The Whiteley Homes Trust

Disrepair Policy

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EIA	Yes

Review Tracker

Review Date	Reviewed by	Changes Made	Approved by	Approved date	Version
July 2026	**Head of Property & Compliance / Director of Operations**	**New Policy**	**RECC**	**6/8/26**	**1.0**

Introduction

At The Whiteley Homes Trust, known throughout this policy as the Trust, we're committed to fostering a safe, inclusive and transparent environment for everyone who lives, works and is associated with us.

This policy sets out how the Trust prevents, identifies, investigates and resolves disrepair, including legal disrepair claims, repair complaints and hazards that may affect the health, safety or wellbeing of residents.

We believe that transparency builds trust, so this document uses language that reflects the many roles and relationships within our community. Whether you are an employee, resident, volunteer, contractor, supplier or third-party partner, this policy aims to guide and inform you in a way that's accessible, respectful and representative.

Through clarity and openness, we aim to foster understanding, accountability and confidence across our workforce and wider community.

Scope

This policy applies to homes let directly by the Trust where the Trust has repairing or landlord responsibilities, including associated communal areas where applicable.

This policy applies to all individuals engaged with The Trust, including employees, agency workers, bank workers and volunteers. Throughout this policy, these groups are referred to collectively as *"employees"* for clarity and ease of reference.

It also applies to residents including beneficiaries, tenants in our private let homes and their households. Throughout this policy, these groups are referred to collectively as "residents" for clarity and ease of reference.

In addition, this policy extends to third-party stakeholders, including contractors, suppliers and external individuals or organisations that provide services on behalf of the Trust.

This policy does not apply to homes within Whiteley Village that are let, sold, managed or maintained by third parties, except where the Trust has a defined contractual or legal responsibility. Where responsibilities are unclear, the Trust will clarify ownership and responsibility promptly and signpost the resident appropriately.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Trust:

- Meets its legal, regulatory and contractual repair obligations
- Responds effectively to potential disrepair
- Reduces avoidable escalation and litigation
- Protects residents from harm
- Maintains homes to the required standard.

The policy supports a consistent approach to repairs, inspections, damp and mould, hazards, resident communication, complaints, legal claims, record keeping, compensation, decants and service improvement.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Trust will comply with all applicable legislation, regulation and standards, including Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, the Defective Premises Act 1972, the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Equality Act 2010, the Building Safety Act 2022, UK GDPR and

the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Trust will also have regard to the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards, including the Safety and Quality Standard, which requires registered providers to have accurate, up-to-date and evidenced stock condition information, maintain homes to at least the Decent Homes Standard, take reasonable steps to ensure health and safety and provide effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements.

The Trust will comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and ensure residents can raise complaints about repairs, disrepair, damp and mould, communication failures or service delays without unnecessary barriers.

Definitions

Disrepair means a failure to keep a home, fixture, fitting, service installation or relevant communal area in the condition required by law, tenancy agreement, licence or other applicable obligation where the Trust has responsibility.

Service request means a request from a resident for the Trust to put something right, such as reporting a repair, defect or hazard. A service request may become a complaint if the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the Trust's response, delay, communication or outcome.

Complaint means an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Trust, its employees or contractors affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

Hazard means a risk to health or safety in the home or associated communal area, including hazards assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

Emergency hazard means a hazard that presents an imminent and significant risk of harm and requires action to make the situation safe within 24 hours.

Pre-Action Protocol means the court protocol for housing condition claims, which sets out expectations for early exchange of information, inspection, expert evidence and attempts to resolve matters before court proceedings.

Policy Commitments

The Trust will take a proactive, resident-focused and evidence-based approach to repairs and disrepair. We will act promptly where concerns are raised, communicate clearly with residents, keep accurate records and use learning from disrepair cases, complaints and inspections to improve services.

The Trust will maintain homes and communal areas for which it is responsible in a safe, decent and good state of repair. We will ensure residents can report repairs easily, provide clear repair timescales, keep residents updated and take appropriate steps to complete repairs within agreed or legally required timescales.

The Trust will use stock condition data, repair records, complaints, inspections, resident feedback and contractor information to identify recurring issues, prioritise investment and reduce the risk of disrepair.

Where potential disrepair is reported or identified, the Trust will triage the matter, assess any immediate risk, arrange inspection where required, confirm responsibility, communicate next steps to the resident, complete remedial works and re-inspect or verify completion where appropriate.

Damp, Mould and Awaab's Law

The Trust will take all reports of damp, mould and condensation seriously and will assess the potential impact on residents, particularly where residents may be vulnerable due to age, disability, health condition or other personal circumstances.

For social housing tenancies within scope of Awaab's Law, the Trust will meet the prescribed timeframes and obligations for emergency hazards and significant damp and mould hazards in line with our Damp & Mould Policy and Responsive Repairs Policy.

Where a home cannot be made safe within the required timescale, the Trust will consider, in line with our Decant Policy, suitable temporary accommodation, temporary protective measures and other support for the resident until the hazard is resolved.

Managing Disrepair Reports and Claims

When a disrepair concern is received, the Trust will record the report, acknowledge receipt, identify whether it is a service request, complaint, legal claim or urgent hazard and allocate responsibility for managing the case.

The Trust will normally arrange an inspection where the cause, severity or responsibility is unclear, where damp and mould is reported, where a resident's health or safety may be affected or where a legal disrepair claim has been made.

Legal disrepair claims will be handled in accordance with the Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions Claims. The Trust will acknowledge and respond to legal correspondence within relevant protocol timescales, seek legal advice where appropriate, preserve evidence and work to resolve valid claims at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

The Trust may appoint independent surveyors, experts or legal advisers where required. Unfounded or exaggerated claims may be challenged, but the Trust will continue to address any genuine repair need identified.

Complaints and Resident Rights

Residents may raise a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the Trust's handling of a repair, inspection, disrepair issue, damp and mould report, communication, delay or outcome. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the Trust's Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Residents are encouraged to use the complaints process so the Trust can put matters right quickly and learn from service failures. However, this policy does not prevent residents from seeking independent advice, contacting the Housing Ombudsman or exercising legal rights available to them.

Access to Homes

Residents are expected to provide reasonable access for inspections, repairs, servicing and works required to meet legal, health and safety or tenancy and licence obligations. The Trust will give reasonable notice wherever possible and will take account of residents' needs, vulnerabilities and availability.

All access attempts will be recorded. Where access is repeatedly refused or not provided and there is a risk to health, safety, legal compliance or the condition of the home, the Trust may take proportionate action, including legal action where necessary, to gain access.

Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Reasonable Adjustments

The Trust will consider residents' individual circumstances when responding to disrepair, hazards, repairs and legal claims. This includes age, disability, health conditions, communication needs, caring responsibilities, mental capacity, language needs and any safeguarding concerns.

Reasonable adjustments may include alternative formats, additional communication support, appointment flexibility, longer visit windows, liaison with representatives or advocates and consideration of temporary accommodation where a resident cannot safely remain in their home.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The **Director of Operations** is accountable for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively across the Trust and that significant risks, service failures and learning are escalated appropriately
- The **Head of Property & Compliance** is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy, including repair standards, inspections, contractor management, stock condition information, damp and mould responses, compliance monitoring, disrepair case oversight and reporting
- **Employees in the Property team** are responsible for recording reports accurately, arranging inspections and works, communicating with residents, updating case records, identifying vulnerabilities and escalating risks promptly

- **All employees** are responsible for raising concerns and escalating risks promptly
- **Contractors** working on behalf of the Trust must complete works safely, competently and within agreed timescales; report risks, access issues or additional defects promptly; and treat residents with respect

Records, Evidence and Data Protection

The Trust will maintain accurate records of reports, inspections, photographs, survey findings, risk assessments, resident communication, access attempts, repair orders, completion evidence, complaints, legal correspondence, compensation decisions and learning actions.

Information will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Trust's Data Protection and Retention Policies. Information will be shared only where lawful and necessary, including with contractors, insurers, legal advisers, regulators or statutory bodies.

Remedies, Decants and Compensation

Where disrepair or service failure is identified, the Trust will consider appropriate remedies. These may include completing repairs, apologising, improving communication, reimbursing reasonable costs, offering compensation, arranging temporary accommodation or taking other proportionate action to put matters right.

Any compensation or remedy will take account of the circumstances of the case, the impact on the resident, evidence available, legal obligations, Ombudsman guidance, insurance requirements and the Trust's policies.

Monitoring, Assurance and Reporting

The Trust will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through repair performance, overdue works, emergency repairs, damp and mould cases, repeat repairs, disrepair claims, complaints, compensation, access issues, resident satisfaction, contractor performance and lessons learned.

Significant risks, trends, legal claims and performance information will be reported to senior leadership and the appropriate committee. Learning from cases will be used to improve repairs processes, resident communication, contractor management, stock investment and employee training.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be supported by operational procedures, repair timescales, damp and mould guidance, complaint handling arrangements, contractor instructions and employee training. Employees involved in repairs, property management, compliance, resident services and complaints must understand their responsibilities under this policy.

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if there are changes in legislation, regulation, Ombudsman guidance, operational arrangements, serious incidents, audit findings or lessons learned from disrepair cases.

Related Policies

This policy must be read and implemented alongside the following Trust policies:

- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Damp & Mould Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Decant Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection and Retention Policies