


<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> ALL
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b> Social Housing Regulator Consumer Standards update	
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Director of Property Management	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> Housing & Fire Safety Advisory Panel	<b>DATE:</b> 17 April 2024
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>This report updates the Panel on the publication by the Regulator of Social Housing of their updated Consumer standards which come into effect in April 2024.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p>The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report:</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Melissa Dillon, Resident Safety Engagement &amp; Governance Lead, Supporting Communities, Tel: 0207 974 3100, E-mail: melissa.dillon@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>That the Panel notes the content of the report and identifies any further information it would like to receive about the Council's next steps.</p>	

Signed: 

Director of Property Management

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Panel on the publication of updated Social Housing Consumer standards which are now in force.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Consumer Standards are the measurable quality and performance standards that the providers of registered social housing must meet so that tenants live in safe, good quality homes, have choice and protection and can hold their landlords to account. LB Camden is a registered provider of social housing and must comply with the Consumer Standards.

- 1.2 Consumer Standards were originally established by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and were recently amended and update by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. There are now four updated standards which are:

- **The Safety and Quality Standard** – requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.
- **The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard** – requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints when necessary, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
- **The Neighbourhood and Community Standard** – requires landlords to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.
- **The Tenancy Standard** – sets requirements for the fair allocation and letting of homes and for how those tenancies are managed by landlords.

- 2.3 The 2023 Act also gave the Social Housing Regulator the power to issue a Code of Practice for the implementation of the standards. Following Royal Assent to the 2023 Act, Government carried out public consultation on the draft consumer standards and the proposed code of practice. Consultation closed in October 2023 and government has now published the updated standards which can be viewed here on the government website: [Proposed Consumer standards \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

## 3. New Regulatory Approach

- 3.1 The Social Housing Regulator (SHR) has moved from a reactive approach to consumer regulation where they could only investigate consumer issues

referred to them to a proactive approach with powers to assess landlords more routinely. The Regulator will carry out regulatory inspections of all large, registered providers including local authorities on a four yearly cycle. The SHR inspection cycle will be risk based; Councils will remain responsible for meeting the regulatory standards, demonstrating to themselves, their tenants and the Regulator that standards are being met. Landlords are also expected to support tenants to understand how they are performing and enable tenants to hold them to account.

- 3.2 For each consumer standard the Regulator has set out the required outcomes (and more detailed specific expectations) that landlords of social housing must be able to demonstrate they are delivering and evidence that that they are meeting. The outcomes and expectation for each standard are summarised in the appendix to the report.

#### **4. Link to the Building Safety Act 2022**

- 4.1 The “Safety & Quality” standard requires all landlords to provide good quality homes which meet the government Decent Homes Standard. This means that both having an effective repairs and maintenance service, and keeping tenants informed about repairs and planned improvements are central to delivering good quality homes. The Social Housing Regulator will also look at performance on compliance data such as fire safety actions and electrical checks.
- 4.2 The Building Safety Regulator oversees the safety and performance of all buildings and has a special focus on high-rise buildings. It will promote competence and organisational capability within the construction industry including building control professionals and trades people. The Council’s progress in implementing the requirements of the Building Safety Act is the subject of a separate report on the agenda.

#### **5. Landlord Services**

- 5.1 The revised regulatory approach is intended to ensure that landlords provide a quality service and that when things go wrong, complaints are handled effectively, and things are put right.
- 5.2 The “Transparency” and “Tenancy” standards require that the relationship between tenants and landlords is underpinned by shared expectations of fairness and respect and a shared understanding of their respective rights and responsibilities. Landlords must demonstrate that they understand the diverse needs of the communities that they serve, and their services reflect that.
- 5.3 Tenants must be able to understand, use and have confidence in the recourse that they have to get problems resolved. The SHR expects landlords to consider how best to engage with their tenants and to really understand their feedback, so that tenants can influence decision making and meaningfully influence the services they receive.

- 5.4 The “Neighbourhood” consumer standard requires landlords to play a role in contributing to the upkeep and safety of shared spaces although the SHR recognised that landlords (including local authorities) are not always the primary organisation responsible for all aspects of their neighbourhoods.

## **6. Next Steps**

- 6.1 In preparation for the publication of confirmed consumer standards the Regulator has required landlords to carry out resident satisfaction surveys and collect performance data, and to submit this information at the end of the financial year. The Council will share its survey results and performance data with the panel. It will also continue to meet the Regulator each month to update on its performance against the action plan and Voluntary Undertaking for fire safety actions.
- 6.2 The Regulator will review information submitted and carry out inspections of all landlords so that they can provide a rating which summarises a landlord's compliance.

## **7. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

- 7.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on Social Housing Consumer standards which come into effect in April 2024. There are currently no financial implications arising from this report. There may be once action to implement the requirements of the standard commences. Finance will work with the service to monitor and ensure as much as possible that associated costs are funded from existing resources.

## **8. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

- 8.1 The comments of the Borough Solicitor are incorporated in the report.

## **9. Environmental Implications**

- 9.1 There are none.

## **10 Appendices**

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Consumer Standards Outcomes & Expectations

**ENDS**

## APPENDIX 1 – CONSUMER STANDARDS OUTCOMES SUMMARY

Consumer Standard	Outcome
<b>Safety &amp; Quality</b>	<b>Stock quality</b> – Landlord has accurate, up to date & evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes
	<b>Decency:</b> Ensure tenants' homes meet section 5 of Decent Homes Guidance & maintain to this standard
	<b>Health &amp; Safety:</b> Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health & safety of tenants in their homes & associated communal areas
	<b>Repairs, maintenance &amp; planned improvements.</b> provide effective, efficient & timely repairs, maintenance & planned improvements service for homes & communal areas
	<b>Adaptations:</b> must assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services
Consumer Standard	Outcome
<b>Transparency, Influence and Accountability</b>	<b>Fairness and respect:</b> Must treat tenants & prospective tenants with fairness and respect
	<b>Diverse Needs:</b> In relation to housing & landlord services they provide. Must take action to deliver fair & equitable outcomes for tenants & where relevant, prospective tenants
	<b>Engagement with tenants:</b> Must take tenants views into account in their decision-making about how landlords services are delivered & communicate how tenants views have been considered
	<b>Information about Landlord Services:</b> Must communicate with tenants & provide information so they can use landlord services, understand what to expect from their landlord & hold their landlord to account.
	<b>Performance information:</b> Must collect & provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord services

Consumer Standard	Outcome
<b>Neighbourhood &amp; Community</b>	<b>Safety of Shared Spaces:</b> Must work co-operatively with tenants, other landlords and relevant organisations to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of shared spaces
	<b>Local Cooperation:</b> Must co-operate with relevant partners to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they provide social housing
	<b>Anti-social behaviour &amp; hate incidents:</b> Must work in partnership with police & other relevant organisations to deter & tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) & hate incidents in the neighbourhoods where they provide social housing
	<b>Domestic Abuse:</b> Must work co-operatively with other agencies tackling domestic abuse and enable tenants to access appropriate support and advice
Consumer Standard	Outcome
<b>Tenancy</b>	<b>Allocation &amp; Lettings:</b> Must allocate and let their homes in a fair & transparent way that takes the needs of tenants & prospective tenants into account
	<b>Tenancy Sustainment &amp; Evictions:</b> must support tenants to maintain their tenancy or licence. Where a registered provider ends a tenancy or licence, they must offer affected tenants advice & assistance
	<b>Tenure:</b> 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, & the efficient use of their housing stock. Meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.
	<b>Mutual Exchange:</b> Must support relevant tenants living in eligible housing to mutually exchange their homes.

ENDS