#)

²⁹ [Guidance for LAs on DFG delivery from DLUHC and DHSC \(2022\)](#)

³⁰ [Equality & Human Rights Commission](#)

³¹ [DFG Guidance for LA, DLUHC/DHSC, 2022](#)

<p>so that a housing adaptations service is provided to tenants.</p>	<p>Our proposed requirements Based on the evidence, tenants within the sector who may be impacted by housing adaptation services are those who share the protected characteristics of age, disability, and race. We consider that PSED aims one and two are relevant to this requirement.</p> <p>We are increasing our expectations of registered providers in relation to housing adaptations, by requiring registered providers to assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services. Our requirements may improve access to adaptations services, particularly for older tenants and those who are physically disabled, which in turn may improve the accessibility of homes and areas around the home for tenants who need adaptations, allowing them to remain in their homes independently for longer.</p> <p>Improving accessibility to and from the home may help to improve access to opportunities for disabled and older people to participate in public life, where the lack of adaptations may have created a barrier to such participation and the enjoyment of their home.</p> <p>Requiring registered providers to be clear about the type of assistance they can provide to tenants seeking housing adaptations may help to raise tenants' awareness and reduce barriers to the adaptations process for tenants who need a housing adaptation, particularly for older and disabled people and tenants from ethnic minority groups (who may currently experience difficulties accessing such services) when compared to individuals who do not share those protected characteristics. While this requirement does not guarantee that a tenant will be supplied with the adaptation they need, it seeks to lessen the barriers to accessing help and assistance that some tenants may experience.</p> <p>Requiring registered providers to co-operate with LAs so that adaptations can be provided to those in need of them may help to reduce barriers for tenants when accessing adaptations and having the works completed via the LA. We make it clear in the draft Code of Practice that providers should not unreasonably withhold permission for agencies to install adaptations in their homes, nor should they unreasonably refuse to install an adaptation in their home where they provide that service directly.</p> <p>Overall assessment For the reasons given, we believe that our requirements relating to housing adaptations may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics age, race, and disability.</p>
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Transparency and accountability to tenants – Fairness and respect				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment X	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex X	Sexual orientation X	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups. However, it can be reasonably assumed that the requirement is relevant to all protected characteristics as the stigma that social housing tenants can face can intersect with other protected characteristics.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must treat all tenants with fairness and respect.</p> <p>Specific expectations None</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <p>Research on ethnicity and social housing in 2018 found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 per cent of households with an ethnic minority HRP felt they were treated worse than other races by their landlord. This is compared to 9.5 per cent of households with a white HRP. The percentage of people who felt they were treated better than other races is broadly similar, at 4 per cent for both white and ethnic minority HRPs. • 64 per cent of white social tenants agree their social landlords treat them fairly (and only 17 per cent indicate a perception of unfairness), against 53 per cent of ethnic minority social tenants agreeing with this statement, and 24 per cent believing they are treated unfairly. Perceptions of fairness vary between individual ethnic minority groups³². • Results are consistently lower in households with a minority ethnic HRP than a white HRP, across a range of questions including whether the landlord's staff were friendly and helpful (65 per cent against 73 per cent); whether they trusted their landlord (55 per cent against 63 per cent); and whether the landlord's services were good overall (42 per cent against 58 per cent).³³ <p>Research on the experience of LGBT+ social housing residents³⁴ has found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37 per cent of survey respondents agreed that housing provider staff were always responsive to their concerns • 29 per cent agreed that staff were sensitive to the needs of LGBT+ • 56 per cent felt that their housing provider was approachable. <p>The researchers reported repeated examples given by participants of poor staff understanding of LGBT+ lives and, in some cases, outright discrimination.</p> <p>A 2021 survey³⁵ of 161 LGBT+ people aged 16-25 who had experienced homelessness found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over half of LGBT+ young people have faced some form of discrimination or harassment while accessing housing and homelessness services. • Only half (56 per cent) of LGBT+ young people who accessed housing support services while homeless were satisfied with their experience. • Over a third (39 per cent) of LGBT+ young people have faced discrimination from services due to an illness, disability, or mental health condition. <p>Peer research carried out for Shelter with 34 women living in a range of different housing situations (2021) found that two-thirds of participants (23) in this small study reported poor treatment by their landlord (private or social) or accommodation provider. Participants described being spoken to rudely, being made to feel like a burden or that their problems weren't severe enough or being shown a lack of empathy or understanding³⁶.</p> <p>Evidence³⁷ to the Inquiry on Regulation of Social Housing by the Levelling up Housing and Communities Committee from the authors of the Stigma and Social Housing in England report quoted from their research findings, that the stigma related to social housing is complex and intersects with other societal stigmas such as poverty, unemployment, mental health and disabilities and race and immigration. Their research uncovered a paternalistic attitude amongst housing association staff. The research also included several examples of social housing professionals and contractors stigmatising tenants through their lack of respect when engaging with them, ignoring repair requests, ignoring ASB complaints, and using derogatory rhetoric³⁸.</p>			

³² Human City Institute Surveys (2013-17) of Weighted Data from 6,493 interviews with social tenants in England

³³ [Human City Institute](#)

³⁴ [No Place Like Home](#)

³⁵ [akt lgbtq+ youth homelessness report](#)

³⁶ [Fobbed Off, Shelter, 2021](#)

³⁷ <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/41984/pdf/>

³⁸ [The Regulation of Social Housing LUHC Committee inquiry report](#)

Our proposed requirements

Based on the evidence above, being treated with fairness and respect by their landlords may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics race, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and sex. We make it clear in the draft Code of Practice that providers should consider how they can adapt their services and communications to meet individual tenants' needs. We consider that all three PSED aims are relevant to these requirements.

By making this a standalone required outcome, we hope that providers make this a priority across all interactions with tenants.

Overall assessment

We consider that this measure may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics race, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and sex.

Transparency and accountability to tenants – Diverse needs				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment X	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex X	Sexual orientation X	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must take action to deliver fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services for all tenants.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.1.1 Registered providers must use relevant information and data to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> understand the diverse needs of tenants, including those arising from protected characteristics, language barriers, and additional support needs; and assess whether all tenants have fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services. <p>2.1.2 Registered providers must ensure that communication with and information for tenants is clear, accessible, relevant, timely and</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As set out in evidence above under the Safety and Quality Standard and the requirement to treat tenants fairly and with respect, households from certain ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to live in non-decent housing, and feel they are treated worse than those from other races. Black African, mixed white and black African, and black Caribbean, households are most likely to rent social housing out of all ethnic groups, and black households are over-represented in new social housing lettings^{39, 40} There is a much higher proportion of households with at least one disabled member in the social rented sector than other tenures (54 per cent compared with 37 per cent for outright owners (despite these two groups having a similar age profile) and 30 per cent for private renters)).⁴¹ 20 per cent of social renters are from an ethnic minority background compared to 15 per cent in 2011 and compared to the national average of 15 per cent⁴². 57 per cent of social housing tenants are aged 50 and over. Older tenants may require reasonable adjustments to access landlord services, live in their home and to participate in public life. Nearly a third of households in social housing comprise either a female living alone or a female single parent.⁴³ There is some research showing how women can experience barriers when accessing advice and support with their housing.⁴⁴ In 2021-22, 93 per cent of households in England had internet access at home, but social renters were the least likely out of all tenures to have this access, at 83 per cent.⁴⁵ Cross-tenure research by OFCOM in 2021 found that amongst those aged 65+, only 77 per cent used the internet at home⁴⁶. Only 35 per cent of LGBTQ+ young people who have accessed a service while homeless recall being asked by service providers to provide information about their gender identity and sexual orientation.⁴⁷ Research in 2017 on the experience of LGBTQ+ social housing residents found that 59 per cent of survey respondents had never been asked for information about their gender identity or sexual orientation by their housing provider.⁴⁸ 3% of those living in social housing identify as LGBT+⁴⁹ 0.8% of social housing residents do not identify with the sex registered at birth⁵⁰. <p>Our proposed requirements We are proposing to strengthen our requirements in this area, setting clear expectations that landlords must act to deliver fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services for all tenants. The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard currently expects landlords to demonstrate they understand the different needs of tenants. The proposed Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard goes further, requiring landlords to use information and data to inform their understanding of how they will meet the different needs of tenants. The requirement makes clear that this relates to needs arising from tenants' protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, as well as more broadly (see 2.1.1 below). We consider that these proposed requirements may lead to registered providers doing more to collect and maintain better data about tenants and their diverse support needs, which means that they will be better able to tailor services to meet their needs.</p>			

³⁹ [New social housing lettings - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-figures)

⁴⁰ [English Housing Survey: Social rented sector, 2020-21 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.service.gov.uk/publishing)

⁴¹ [EHS Headline report 2021/22](https://www.service.gov.uk/publishing)

⁴² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

⁴³ [EHS Headline report 2021/22](https://www.service.gov.uk/publishing)

⁴⁴ [Fobbed Off, Shelter, 2021](https://www.service.gov.uk/publishing)

⁴⁵ [EHS Headline report 2021/22](https://www.service.gov.uk/publishing)

⁴⁶ [Adult's Media Use and Attitudes report 2020/21 \(ofcom.org.uk\)](https://www.ofcom.gov.uk)

⁴⁷ [akt LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness Report](https://www.service.gov.uk/publishing)

⁴⁸ [No Place Like Home](https://www.service.gov.uk/publishing)

⁴⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

⁵⁰ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

<p>appropriate to the diverse needs of tenants.</p> <p>2.1.3 Registered providers must ensure that landlord services are accessible, and that the accessibility is publicised to tenants. This includes supporting tenants and prospective tenants to use online landlord services if required.</p> <p>2.1.4 Registered providers must allow tenants and prospective tenants to be supported by a representative or advocate in interactions about landlord services.</p>	<p>We are also proposing expectations of landlords on how they communicate with tenants (2.1.2), ensure their services are accessible including where those services are accessed online (2.1.3); and allowing tenants to be supported by advocates or other representatives (2.1.4). The aim of all these changes is to influence the social housing sector to meet the wide and varying range of tenant needs by understanding those needs and reducing barriers for tenants in accessing their landlord and its services.</p> <p>The proposed requirements support our proposed equality objective 1, which is to better understand the diversity of the communities that they serve and that measures are in place to promote equity in relation to their service delivery.</p> <p>Overall assessment</p> <p>By introducing these requirements, landlords will have to consider how they intend to meet them, which in turn may benefit tenants overall but particularly those tenants who share the protected characteristics of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and sex, given the evidence demonstrates that there are some disparities for these groups. We take the opportunity in the draft Code of Practice to amplify our requirements relating to diverse needs.</p> <p>We consider that PSED aims one and two are relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>Taking the above into account, we consider that the proposed measures may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and sex.</p>
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Transparency and accountability to tenants – Engagement with tenants				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment X	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex X	Sexual orientation X	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Our assessment relates to the required outcome and specific expectations 2.2.5 and 2.2.6 only.</p> <p>Required outcome Registered providers must take tenants' views into account in their decision-making about how landlord services are delivered.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.2.5 Registered providers, working with tenants, must regularly consider ways to improve and tailor their approach to delivering landlord services including tenant engagement. They must implement changes as appropriate to ensure services deliver the intended aims.</p> <p>2.2.6. Where a registered provider is considering a change in landlord for one or more tenants, or a significant change in management arrangements, it must consult affected tenants on its proposals at a formative stage and take those views into account in reaching a decision. The consultation must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be fair and accessible • provide tenants with adequate time, information and opportunities to consider and respond • set out actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including 	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the section on Fairness and Respect we have referred to research from the Human City Institute which indicated differential levels of trust and confidence in landlords based on ethnicity. Lack of trust and feeling that you are not treated with respect are likely to act as barriers to engaging with your landlord. • We have referred in the section on Diverse Needs to research from the EHS and OFCOM which sets out potential lower rates of those having internet access at home in social housing generally, but also across all tenures amongst older households. • Research commissioned by the Local Government Association and developed with TPAS calls for providers to do more to engage with younger tenants (age is not specified). It talks about the importance of using a variety of engagement methods to promote accessibility and to ensure engagement is representative and asks providers to consider what steps they take to increase representation and target all areas of the community.⁵¹ • As part of the EHS in 2020/21, social renters with a disability were asked which areas were affected by their disability. The most common issues reported by HRP's with a disability were mobility (54 per cent, 1.2 million households), stamina (45 per cent, 1 million households), mental health (43 per cent, 950,000 households) and dexterity (35 per cent, 760,000 households). All of these are likely to affect disabled tenants' ability to engage with their landlord.⁵² • Joint research based on the views of people with a label of mild/moderate learning disability called for better opportunities for the voices of people with learning disabilities to be heard and to influence housing policy and noted that family members are often left to provide support.⁵³ • Shelter's report Fobbed Off, referred to above, discusses the importance of involving women with lived experience in the design and delivery of housing and homelessness services in order to overcome barriers women face, particularly in relation to women-specific services. • CIH's 2011 briefing on delivering housing services to LGBT+ tenants that, due to historical discrimination many LGBT+ people have been reluctant to articulate their needs or have been marginalised in consultation processes.⁵⁴ • An akt 2022 report recommended that the housing and homelessness sector should involve young people in the design of services, and commission training programmes for housing staff to raise awareness of the needs of LGBTQ+ young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.⁵⁵ <p>Our proposed requirements Our expectations on providers in this area have been increased, requiring regular and ongoing consideration of ways to improve and tailor their approach to tenant engagement, as well as all other landlord services. This may lead to tenants who are less likely to be engaged with their landlord to take part.</p> <p>The proposed requirements on resident engagement recognise that the methods used should vary to meet a range of needs and interests, as some tenants may want to engage proactively with their landlord's policies, and others may prefer to be kept informed.</p> <p>Based on the evidence above, all tenants within the sector may be positively impacted by requirements relating to tailoring of services, tenant engagement and consultation. This impact may be more positive for those who share the protected characteristics of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and sex. We consider that PSED aim two is relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>We have also clarified our expectations on landlords when considering significant changes in management arrangements. This has been done to address some of the issues we have seen in our consumer regulation case work since 2017 when the requirement currently in the existing Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard was first introduced. The expanded expectations should encourage more effective consultation practice that improves the ability of those who share one or more protected characteristics (where it has been shown that participation / engagement levels are low) to give their views.</p>			

⁵¹ [Engaging and empowering tenants in council-owned housing](#)

⁵² [English Housing Survey: Social rented sector, 2020-21](#)

⁵³ [Supporting people with learning disabilities to rent their own place - Resource Library - Resources - Housing LIN](#)

⁵⁴ [CIH Practice Brief: Delivering housing services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender customers](#)

⁵⁵ [Building inclusive housing support for LGBTQ+ people](#)

<p>costs) to tenants in the immediate and longer term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate to affected tenants how the consultation responses have been taken into account in reaching a decision.	<p>We have taken the opportunity in the draft Code of Practice to be clear that providers should take reasonable steps to ensure that all tenants have an equitable opportunity to be involved in influencing and scrutinising strategies, policies, and services, taking into account the diverse needs of tenants.</p> <p>Overall assessment</p> <p>Taking all the above into account, we consider that these requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and sex.</p>
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Transparency and accountability to tenants – Information about landlord services				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief	Sex X	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups. It is recognised that communications and the standard of service received by tenants can be influenced by stigmatisation. Research suggests that social housing stigma is complex and intersects with other issues such as poverty and immigration ⁵⁶ .				
Proposal		Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral		
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must communicate with tenants and provide information so tenants can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord, and hold their landlord to account.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.3.1. Registered providers must provide tenants with information about the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> available landlord services, how to access those services, and the standards of service tenants can expect standards of safety and quality tenants can expect homes and communal areas to meet rents and service charges that are payable by tenant responsibilities of the registered provider and the tenant for maintaining homes, communal areas, shared spaces⁵⁷ and neighbourhoods. <p>2.3.2. Registered providers must communicate with affected tenants on progress, next steps and outcomes when delivering landlord services.</p>		<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a much higher proportion of households with at least one disabled member in the social rented sector than other tenures (54 per cent compared with 37 per cent for outright owners (despite these two groups having a similar age profile) and 30 per cent for private renters)). 57 per cent of social housing tenants are aged 50 and over.⁵⁸ 2.7% of social rented households have a HRP that has little/no proficiency in the English language⁵⁹. 36% of social rented HRPs do not have any educational qualifications. Comparatively the national average is 20%⁶⁰. Women can experience barriers when accessing advice and support with their housing⁶¹. In 2021-22, 93 per cent of households in England had internet access at home, but at 83 per cent, social renters were the least likely out of all tenures to have this access⁶². Cross-tenure research by OFCOM in 2021 found that amongst those aged 65+, only 77 per cent used the internet at home⁶³. <p>Our proposed requirements We are expanding requirements on transparency, so providers must keep tenants informed of plans and progress during the delivery of services.</p> <p>To aid transparency, tenants must be able to access policies that relate to landlord services and these policies must be fair and reasonable, setting out the criteria for making decisions and processes tenants must follow should they choose to appeal a decision (2.3.3). We are proposing to add to these a further requirement for landlords to have a dedicated person responsible for complying with the consumer standards (2.3.4).</p> <p>We consider that PSED aim two is relevant to these requirements. These requirements may lead to an improvement in how registered providers provide information to tenants and the scope of that information, particularly to those tenants who are more likely to experience barriers to communication and/or engagement.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, we consider that these requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics age, race, disability, and sex.</p>		

⁵⁶ [Inside Housing - Home - Paternalistic attitudes from social landlords can add to the stigmatisation of residents](#)

⁵⁷ Throughout the consumer standards 'shared spaces' are those spaces used by tenants that are not the responsibility of the landlord, as opposed to communal areas where landlords have direct responsibilities for ensuring their safety and maintenance.

⁵⁸ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

⁵⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

⁶⁰ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

⁶¹ [Fobbed Off, Shelter, 2021](#)

⁶² [EHS Headline report 2021/22](#)

⁶³ [Adult's Media Use and Attitudes report 2020/21 \(ofcom.org.uk\)](#)

2.3.3. Registered providers' housing and neighbourhood policies must be fair, reasonable, accessible, and transparent. Where relevant, policies should set out decision-making criteria and appeals processes.

2.3.4. Registered providers must make information available to tenants about the relevant roles and responsibilities of senior level employees or officers, including who has responsibility for compliance with the consumer standards.

Transparency and accountability to tenants – Performance information
EXCLUDES specific expectations 2.4.1 – 2.4.3 relating to tenant satisfaction measures as they are covered by a separate EQIA

Potential impact on different protected characteristics

Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	

There is insufficient evidence of any impact on protected groups.

Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral
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<p>Required outcome Registered providers must collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord’s performance in delivering landlord services.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.4.4. Registered providers must provide tenants with information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) how they are performing in delivering landlord services and what actions they will take to improve performance where required b) how they have taken tenants’ views into account to improve landlord services, information, and communication c) how income is being spent; and d) their directors’ remuneration and management costs. 	<p>We did not find any evidence which is directly relevant to the provision of information to tenants by providers. However, we acknowledge that our proposed general requirement for registered providers to consider how they communicate and or present information to their tenant populations is likely to support this specific proposal.</p> <p>Our proposed requirements While all tenants may be positively impacted by requirements relating to the provision of performance information, as it will help them to better hold their landlord to account, there is no evidence of a specific positive or negative impact on tenants who share different protected characteristics.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, we consider that these requirements are likely to have a neutral impact on tenants who share different protected characteristics.</p>
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Transparency and accountability to tenants: Complaints				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact of the requirement on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must ensure complaints are addressed fairly, effectively, and promptly.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.5.1. Registered providers must ensure their approach to handling complaints is simple and accessible.</p> <p>2.5.2. Registered providers must publicise their complaints process and what tenants can do if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint or how a complaint was handled.</p> <p>2.5.3. Registered providers must provide tenants with information about the type of complaints received and how they have learnt from complaints to continuously improve services.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last 12 months, 32 per cent of social renters had considered making a complaint. Compared to private renters, social renters are twice as likely to consider complaining. Older renters were less likely to consider complaining than younger renters (20 per cent of those aged 65 or over considered making a complaint compared to 34 per cent of those under 65).⁶⁴ Most social renters who chose not to make a complaint made this decision because of the hassle and time required to do so (43 per cent), or because they believed that nothing would be done in response to their complaint (27 per cent). Most social renters who made a complaint were unhappy with the response to their complaint (63 per cent)⁶⁵. Social renters with an HRP from an ethnic minority background were more likely to consider complaining than those with a white HRP, 38 per cent as opposed to 30 per cent (this difference might be due to the younger age profile of ethnic minority households, as younger tenants were more likely to consider complaining than older renters over aged 65). The proportion of social renters who, after considering a complaint, went on to make one was the same for households with an ethnic minority HRP and those with a white HRP, 85 per cent in both groups.⁶⁶ Evidence presented by Social Housing Action Campaign (SHAC) to the Levelling Up Housing and Communities Committee's Inquiry into the regulation of social housing indicated that for disabled people the complaints process could be draining and demoralising when met by landlords who (SHAC alleged) intentionally protract the process or completely ignore their complaints. The complaints process itself is not always accessible depending on the tenant's disability, and landlords often refuse to make reasonable adjustments to facilitate this⁶⁷. <p>Our proposed requirements The requirements relating to complaints handling should result in registered providers making tenants aware of how to make a complaint to their landlord, which, given the evidence, may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of race, age, and disability. We consider that PSED aims one and two are relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>The expanded requirements on providers regarding complaints should help to ensure that registered providers have an accessible and responsive complaints system which does not place barriers in the way of any tenants. Our proposed standard operates alongside the work of the Housing Ombudsman Service, setting expectations about how registered providers are expected to handle complaints, and incorporating requirements around transparency to tenants.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, we consider that these requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of race, age, and disability.</p>			

⁶⁴ [EHS: Social rented sector, 2020-21](#)

⁶⁵ [EHS: Social rented sector, 2020-21](#)

⁶⁶ [EHS: Social rented sector, 2020-21](#)

⁶⁷ <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/41978/pdf/>

Transparency and accountability to tenants: Self-referral

Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	

There is insufficient evidence of any impact on protected groups.

Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral
<p>Specific expectation Registered providers must communicate in a timely manner with the regulator on all material issues that relate to non-compliance or potential non-compliance with the consumer standards.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us We did not find any equality evidence which is directly relevant to this requirement.</p> <p>Our proposed requirements The Governance and Financial Viability Standard requires private registered providers to communicate to the regulator on material issues that relate to their non-compliance or potential non-compliance with the standards and the Rent Standard requires this of both private registered providers and local authority registered providers where there are material issues related to non-compliance in respect of rents. This proposed requirement will make clear that this is also a requirement in respect of our consumer standards.</p> <p>While all tenants are likely to be positively impacted by requirements on providers to communicate with the regulator on material issues relating non-compliance with the consumer standards, there is no evidence of any impact on tenants who share different protected characteristics.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, we consider at this stage, we have not identified any equality impacts relevant to this requirement.</p>

Neighbourhood and Community: Maintenance of shared spaces				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must work co-operatively with tenants, other landlords and relevant organisations to contribute to the upkeep and safety of shared spaces associated with their homes.</p> <p>Specific expectation 2.1.1 Registered providers must work co-operatively to assist in resolving issues affecting the upkeep and safety of the shared spaces associated with their homes.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist older persons' housing is likely to be flatted accommodation, where communal areas are important for accessibility and create spaces that help combat isolation. These need to be safe and well maintained. While there is a distinction between communal areas (which are covered under the Safety & Quality Standard) and shared spaces, older people's housing may be also more likely to have shared spaces as well as communal. Government planning guidance indicates the importance of the quality and accessibility of shared spaces for the wellbeing of older residents.⁶⁸ 45 per cent of social housing tenants live in a flat (compared to 22 per cent for all tenures) and 48 per cent of disabled social housing tenants live in a flat, maisonette or apartment⁶⁹. Accessibility and social cohesion are two of the most significant factors affecting how older people experience their neighbourhood.⁷⁰ Research by Foundations in 2022 also emphasised the importance of shared spaces and their accessibility to the lives of disabled people.⁷¹ The Housing Ombudsman in his evidence to the Levelling Up Housing and Communities Committee's Inquiry on the regulation of social housing advocated that as part of a reviewed DHS, a minimum standard should apply to communal spaces including external areas such as gardens, including lighting, bin areas and bin chutes.⁷² In social housing between 2016 and 2019, 6 per cent of households with a white British HRP were overcrowded compared to 17 per cent of those with a HRP from an ethnic minority. Households with the highest rates of overcrowding were those with HRPs from the following groups: Bangladeshi (24 per cent), Pakistani (18 per cent), black African (16 per cent), Arab (15 per cent) and Mixed white and black African (14 per cent).⁷³ Ethnic minority social tenants are twice as likely to live in overcrowded homes⁷⁴. <p>Our proposed requirements Responses to the Social Housing Green Paper highlighted tenants' concerns about the quality and upkeep of the spaces around their homes. These proposed requirements set expectations in relation to 'shared spaces', which the landlord does not have responsibility for but where, with effective contribution and cooperation with others, they can improve tenants' experience of using the shared spaces around their homes.</p> <p>Based on the evidence, older people may be more likely to live in accommodation where shared spaces are a feature. Disabled people need shared spaces to be accessible and safe. People from some minority ethnic groups are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions and therefore have most to gain from quality shared spaces. The requirement to contribute to the upkeep and safety of shared spaces may therefore have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of age, disability, and race. We consider that PSED aim two is relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, we consider that these requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics age, disability, and race.</p>			

⁶⁸ [Housing for older and disabled people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/housing-for-older-and-disabled-people)

⁶⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

⁷⁰ [Future of an aging population, Government Office for Science,](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-data-and-analysis/publications/future-of-an-aging-population)

⁷¹ [Housing-Associations-and-Home-Adaptations](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-data-and-analysis/publications/housing-associations-and-home-adaptations)

⁷² <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/41938/pdf/>

⁷³ [Overcrowded households - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-data-and-analysis/publications/overcrowded-households)

⁷⁴ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

Neighbourhood and Community: Local cooperation				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment X	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex X	Sexual orientation X	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental, and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.2.1 Registered providers, having taken account of their strategic objectives, the views of tenants and their presence within the areas where they provide social housing, must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> identify and communicate to tenants the roles registered providers play in promoting social, environmental, and economic wellbeing and how they will achieve them co-operate with local partnership arrangements and the strategic housing function of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives. 	<p>What the evidence tells us 2020 Government data⁷⁵ for the most deprived 10 per cent of neighbourhoods shows that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> White British people were the least likely to live in the neighbourhoods most deprived in relation to living environment (9.2 per cent), crime (8.9 per cent) and barriers to housing and services (8.2 per cent) Out of the 18 individual ethnic groups, black African (32.3 per cent), black Other (31.6 per cent), and black Caribbean (29.2 per cent) people were the most likely to live in the neighbourhoods most deprived in relation to housing and services. People from the Pakistani ethnic group were the most likely to live in the 10 per cent of neighbourhoods most deprived in relation to education, skills, and training (27.4 per cent), health and disability (16.0 per cent), crime (21.2 per cent) and the living environment (28.2 per cent). <p>A Bristol University report The Inequality of Poverty⁷⁶ from 2021 indicates the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People from Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic minorities have the highest rates of poverty (at 23-26 per cent), followed by Indian, black Caribbean and black African groups (9-11 per cent). The white majority has the lowest poverty rate at (6 per cent). Some protected characteristics are associated with an increased risk of poverty in the UK: race, sex (in the case of single mothers), and disability. In relation to age, while pensioner poverty has fallen over the last few decades younger workers are much more likely to be in poverty than other age groups. We also found that intersectionality plays a large role; the more protected characteristics a person has, the more risk they bear of being in poverty. Poverty amongst minority ethnic groups arises largely from the position in the labour market. Overall people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to work in low-paid occupations or earn below the living wage. There are also higher unemployment rates in some minority ethnic groups, and workers from black minority ethnic groups are more likely to have insecure work. <p>A Houseproud project report from the University of Surrey in 2018 found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nearly 50 per cent of LGBT+ survey respondents in social housing do not feel a sense of belonging in their local community. 25 per cent reported feeling lonely in the area they live and only 31 per cent of LGBT+ survey respondents felt their housing provider could deal effectively with issues of harassment.⁷⁷ The poverty rate is consistently higher for disabled people (32 per cent in 19/20) compared to 20 per cent not disabled).⁷⁸ In the year ending March 2021, disabled people were more likely to report feelings of loneliness “often or always” (15.1 per cent) than non-disabled people (3.6 per cent).⁷⁹ <p>Our proposed requirements Based on the evidence, requiring providers to co-operate with partners to promote social, environmental, and economic wellbeing may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics age, race, disability, sex, gender reassignment, and sexual orientation. We consider that all PSED aims are relevant to these requirements. Requiring registered providers to set out how they will achieve their role in the promotion of social, environmental, and economic wellbeing strengthens the current expectation as it is more transparent and active.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, we believe this requirement may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics age, race, disability, sex, gender reassignment, and sexual orientation.</p>			

⁷⁵ [People living in deprived neighbourhoods - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/people-living-in-deprived-neighbourhoods)

⁷⁶ [The Inequality of Poverty Full Report.pdf \(fairbydesign.com\)](https://www.fairbydesign.com/the-inequality-of-poverty-full-report.pdf)

⁷⁷ [No Place Like Home](https://www.no-place-like-home.org/)

⁷⁸ [2022 UK Poverty report](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101422/2022-UK-Poverty-report.pdf)

⁷⁹ [Outcomes for disabled people in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/people-in-work-and-retirement/disability-and-health/health-and-wellbeing/outcomes-for-disabled-people-in-the-uk)

Neighbourhood and Community: Safer neighbourhoods

Potential impact on different protected characteristics

Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment X	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief X	Sex X	Sexual orientation X	Marriage and civil partnership	

There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.

Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must work in partnership with appropriate local authority departments, the police, and other relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.</p> <p>Specific expectations</p> <p>2.3.1 Registered providers must have a policy on how they work with relevant organisations to deter and tackle ASB in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.</p> <p>2.3.2 Registered providers must have clearly set out their approach for how they tackle and deter hate incidents in neighbourhoods where they provide social housing.</p> <p>2.3.3 Registered providers must enable ASB to be reported easily and keep tenants informed about the progress of their case.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <p>Government 2021/22 hate crime figures⁸⁰:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 per cent (109,843) of hate crimes were racially motivated - racially motivated hate crimes increased by 19 per cent between year ending March 2021 and year ending March 2022. Religious hate crimes increased by 37 per cent between year ending March 2021 and year ending March 2022 (from 6,383 to 8,730). In year ending March 2022, where the perceived religion of the victim was recorded, two in five (42 per cent) of religious hate crime offences were targeted against Muslims (3,459 offences). The next most targeted group were Jewish people, who were targeted in just under one in four (23 per cent) of religious hate crimes (1,919 offences). Sexual orientation hate crimes rose by 41 per cent (to 26,152 offences). This was the largest percentage annual increase in these offences since the time series began in year ending March 2012. Disability hate crimes increased by 43 per cent (from 9,945 to 14,242) over the last year, the largest percentage annual increase seen since year ending March 2017 (53 per cent). <p>ONS crime figures 2020⁸¹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 per cent of white British households experienced ASB in the local area compared to 46 per cent white and black African and 55 per cent other mixed ethnic background. 50 per cent of Jewish households experienced ASB in the local area. 52 per cent of gay/lesbian households and 49 per cent of bisexual households experienced ASB in the local area compared to 42 per cent of heterosexual households. <p>ONS perception of personal safety and experiences of harassment 2022⁸²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People felt less safe walking alone in all settings after dark than during the day; with women feeling less safe than men in all settings after dark. Disabled people felt less safe in all settings than non-disabled people. More women (27 per cent) than men (16 per cent) reported they had experienced at least one form of harassment in the previous 12 months. <p>Research⁸³ from the University of Surrey indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transgender respondents were particularly concerned about safety in their neighbourhood, due to transphobia and transphobic hate crime. Disabled people aged 16 years and over (43.4 per cent) were significantly more likely to have experienced ASB than non-disabled people (39 per cent). This was most pronounced amongst those aged 35-44, where 57.7 per cent of disabled people experienced ASB compared with 43.3 per cent of non-disabled people.⁸⁴ <p>London Councils' 2014 report⁸⁵ on ASB and mental health found that people with learning disabilities and mental health problems can sometimes be perceived as perpetrators of ASB through displaying behaviours due to their impairment.</p> <p>A Cambridge University research project⁸⁶ found very differing ideas about what constitutes ASB between adults and people aged 11-15 within the same area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social housing tenants are more likely to experience ASB and be victims of crime than those in other tenures⁸⁷.

⁸⁰ [Hate crime, England and Wales, 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK](#)

⁸¹ [Crime in England and Wales, 2020](#)

⁸² [Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Mar 22 Great Britain - ONS](#)

⁸³ [SAFE Housing University of Surrey, 2017](#)

⁸⁴ [Outcomes for disabled people in the UK - ONS](#)

⁸⁵ [Mental-Health-and-Anti-Social-Behaviour-London-Councils-2014.pdf \(hampshiresab.org.uk\)](#)

⁸⁶ [Generation blame: how age affects our views of anti-social behaviour | University of Cambridge](#)

⁸⁷ [The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<p>2.3.4 Registered providers must provide prompt and appropriate action in response to ASB, having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available to them.</p> <p>2.3.5 Registered providers must support tenants who are affected by ASB, including by signposting them to agencies who can give them appropriate support and assistance.</p>	<p>Our proposed requirements</p> <p>Based on the evidence, tenants who share the protected characteristics age, race, religion or belief, disability, sex, gender reassignment, and sexual orientation may be more positively impacted by requirements relating to ASB and hate crime. We consider that all PSED aims are relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>The new expectation that providers set out their approach to tackling and deterring hate incidents may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics race, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, and age, as providers will need to define their policy and approach, taking into account the needs of their tenants and current sector good practice in this area.</p> <p>Some perpetrators of ASB suffer with mental health problems. 2.3.5 requiring providers to support those affected by ASB rather than limiting support to victims of ASB may help to facilitate the right support and interventions being put in place for those perpetrators and achieve a positive outcome that reduces further offending and helps them to maintain their tenancy.</p> <p>We have taken the opportunity in the draft Code of Practice to make it clear that providers should aim to eliminate any barriers to reporting ASB and hate incidents to their landlord, which may have a positive impact on those tenants who may be reluctant to report ASB and hate incidents or who experience communications barriers.</p> <p>Overall assessment</p> <p>Taking the above into account, we consider that these requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, disability, sex, sexual orientation, and age.</p>
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Neighbourhood and Community: Domestic abuse				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment X	Pregnancy and maternity X	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex X	Sexual orientation X	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.4.1. Registered providers must have a policy for how they respond to cases of domestic abuse.</p> <p>2.4.2. Registered providers must co-operate with appropriate local authority departments to support the local authority in meeting its duty to develop a strategy and commission services for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us ONS data on domestic abuse victim characteristics 21/22⁸⁸:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74 per cent of domestic abuse related crimes recorded by the police the victim was female. • Significantly higher proportion of adults aged 20 to 24 years were victims of any domestic abuse compared with those in age categories of 55 years and over. • 10 per cent of adults with a disability experienced domestic abuse compared to 4 per cent of adults without a disability. • Differences between any domestic abuse estimates across different ethnic groups were found not to be significant. • ONS statistics⁸⁹ show that, of all victims of any type of domestic abuse, it was reported by 5.0 per cent of white people, 8.7 per cent of mixed ethnicity people, 3.9 per cent Asian people, and 5.9 per cent black people. Looking at female victims only, the figures were 7.0 per cent white, 3.2 per cent Asian, and 10.2 per cent black. • Domestic abuse can escalate during pregnancy⁹⁰. • 1 in 15 survivors using domestic abuse services are pregnant women.⁹¹ • The Safe at Home Report⁹² recommends creating a domestic abuse policy for staff and tenants in order to raise awareness of domestic abuse. • The Home Office states⁹³ that between an estimated quarter and a third of children have been exposed to domestic abuse at some point in their lives; and that women aged 16 to 19 years were significantly more likely to be victims of any domestic abuse in the last year than women aged 25 years and over. It also found that disabled adults were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than non-disabled adults. • There is further evidence to suggest that disabled people are at increased risk of experiencing domestic abuse in the Crime Survey for England and Wales year ending March 2020⁹⁴. This found that around 1 in 7 (14 per cent) disabled adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse, compared with 1 in 20 (5 per cent) non-disabled adults, and that disabled women were more than twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse (18 per cent) than non-disabled women (7 per cent). • While there are no official statistics on the experiences of LGBT+ communities with domestic abuse, research ⁹⁵by GALOP suggests it is very prevalent. • A Stonewall study⁹⁶ found more than a quarter of British transgender people (28 per cent) in a relationship in the previous year had faced domestic abuse from a partner. <p>Our proposed requirements The White Paper commits the regulator to introducing a requirement for landlords to have a policy setting out how they should tackle issues surrounding domestic abuse, working with other agencies as appropriate, and the Act extends our powers to set standards to include policies and procedures in connection to domestic abuse. This is reflected in the proposed standard. We consider that all PSED aims are relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>Based on the evidence, requiring providers to work with others to tackle domestic abuse may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics of pregnancy and maternity, gender, age, race, disability, gender reassignment, and sexual orientation. By working with other agencies, registered providers may be able to achieve more to tackle domestic abuse than they could by working alone, which may reduce disadvantages suffered by victims and survivors. The outcome of such partnership working should help to ensure that victims and survivors of domestic abuse can remain safe in their home or move to a place of safety.</p>			

⁸⁸ [Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

⁸⁹ [Domestic abuse prevalence and victim characteristics - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

⁹⁰ [Safe Lives: Cry for health, 2016](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442223/Safe_Lives_Cry_for_health_2016.pdf)

⁹¹ [The Domestic Abuse Report, 2022](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442223/Safe_Lives_Cry_for_health_2016.pdf)

⁹² [Safe at Home Report.pdf \(safelives.org.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442223/Safe_Lives_Cry_for_health_2016.pdf)

⁹³ [Policy Equality Statement: demonstrating compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442223/Safe_Lives_Cry_for_health_2016.pdf)

⁹⁴ [Disability and crime - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

⁹⁵ [Galop domestic abuse.indd](https://www.galop.org.uk)

⁹⁶ [stonewall_and_nfp_synergy_report](https://www.stonewall.org.uk)

Having a domestic abuse policy should raise awareness of and increase understanding of domestic abuse and the support available to victims and survivors of domestic abuse within the community and with a registered provider's staff. Having a policy setting out how they respond to cases of domestic abuse may also help to ensure that providers respond appropriately and consistently to reports of domestic abuse. The Draft [Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance Framework](#) states that it is vital that housing providers are able to recognise and respond to the signs of domestic abuse. Its findings include the risk of housing providers misdiagnosing the effects of domestic abuse as ASB and the cost to providers of doing so. Expecting registered providers to have a clear policy and commitment to this approach may also help to contribute to a societal challenge against domestic abuse towards victims and survivors, where there is significant correlation across protected characteristics, particularly for women.

The draft Code of Practice makes clear that providers should ensure they have an appreciation of the different specific needs of tenants who experience domestic abuse, including those arising from the tenant's protected characteristics, such as disability and race.

Overall assessment

Taking the above into account, we consider that these requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics pregnancy and maternity, sex, age, race, disability, gender reassignment, and sexual orientation.

Tenancy: Allocations and lettings				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must allocate and let their homes in a fair and transparent way that takes the needs of tenants and prospective tenants into account.</p> <p>Specific expectations</p> <p>2.1.1 Registered providers must co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing functions and assist local authorities to fulfil their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.</p> <p>2.1.2 Registered providers must seek to allocate homes that are designated, designed, or adapted to meet specific needs in a way that is compatible with the purpose of the housing.</p> <p>2.1.3 Registered providers must develop and deliver services to address under-occupation and overcrowding in their homes. These services should be focused on the needs of tenants.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <p>Government figures on overcrowded households⁹⁷:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households with a black lead applicant were the most disproportionately homeless at 9.7 per cent of those owed a duty but only 3.5 per cent of the population. Households with the highest rates of overcrowding were in the Bangladeshi (24 per cent), Pakistani (18 per cent), black African (16 per cent), Arab (15 per cent) and mixed white and black African (14 per cent) ethnic groups. 2 per cent of white British households were overcrowded. In social housing 6 per cent of white British were overcrowded compared to 13 per cent of the population other than white British. For vulnerable Bangladeshi households, the most common reason they were given priority was the need to move out of unsanitary, unsatisfactory, or overcrowded conditions. White British households were more likely to under-occupy their home than households from all other ethnic groups combined. <p>Government data on renting social housing⁹⁸</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black African (44 per cent), mixed white and black African (41 per cent) and black Caribbean (40 per cent) households were most likely to rent social housing out of all ethnic groups. Indian (7 per cent), Chinese (10 per cent), and white other (11 per cent) households had lower rates of renting social housing. Compares with 16 per cent of white British households rented social housing. In London, white British households were less likely to rent social housing than households from all other ethnic groups combined. Outside London, white British households were as likely to rent social housing as households from all other ethnic groups combined. Households with a HRP from black ethnic groups were the most likely to live in the neighbourhoods most deprived in relation to barriers to housing and services and those with a HRP from the white British ethnic group least likely. Households from the Pakistani ethnic group were the most likely to live in the 10 per cent of neighbourhoods most deprived in relation to education, skills and training, health and disability, crime, and the living environment. <p>Census 2021 data⁹⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnic minority social tenants are twice as likely to live in overcrowded homes <p>Research¹⁰⁰ by the National Institute for Health Research, School for Social Care Research highlights some of the difficulties those with mild and moderate learning disabilities have with accessing social housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social housing was often viewed as the first or preferred option, but the sector was difficult to access. The process of applying for social housing, generally through choice - based lettings, is challenging, even where a person has advocates. The bidding process is difficult to understand and the competitive nature of it places significant pressure on people with learning disabilities. The choice based letting system needs to be made much more accessible. Having a trusted and well-informed individual that supports someone through a move and maintaining their tenancy is essential. <p>Some of the evidence¹⁰¹ provided to the Levelling Up Housing and Communities Committee's inquiries into the regulation of social housing, and into exempt accommodation, indicated that unsuitable allocations can have a detrimental effect. SHAC's written evidence to the inquiry on the regulation of social housing suggests that support provided to disabled tenants experiencing ASB needs to be improved, with better use made of powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. West Midlands Police's written evidence to the inquiry on exempt accommodation expressed concern about 'concentrations of vulnerable persons, many with complex needs' in ASB hotspot areas as it provides 'opportunity for them to be exploited, to exploit others or for their vulnerabilities to be otherwise taken advantage of or exposed'.</p>			

⁹⁷ [Overcrowded households – GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures](#)

⁹⁸ [Renting social housing – GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures](#)

⁹⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

¹⁰⁰ [Supporting people with learning disabilities to rent their own place - Resource Library - Resources - Housing LIN](#)

¹⁰¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/41978/pdf/> <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/43141/pdf/>

<p>2.1.4 Registered providers must take action to prevent and tackle tenancy fraud.</p>	<p>A 2019 report¹⁰² from the APPG for housing and care for older people highlighted that older tenants in social housing are most likely to under-occupy and that this can create several problems with fuel poverty and maintenance cost.</p>
<p>2.1.5 Registered providers must have a fair, reasonable, simple, and accessible appeals process for allocation decisions.</p>	<p>Overcrowding is much more prevalent amongst those aged 16 to 34.¹⁰³</p> <p>A 2021 publication¹⁰⁴ from the House of Commons Library stated that older households who want to move may struggle to move to an accessible home due to a shortage of accessible and specialist housing for older people (for example, retirement housing, sheltered housing and housing with care) in both the private and social sectors.</p>
<p>2.1.6 Registered providers must record all lettings and sales as required by the Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) system.</p>	<p>Our proposed requirements</p> <p>Based on the evidence, tenants within the sector who may be positively impacted by these requirements share the protected characteristics age, race, and disability. We consider that PSED aim two is relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>We are broadening the current requirement that providers <i>take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants, to take into account the needs of tenants and prospective tenants</i>. This may encourage registered providers to consider the wider needs of tenants and prospective tenants arising from their protected characteristics, or broader circumstances, in their allocations decisions, and therefore help to advance opportunities for some tenants who share one or more protected characteristics.</p> <p>2.1.2 makes the need clear for providers to make best use of the limited stock of adapted properties, which may improve opportunities for those who share protected characteristics of disability and age.</p> <p>2.1.5 requires that the appeals process must be fair, reasonable, simple, and accessible, and reiterates requirements that are elsewhere in the standards for landlord services to be accessible.</p> <p>2.1.6 ensures the continued availability of data on social housing lettings which helps to increase information in the public domain about who is moving into social housing, which is a fundamental element in ensuring equitable access and outcomes.</p> <p>Overall assessment</p> <p>Taking the above into account, we consider that these requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics age, race, and disability.</p>

¹⁰² [HAPPI-5-Rental-Housing.pdf \(housinglin.org.uk\)](https://housinglin.org.uk/HAPPI-5-Rental-Housing.pdf)

¹⁰³ [English Housing Survey: Housing across the life course 2018-19 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94444/English_Housing_Survey_-_Housing_across_the_life_course_2018-19.pdf)

¹⁰⁴ [Housing an ageing population: a reading list \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/housing-and-communities-committee/inquiries-and-reports/housing-an-ageing-population-a-reading-list/)

Tenancy: Tenure				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief	Sex	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>We have only assessed the text in bold below.</p> <p>Required outcome Registered providers must offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock.</p> <p>They shall meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us We did not find any evidence which is directly relevant to the requirement for registered providers to meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.</p> <p>Our proposed requirements We considered whether this requirement may have a positive impact on tenants who share different protected characteristics. While all tenants may be positively impacted by this requirement, there is no evidence of any impact on tenants who share different protected characteristics.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, at this stage we have not identified any equality impacts relevant to this proposal.</p>			

Tenancy: Tenancy sustainment and evictions				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex X	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Required outcome Registered providers must support tenants to maintain their tenancy or licence. Where a registered provider ends a tenancy or licence, they must offer affected tenants advice and assistance.</p> <p>Specific expectations 2.2.1 Registered providers must provide services that support tenants to maintain their tenancy or licence and prevent unnecessary evictions.</p> <p>2.2.2 Registered providers must provide tenants required to move with timely advice and assistance about housing options before the tenancy or licence ends.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <p>Government data on the social rented sector¹⁰⁵:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youngest and oldest social renters (those aged 16 to 24, and 75 and over) had the highest proportions in the lowest income quintile for their age (69 per cent and 73 per cent respectively), with the weekly income being lowest for 16- to 24-year-olds and those aged 75 and over, at £293 and £290 respectively. Amongst household types in the social rented sector, lone parents with dependent children (49 per cent) and one person households (79 per cent) had the highest proportion in the lowest income quintile compared to other household types. Lone parents with non-dependent children (56 per cent) and lone parents with dependent children (60 per cent) had the lowest proportion saying they found it easy to pay rent compared to other household types. Younger social renters were more likely to have been in rent arrears within the previous year than older renters. Social renters aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 34 were more likely than all other age groups to have been in arrears in the last year (44 per cent and 37 per cent respectively). Social renters aged 75 and over and those aged 65 to 74 were the least likely to be in arrears (6 per cent and 5 per cent respectively). Lone parents in social housing with dependent children (42 per cent) were more likely to have been in rent arrears within the previous year than any other household type. This was followed by couples with dependent children (27 per cent). In the social rented sector, those receiving housing benefit were more likely to have been in rent arrears in the previous year (30 per cent) compared to those who do not (17 per cent). <p>The Inequality of Poverty report from the University of Bristol¹⁰⁶ also found significant differences in rates of poverty, which seem to align with certain protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some protected characteristics are associated with an increased risk of poverty in the UK: race, sex (in the case of single mothers), and disability. People from Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic minorities have the highest rates of poverty (at 23-26 per cent), followed by Indian, black Caribbean and black African groups (9-11 per cent) with the white majority at (6 per cent). Their findings indicate that younger workers are much more likely to be in poverty than other age groups. Intersectionality plays a large role; the more protected characteristics a person has, the more risk they bear. They also found a very strong relationship between poverty and disability. <p>The Race Equality Foundation's work in its Housing Collaborative reported¹⁰⁷ that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across all tenures and groups, around 6 per cent of households responding to the Understanding Society survey¹⁰⁸ were in arrears with their housing payments. Those born outside the UK were twice as likely to be in housing arrears. Single parents and other households with dependent children twice as likely. Social housing tenants were two and a half times as likely to be in housing arrears. They identified inequality by ethnicity with a quarter of people with Bangladeshi ethnicity and a fifth of those with Pakistani or black African ethnicity being in housing arrears. This study also looked at those who had told the survey that they intended to move from their present accommodation. Of the total who said this, 4 per cent were moving because of the end of their tenancy or eviction. The report does not explain its results particularly clearly, but it does indicate that the numbers of lone parent with dependent children households who intended to move because of the end of their tenancy or eviction was disproportionately high, both in social housing and private rented housing. They also indicate that black Caribbean, Bangladeshi, white other and mixed ethnic groups were more likely to intend to move because of the end of tenancy or eviction. <p>Census 2021 data¹⁰⁹:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social housing tenants have the second lowest employment rate behind owners who have bought their homes outright. 			

¹⁰⁵ [EHS_19-20_Social_rented_sector_report_FINAL.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁰⁶ [The-Inequality-of-Poverty-Full-Report.pdf \(fairbydesign.com\)](#)

¹⁰⁷ [Layout 1 \(raceequalityfoundation.org.uk\)](#)

¹⁰⁸ [COVID-19 | Understanding Society](#)

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

Our proposed requirements

Our draft requirements on tenancy sustainment and evictions give greater emphasis on landlords supporting tenants to maintain their tenancy, as we are proposing to set a required outcome on this issue. Being in arrears with rent is a means by which a tenant may face eviction and the evidence shows us that certain groups e.g., young people (age), people from certain ethnic minorities (race), lone parents (sex), and those with a disability are more likely to be in rent arrears within the social housing sector when compared to other groups who do not share those protected characteristics. By introducing these requirements, registered providers will have to demonstrate how they support tenants in this area. Where tenants can access this additional support, this may reduce the disparities.

We are also being explicit that this requirement applies not only to tenancies, but to licences. These are commonly granted as the basis of occupation in a supported housing context, where licensees are more likely to share the protected characteristic of disability. Registered providers will need to ensure that their approach to tenancy sustainment and evictions covers licensees as well as tenants.

The evidence indicates that tenants within the sector who may be positively impacted by this requirement are those who share protected characteristics of age, race, disability, and sex, as they are more likely to be in poverty and to fall into rent arrears, and so at higher risk of eviction. Other protected groups can also be vulnerable to eviction, such as families with support needs, young people leaving care, and single parents. Vulnerable individuals are also more likely to be housed in supported accommodation, including people fleeing abusive relationships, refugees and migrants, young care leavers and people experiencing mental health problems.

We consider that PSED aim two is relevant to these requirements.

Overall assessment

Taking the above into account, we consider that these measures may have positive impacts on tenants who share the protected characteristics age, sex, race, and disability.

Tenancy: Mutual exchange				
Potential impact on different protected characteristics				
Age X	Disability X	Gender reassignment	Pregnancy and maternity	Race X
Religion or belief	Sex X	Sexual orientation	Marriage and civil partnership	
There is insufficient evidence of any impact on the other protected groups.				
Proposal	Evidence of potential impact(s) and an assessment of our requirements and of the potential impact: positive, negative, or neutral			
<p>Our assessment has been carried out on the required outcome and on specific expectation 2.2.4, which are proposed by the regulator.</p> <p>Required outcome Registered providers must support relevant tenants living in eligible housing to mutually exchange their homes.</p> <p>Specific expectation 2.4.4. Registered providers must offer tenants seeking to mutually exchange with information about the implications for tenure, rent and service charges.</p>	<p>What the evidence tells us</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelter's 'Fobbed off' report¹¹⁰ identifies that women face barriers when accessing advice and support with their housing including lack of knowledge of how the system works and poor treatment by professionals. Data from the EHS and OFCOM shows rates of home internet use reducing with age and being lowest generally amongst social housing tenants compared to other tenures. <p>Our proposed requirements We consider that PSED aims one and two are relevant to these requirements.</p> <p>The required outcome should help to ensure that all tenants are equally supported to mutually exchange their home by their landlord. Similarly, 2.4.4 should help to ensure that those who wish to exchange and are eligible can understand the full implications of it, allowing them to make an informed choice about what is best for them. Both changes may have a positive impact on female tenants, tenants who have communication difficulties, and those whose first language is not English.</p> <p>Overall assessment Taking the above into account, we consider that these requirements may have a positive impact on tenants who share the protected characteristics sex, age, disability, and race.</p>			

¹¹⁰ [Fobbed Off, Shelter, 2021](#)

Part 4: Monitoring and review

We are asking respondents to the consumer standards consultation whether they agree with the conclusions in this EQIA. Following the consultation, we will consider the responses in preparing a final EQIA, which we intend to publish alongside the final consumer standards and associated Code of Practice. This will include an assessment of any additional evidence of potential impacts on equality received during this consultation.

If we make changes to the consumer standards following the consultation, we will consider whether to revise the EQIA. In addition, where new relevant equality data becomes available, including in relation to the identified gaps, consideration to reviewing the EQIA will also be given at that point.



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