

Requirements of the Charter

An analysis of the White Paper has been completed and the key requirements outlined in the seven elements of the Charter are shown below:

Charter 1	<p>To be safe in your home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety will become part of the Regulators' new consumer regulation role, including the development of statutory and good practice guidance on engaging residents of all tenures on safety issues• Social landlords will need to identify a nominated person responsible for complying with their health and safety requirements – This is in place with our Compliance & Assurance Manager (Jon Priest) and the Director of Communities (Keith Gerrard) with overall governance• Launch a consultation on requiring smoke alarms in social housing and introducing new expectations for carbon monoxide alarms. SDC Property Care is a Gas Safe accredited contractor. Smoke alarms are fitted in all properties as a matter of course, and renewed as part of cyclical and planned and preventative works. Carbon monoxide detectors are installed as matter of course where the Council owns and maintains open flued appliances such as a gas fire. As the programme of renewal of existing smoke detectors is rolled out across all stock existing smoke detectors are being replaced with new combined smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors where possible. Where this is not possible to achieve detector units are installed separately.• Continue to work with the Social Sector (Building Safety) Engagement Best Practice Group and the Building Safety Regulator to ensure resident voices are heard. As part of the mobilisation process to internalise the Repairs and Maintenance Service, Property Care were able to achieve Safe Contractor accreditation. Health and safety is an integral part of how we operate. As a maintenance provider, this is one of the core values so that we have effective and suitable controls in place for our own employees and contractors to manage health and safety risks. Membership and accreditation demonstrates that we meet the necessary requirements around health and safety, equal opportunities, diversity and environmental management practices - all in one plan.• Consult on measures to ensure that social housing residents are protected from harm caused by poor electrical safety. SDC Property Care is an NICIEC approved contractor. We undertake periodic tests to all domestic and non-domestic installations in accordance with the statutory requirements. PAT testing is also undertaken annually by our own internally trained staff.• Tenants and Members will be engaged through the new T&F Groups to review standards and guidance relating to all elements of the repairs service. We want to agree a clear set of standards which is adhered to consistently. Often the term “quality” is confused with an aspiration for “excellence” or deemed to be a standard in itself. Where we use words
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	<p>such as “good” or “excellent” there should be no ambiguity as they mean different things to different people and cannot themselves be measured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Care operatives are empowered to undertake additional repairs identified during service visits. Going forward we will use existing property knowledge and analysis of historical property repairs to target repeat repairs before defects are noticed by tenants. We will also use the information to further strengthen our planned preventative programmes of work. • Housemark is the leading data and insight company for the housing sector. The service uses Housemark to benchmark services against peer organisations. The platform is also used for networking and sharing of information and best practice. Any learning is being used to improve existing practices and make improvements to policy and guidance where necessary.
<p>Charter 2</p>	<p>To know how your landlord is performing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regulator will introduce a new set of tenant satisfaction measures. Satisfaction has already been flagged from consultation events and the STAR survey (both in 2019 pre pandemic) by residents and members. An action plan has been put together to improve satisfaction levels with a timeline and responsible officer. Satisfaction is a key area where we need to improve but tempered with managing expectations. This will be managed and governance applied by the Task and Finish group for resident involvement. • Landlords will have to provide a clear breakdown of how their income is being spent, including levels of executive salaries and management costs (relative to the size of the landlord) to be published alongside tenant satisfaction measures. This is already in place with finance colleagues and will form part of the annual report. • Landlords will be required to identify a senior person in their organisation who is responsible for ensuring they comply with the consumer standards set by the Regulator This is already in place and this is Keith Gerrard (Director of Communities) • Landlords will be expected to report to every tenant on such matters at least once a year, if not continuously, using technology (the use of apps is referenced in the paper) This is planned as part of the tenants newsletter and annual report. The opportunity to digitalise is being investigated by the Housing Manager and the councils communications team
<p>Charter 3</p>	<p>To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords will be required to comply with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code, ensuring that they have good processes in place to respond swiftly and effectively to complaints. This is in place with a corporate complaints model which covers the Housing Ombudsman and the LGSO with appropriate identification of the different routes when

	<p>complaints need to reach the Ombudsman. Complaints are reported quarterly and these are shared with the member performance group that includes tenant reps from Housing Committee and reported to Housing Committee as appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords have been asked to self-assess against the Code by 31 December 2020 and publish the results. This has been completed and was published in December 2020 • From March 2021, reports on the complaints the Housing Ombudsman has handled for individual landlords, as well as the determinations on individual cases, will be published on the Housing Ombudsman’s website, this is in place and a number of landlords have been identified and failures published by the Ombudsman • Run an awareness campaign so social housing residents know their rights, are confident in navigating their routes to complain, and are aware of how to escalate to get redress where needed. This is currently part of our complaints process, however, this will be enhanced by information being published both in the annual report and tenant newsletters periodically
<p>Charter 4</p>	<p>To be treated with respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove the ‘serious detriment test’ and introduce routine inspections for the largest landlords (with over 1,000 homes) every four years. This will include Stroud at some point as we have around 5,000 homes • The Regulator will have new powers to publish a Code of Practice on the consumer standards which will be clearer on Landlord requirements. The consumer standards were last updated in 2015 and 2017 so a review is welcomed. • Removing the cap on the level of fines the Regulator can issue and introducing Performance Improvement Plans for landlords failing to comply • Reduce the notice period for surveys on the condition of properties, and introduce a new power to arrange emergency repairs if needed where a survey uncovers evidence of systemic landlord failures • Set out an expectation for all landlords to self-refer breaches with the regulatory standards
<p>Charter 5</p>	<p>To have your voice heard by your landlord</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regulator will require landlords to seek out best practice and consider how they can continually improve the way they engage with social housing tenants. This will form the backbone of the new tenant involvement and empowerment strategy with governance from the task and finish group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on tackling loneliness and ensuring that tenant-led engagement activities linked to Covid-19 can continue. These are being refocused but are restricted by a lack of resource. • Deliver a new opportunities and empowerment programme for social housing residents, to support more effective engagement between landlords and residents, and to give residents tools to influence their landlords and hold them to account. This work is planned in line with the new tenant involvement and empowerment strategy • Review professional training and development to ensure residents receive a high standard of customer service.
<p>Charter 6</p>	<p>To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in</p> <p>This section focusses on well designed, decent homes, good neighbourhoods, and pride in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a review of the Decent Homes Standard to ensure it is delivering what is needed for safety and decency now. It will assess how the standard can support better energy efficiency and the decarbonisation of social homes. • The Decent Homes Standard review will consider access to safe, open, and green spaces for people’s wellbeing and how improvements to communal space could make places more liveable, safe, and comfortable. • There will be a review of the tenant’s experience when dealing with frontline staff and how in some cases this can lead to stigma based on their interactions. • The review will include professionalisation as to whether housing staff are equipped with the right knowledge and skills to work with people with mental health needs and the government will encourage best practice for landlords working with those with mental health needs. • There is consideration for supporting tenants facing anti-social behaviour and crime. The new tenant satisfaction measures will include measures on responsible neighbourhood management, including tackling anti-social behaviour. • The Government will work with the Home Office and other partners to develop an understanding on how crime and tenant’s perception of crime can be measured and reported. There will also be clarity on the different responsibilities that police, local authorities, and landlords have for ASB management. • The Government will work with the National Housing Federation and Local Government Association to encourage social landlords to inform residents of their right to make a community trigger application on how their ASB case is being managed (leading to a multi-agency case review). This is already in place at Stroud in line with the new ASB policy 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a review of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour who suffer from mental health issues. • It considers how to integrate communities and prevents social housing tenants from being made to feel like social class citizens. • It covers how social housing is allocated fairly through local authority allocation schemes. There will also be a review of how government can improve access to suitable homes for disabled people. • For those tenants facing domestic abuse, the Government will expect the Regulator to review and amend its Regulatory Standards to make it clear that landlords should have a policy setting out how they should tackle issues relating to domestic abuse. • The Government identifies a commitment to provide priority for social housing for the armed forces community.
<p>Charter 7</p>	<p>To be supported to take your first step to ownership</p> <p>This section of the report highlights policies and funding that have been put in place to increase the supply of affordable housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built over 486,600 new affordable homes since 2010, including 142,400 for social rent • Announced our new £11.5bn Affordable Homes Programme that will deliver up to 180,000 new homes • Announced a new £3bn Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme • Removed the cap on local authority borrowing to fund housebuilding • Consulted on whether greater flexibilities can be offered around how local authorities can use receipts from Right to Buy sales • Supported community-led housebuilding through the community housing fund • Announced Government will consult on further guidance to provide clarity on rural exception sites policy, to ensure they are used to their full potential. • Introduced a new shared ownership model • Announced that around half of the homes delivered by the new Affordable Homes Programme will be for affordable home ownership • Announced a new Right to Shared Ownership, meaning that most new grant-funded housing association homes for rent will give residents the opportunity to purchase a 10% (or more) stake in their home and to purchase further shares in future • Launched a pilot of Voluntary Right to Buy in the Midlands • Amended the National Planning Policy Framework and published a new national design guide to emphasise the importance of beauty and good design

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasised through our new National Design Guide the importance of building beautiful and well-designed social homes. |
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