

## Exeter City Council Housing Service Standards Tenant-led review 2023

**Purpose:** For Tenants’ Voice to review Exeter City Council Housing Department’s current service standard to ensure that they are adequate and fit for purpose, and to provide recommendations for changes where appropriate.

**Process:**

### Stage 1: Fact Finding & Information Gathering

To be reviewed	How?
<b>Existing ECC documents</b>	Reviewing the current five service standards and discussing whether they were sufficient or needed to be amended.
<b>Available data</b>	Reviewing KPIs & other data that could be used to measure how successful the Council is at meeting its pledges.
<b>Communication methods</b>	Looking at how the service standards were published both in print and digitally (on the website as well) and other publications such as InSight magazine.
<b>Interview housing staff</b>	Questioning the Housing Lead- Performance, Strategy & Resident Involvement, the Tenancy Services Lead and the Reactive Repairs Lead to obtain background information and other useful insights.

### Stage 2: Identifying Key Themes & analysis

Tenants’ Voice held discussions about each standard to determine whether they were fit for purpose. They felt that the current service standards worked well, were logically structured, concisely written but broad enough in scope to cover the entire service.

The group noted that there have been iterations of the services standards in the past that contained too many pledges and were far too complicated for their purpose. They liked the simple format of the current standards, though they felt there was still opportunity to improve the wording and messaging.

### Stage 3: Recommendations

The group made the following recommendations:

**1: Repairs & Maintenance** - “We pledge to provide safe, well-maintained homes.”

Tenants’ Voice felt that this wording was appropriate and does not need to be changed.

**2: Neighbourhood & Community** – “We pledge to work in partnership with other organisations to create neighbourhoods which are safe and well maintained, and where people want to live.”

Tenants Voice recommended splitting this into two pledges:

- “We pledge to work in partnership with other organisations to create neighbourhoods which are safe and well maintained, and where people want to live”; and
- “We pledge to involve our residents in shaping our services and work collaboratively to strengthen and improve local communities”.

**3: Tenancy-** “We pledge to work with tenants and leaseholders to ensure all terms and conditions of our tenancies are understood and complied with.”

It was agreed to change the wording to, “We pledge to work with tenants and leaseholders in a variety of ways to ensure all terms and conditions of our tenancies and leases are understood and complied with.”

**4: Lettings** – “We pledge to let our properties promptly, fairly and consistently in order to meet housing need and help create sustainable communities.”

The group discussed and understood the pressure to make the “key to key” time as short as possible as the organisation is measured against this figure. This specific topic of voids/void standards will be brought to a future Tenants Voice meeting.

It was agreed to change the wording to: We pledge to let our properties as quickly as reasonably possible in order to meet varying housing needs and demand.

**5: Equality, Diversity & Access** – “In order to meet all our pledges we will involve our residents, and provide services which are fair, equitable and accessible.”

It was agreed to change this pledge to, “In order to meet all our pledges we will provide services which are fair, equitable and accessible, free from discrimination, making reasonable adjustments where we should.”

**Other:**

The group also recommended a method for publicising the new service standards, which included:

- Producing an attractive and impactful document that can be provided to tenants and leaseholders at housing events.
- Update the messaging on our website with the above recommendations.
- Produce an article for InSight magazine promoting the newly reviewed service standards.
- Monitoring arrangements should be made to measure the success of the standards against agreed performance data.

## Stage 4: Implementation & Review

The Housing Service will implement these recommendations.

It is good practice for organisations to regularly review their service standards, therefore these standards will be reviewed again in 2025.