

Approved Contractor Standards Policy



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Scope:	All contractors	Approved by:	ET
Legislation:	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Data Protection Act 1988 Bribery Act 2010 Equality Act 2010 Modern Slavery Act 2015 Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014	Date of approval:	January 2023
		Date of next review:	January 2026
Related Policies:	Health and Safety Repairs and Maintenance Asbestos Management Electric Safety Gas Safety Water Hygiene & Legionella Fire Safety Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Anti-Fraud, Theft & Bribery Policy Data Protection Probity Policy		

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Approved Contractor Standards provided at Appendix 1 set out the expectations that Housing Solutions has of its contractors and sub-contractors whilst working on behalf of Housing Solutions.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy and the associated Standards cover the requirements that apply to contractors whilst working on behalf of Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions to ensure that the highest levels of contractor performance are achieved whilst work activities are conducted in a suitable and safe manner.
- 2.2 This policy does not relieve the contractor of their responsibilities carried out on

behalf of Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other Acts and Regulations where applicable pertaining to the work being undertaken.

- 2.3 It is the responsibility of the contractor to communicate the content of this policy to its employees, and those of its Sub-contractors and to ensure that it is strictly followed.
- 2.4 Failure to adhere to this policy will result in a review of the individual Contractor(s) concerned, and a decision will be taken in respect of future employment with Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions.
- 2.5 Where applicable, this policy is referenced within Housing Solutions' contract documents.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities in regard to this policy

Role	Responsibility
Executive Team	Approval of this policy
Assistant Director of Finance & Procurement	To review and manage the delivery of this policy
Heads of Service	To ensure adherence to this policy
Procurement Manager	To monitor contractors adherence to this policy, report on non-compliance with the policy and to promote the policy during procurement discussions
Contractors	To adhere to this policy in full

4. Definitions

- 4.1 Contractor – any person commissioned by Housing Solutions to provide goods or services, who is not paid via the company payroll.

5. Legislation

- 5.1 The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 places stipulations on employers, staff and contractors to ensure a safe working environment and adherence to safe working practices. A full list of relevant legislation is provided on the covering page of this policy.

6. Equality & Diversity

- 6.1 Housing Solutions recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Equalities Act 2010. Housing Solutions works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. Housing Solutions will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and

disability.

7. Review

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.

APPENDIX ONE

APPROVED CONTRACTOR STANDARDS

1. Code of Practice for Approved Contractors

1.1 The image that we present to our residents is important, so our contractors will:

- Be smart and clean in appearance
- Be friendly and courteous
- Be helpful and understanding
- Respect and show our values: Ownership, Inclusion, Teamwork and Innovation

1.2 Contractors should avoid

Any behaviour which is considered by residents to be:

- Rude or objectionable
- Excessively noisy, e.g., use of radios etc.
- Overly familiar, argumentative, harassing or intimidating
- Derogatory about customers, contractors, their employer or Housing Solutions

Contractors must not:

- Work under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs
- Smoke in or near residents properties.

1.3 Identification - the contractor will:

- Wear clear, easy to read, identification cards, in a prominent position on the workers clothing, at all times, which includes:
- The workers name & photograph
- The company's name
- The company's address and telephone number
- Use a password if one has been arranged
- Encourage residents to call the workers company and/or Contractor if they are in any doubt about the work or the worker.
- Show residents a letter or a works order, which confirms they have been instructed to carry out work on behalf of Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions.

When requested contractors will be required to carry out DBS checks and provide details to Housing Solutions.

1.4 Quality of workmanship

The contractor will carry out work to a high quality and standard as specified and approved by us whatever the general state of the property.

This will include and not be limited to compliance with current Building Regulations,

British Standards, and any industry best practice guidelines.

Contractors will be required to provide photographs and notes of the work carried out, either by way of email, completion report or uploading into a contractor portal.

1.5 Visits to residents homes / care homes

The contractor will:

- Take all reasonable steps to provide an appointment for residents when arranging access to carry out works in their home. All appointments should be booked within 24 hours of the repair being reported to the contractor and should occur within the repair timescale set by Housing Solutions.
- Ask permission before entering a residents home or garden to carry out work.
- Inform and apologise to residents and their neighbours if the work is likely to cause a nuisance due to dust, noise etc.
- Provide residents with a full explanation for any delay in starting or completing work.
- Provide updates on revised dates for starting or completing the work.
- Notify as soon as possible if the visit has to be cancelled and apologise for any inconvenience caused. Where possible a minimum of 24 hours notice will be given.
- Arrange a mutually convenient time to visit for any further work.
- Ensure that sufficient notice is given when any disconnection of services or interruption of access is necessary
- Ensure that, where appropriate, any statutory consents are obtained before work commences and that any statutory notices have been applied for
- Ensure that wherever possible work activities are restricted to normal working hours or that agreement has been received from residents and neighbours for any work outside of this time
- Ensure that they do not attend a property where there is a lone minor (aged 16 or under)
- Leave site immediately and report to Housing Solutions whenever they encounter a threatening/potentially violent situation
- Ensure adequate care is taken in the protection of resident's fittings, furniture, and gardens with the use of dustsheets and screens as required
- Provide adequate warning and information notices regarding work in progress as may be required.
- Ensure footpaths and rights of way are maintained in a safe condition at all times.
- Not to use radios or other audio equipment whilst working in residents' homes or their immediate vicinity and to only use mobile telephones for business use
- Take reasonable precautions to prevent pollution from noise, smoke, dust or rubbish.
- Remove all rubbish generated as a result of working in Housing Solutions properties
- Ensure residents and property are left safe and secure before leaving site and that all redundant items are removed from home and garden.
- Leave a card with the caller's details if the tenant is not in, explaining the reason

- for the call, providing the contact name, address, and telephone number.
- Not bring pets into or around residents property.
- Ensure that appropriate levels of self-hygiene are maintained
- Not park on footpaths, grassed areas and designated resident parking spaces / disabled spaces etc.
- Make Housing Solutions aware of any safeguarding concerns through agreed reporting roles or processes.

Housing Solutions will:

- Inform the contractor of any residents who are vulnerable or who should not be approached alone
- For those residents identified as vulnerable or who should not be visited alone, agree a suitable approach with the contractor to ensure the repair / works are completed with the contractor and resident safety being prioritised.

1.6 Covid compliance or any such transmissible viruses

All visits must comply with the current guidelines set out by Government and Public Health England. This may include ensuring that only operatives with up-to-date vaccination status are sent to care homes, evidence of testing and wearing PPE. If you are unsure what the current requirements are you must contact and agree the necessary action with Housing Solutions.

Contractors must also make themselves familiar with the Housing Solutions Covid Risk Assessments and RAMs.

1.7 Appointments

Appointments must be booked with the resident within 24 hours of having been notified of the job and attended to within 14 days of being reported. Should a re-visit be required with parts ordering, following the initial appointment the revisit should be within a 21-day period. If an appointment is missed a charge of £15 will be made to the contractor to compensate the resident.

1.8 Protection of resident's belongings

The contractor will make sure that:

- Furniture, fittings, and carpets are protected by dustsheets. Items of furniture or other possessions will be moved with residents permission if this offers further protection.
- If items are breakable or valuable residents should be advised that it would be wiser to move them.
- Damage to plants, trees etc. shall be avoided as far as possible. If some damage is inevitable this should be discussed and agreed with the resident.
- The area of the residents home which is affected by the work, should be left clean and free from any debris.
- Equipment and materials must be removed wherever possible each day unless this is impracticable. In this case it should be stored in a position agreed with the

resident.

- If the property is made unsafe or hazardous, the contractor will give the resident and any neighbours who may be affected, adequate warning and the contractor will minimise the risk. The contractor will also inform Housing Solutions of the issue immediately.
- Operatives must use cover guards to shoes / boots when working in residents property.

1.9 Leaving residents' homes

When completing works, contractors will:

- Explain to the resident what has been done and check to see that they are satisfied. If new equipment is installed contractors will leave operating instructions and provide a full demonstration on how to use the equipment.
- Check that all services are in working condition at the end of each day, during works and when the work is finished.
- Make sure that the residents home is safe and habitable overnight and at weekends when the work cannot be completed within one working day.
- Contractors may also be asked to provide resident satisfaction documentation as part of the post-job process.

2. Safety Standards for Contractors

2.1 Protection of the Public

Protection of the public is of paramount concern and any arrangements must allow for the reduced level of awareness of safety risks amongst members of the public.

2.2 Responsibilities

Contractors are required to co-operate with Housing Solutions and individuals in discharging their responsibilities. They must:

- Ensure that a relevant risk assessment is completed before commencing work and notified of any subsequent changes to these assessments and ensure that persons likely to be affected are identified, are informed of the risks and appropriate control measures are taken.
- Ensure that persons under their control follow any rules and procedures (including provision and use of Personal Protective Equipment).
- Ensure that any other person likely to be affected by their operation is informed of the risks and the measures necessary to remain unharmed.
- Prepare a specific method statement where required. It must include all the measures necessary to ensure that the operation can be carried out safely and must be submitted and agreed before any work commences.
- Contractors must satisfy themselves that all tools, plant, or equipment are

suitable for the purpose to which the Contractor intends to use them and that they are in good condition and any defects reported without delay. The users must be trained, competent and supervised.

- Every effort must be made to segregate the general public, especially children, from work areas.
- Co-operate with Housing Solutions to enable them to carry out their statutory duties.
- The contractor will be required to comply with the requirements of CDM principal contractor / designer.

2.3 Accident / Incident Reporting / Safeguarding

Contractors must have their own Accident Book and they must record details of all injuries to their employees. All accidents are to be immediately reported to Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions.

The Contractor must inform the Health & Safety Executive and submit an F2508 in the event of a reportable accident to direct or agency employees as defined in RIDDOR. A copy of the F2508 document must be forwarded to Housing Solutions and/or the Contractor.

Contractors are also required to keep Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions informed of the subsequent developments of long term injuries, diseases, and dangerous occurrences.

Contractors are also required to notify Housing Solutions where there are any concerns in relation to safeguarding issues that they may encounter when accessing residents properties.

2.4 Welfare

Any facilities provided by the contractor are to be maintained in a safe and clean condition and any person wilfully damaging such facilities will be removed from site and subsequently be liable to being charged for making good.

Contractors must assess their particular first aid needs to ensure adequate and appropriate first aid provision is made for their employees.

Smoking and vaping is not permitted on any Housing Solutions sites or properties.

2.5 Minimum Acceptable Standards

All tradesmen and operatives employed on behalf of Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions will have a demonstrable skill level incorporating Health & Safety training at the appropriate level for the activities to be undertaken.

Contractors are required to declare and be able to demonstrate the level of Health & Safety training that has been completed by their managers and supervisors, relevant to their responsibilities.

2.6 Risk Assessments

The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations requires employers and self-employed persons to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to employees and any others who may be affected by their undertaking and record the significant findings.

All risk assessments will be reviewed by Housing Solutions or the contractor prior to commencing work on site. A period must be allowed for this process and therefore method statements must be submitted by a given date and agreed. Failure to comply may result in a delayed start to the operation.

2.7 Method Statements

All method statements will be reviewed by Housing Solutions or the contractor prior to commencing work on site. To allow review method statements must be submitted by a given date and agreed.

2.8 Fire Precautions

Contractors retain the primary duty to ensure that all its workers fully understand and are familiar with the fire precautions. Care must be taken when using any equipment that generates flames, sparks, heat or other similar ignition sources and hot work permits will be required for all such activities. No hot works should be carried out within the final hour of the day's work activity.

Flammable substances must not be brought onto any site without notification in the relevant method statement.

Fire call points, exits and roadways must be kept clear at all times. Where work may obstruct/affect access to fire exits, call points and fire equipment, notification must be given before this situation arises.

Contractors must identify and provide their own fire extinguishers/equipment on site which must be in a serviceable condition and suitable for the risks involved. Waste materials must be removed from the premises at the end of each day, high risk items must be removed upon completion of their use.

2.9 Asbestos

For any work that involves disturbance of the fabric of the building the contractor must make reasonable efforts to identify the likelihood of presence of asbestos in the area to be worked or disturbed, for example:

- look for adhesive labels warning of the presence of asbestos,
- ask for the site asbestos register,

If contractors are working with asbestos containing materials the activities must be in accordance with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations, associated government codes of practice and company requirements.

When working with asbestos containing materials, contractors should ensure that their workers are competent to carry out their work and are aware of all associated risks and control measures.

Where risk assessments and method statements have been provided workers must be aware and work in accordance with them. Records of training and competency should be provided when requested.

For further information please refer to the Asbestos Management document. Particular attention should be made to asbestos waste and the correct process and procedures are adhered to.

2.10 Dress code

Contractor work employees will ensure compliance with the company dress code, as a minimum all workers must wear:

- Identifiable uniform
- Appropriate safety footwear with mid-sole protection

2.11 Personal Protective Equipment

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations require every employer to provide their employees with suitable personal protective equipment to be used at work when they may be exposed to a hazard where there is a risk to their health or safety that cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

PPE must be fit for purpose, kept clean, maintained, and stored in good condition, with any defects reported.

2.12 Disciplinary procedure

Contractors will, when necessary, invoke their disciplinary procedures. Repeat infringements or serious offences may result in individuals being removed from site and may be precluded from other work for that contractor.

2.13 Drugs and alcohol

It is the policy of Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions to seek to ensure that all its sites are free of the use of alcohol and prescribed drugs.

Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions will exclude from its sites any person under the influence of alcohol or prescribed drugs.

2.14 Good order – housekeeping

Site tidiness is an essential part of accident reduction and fire prevention programs. Areas where Contractors are undertaking work will be kept in a reasonable state of cleanliness to prevent slips, trips, and fire hazards.

Waste, debris, and off-cuts of materials are to be cleared as is necessary but at least daily to ensure other users of the site are not put in danger and that floor areas or structures are not overloaded. No timber or other material with projecting nails shall be allowed to remain in place where they are a source of danger. A good order strategy should be in place to manage this requirement.

All materials / waste removed from site in the first instance should be recycled, or if this is not possible, should be disposed of via an approved waste transfer site and all waste transfer documentation made available to Housing Solutions on request.

2.15 Manual handling

Contractors are to assess the risk and avoid manual handling where reasonably practicable by the use of mechanical aids. Where mechanical aids are not used the contractor is responsible for undertaking a detailed assessment of the residual risks to be carried out and a safe system of work used to ensure the health and safety of the employee. Suitable PPE should be issued where appropriate.

2.16 Access equipment / ladders and step ladders

All access equipment must be assessed for suitability. Ladders (step and lean to) may only be used for access where there is no suitable alternative and a risk assessment justifies their use.

It is the contractor's responsibility to ensure that:

- the equipment used is suitable for the task and regularly inspected
- workers are suitable trained in working at height procedures.

Note: Ladders (step and lean to) are not to be used as working platforms unless there is no suitable alternative and a risk assessment justifies their use.

2.17 Lifting operations, excavators, hoists and MEWP's

It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that all lifting equipment and accessories whilst working on behalf of Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions are in compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations and the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations.

All lifting operations must be fully assessed and planned by a competent, appointed person who has adequate practical and theoretical knowledge and carried out in compliance with BS 7121 Safe Use of Cranes.

All lifting equipment including excavators, hoists, and MEWP's, must be accompanied with all current examination, inspection and test certificates and reports for retention by the Principal Contractor.

2.18 Spraying and mixing

All contractors and suppliers utilising pesticides will comply with the and be trained in the relevant guidance and British Standards and legislations and will provide evidence on request.

2.19 Tools

It is the contractor's responsibility to train its' employees in the use of any tools that they utilise in the execution of any services for Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions to the relevant guidance and standard and consider all relevant areas of health and safety.

2.20 Monitoring contractor Health & Safety.

Although the ongoing monitoring of health and safety is the contractor's responsibility, formal inspection and / or auditing may be carried out by Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions to monitor safety standards.

Further information on our commitment to health and safety can be found in our Health & Safety Policy.

3. Equality & Diversity

- 3.1 Housing Solutions or any client or contractor of Housing Solutions is committed to equality and diversity and to the elimination of direct and indirect discrimination in all our dealings as an employer and provider of housing and related services.

Housing Solutions will reflect its duty to promote equality in its procurement functions and will ensure that the protected characteristics are integrated into its procurement processes.

More information can be found in our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

4. Anti-Fraud, Theft and Bribery Policy Summary

- 4.1 Housing Solutions operates a counter fraud, corruption and bribery policy that details the steps that must be taken where fraud, corruption or bribery is suspected or discovered. Any person who becomes aware of any fraud, corruption, bribery, or other illegal act and does not follow this policy could be subject to disciplinary action.

The key objectives of this policy are for Housing Solutions to:

- demonstrate commitment to minimise the risk of these incidents occurring
- safeguard assets and reputation
- provide a framework for whistleblowing
- ensure Employers and employees can declare private interests which potentially conflict with the activities of Housing Solutions

- 4.2 Fraud and bribery are criminal offences and the police are likely to be involved.

Any individual committing acts of fraud or bribery could be subject to both criminal and disciplinary action.

- 4.3 More information can be found in our Anti-Fraud, Theft and Bribery Policy.

5. Modern Slavery

- 5.1 Housing Solutions will continue to take appropriate steps to ensure that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains. This includes continuing to review our existing policies and procedures in light of the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Our Modern Slavery statement can be found on our website.

All contractors and suppliers must comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

6. Social Value

- 6.1 The Social Value Act applies to Housing Associations and requires us to consider how social value can be provided in service contracts in local areas. Contractors and suppliers consider how they can help fulfil the requirements by working in partnership with the Resident Engagement Team at Housing Solutions. This may include providing working opportunities, e.g. apprenticeships if available or to provide local neighbourhood improvement support. As a guide the contractor should endeavour to provide support in the region of 1% of the service fee annually.
- 6.2 As a requirement of any formal tender exercise, contractors will need to demonstrate to Housing Solutions that they have implemented a clear Corporate Social Responsibility policy and/or culture at their company.

7. Contractor understanding and compliance

- 7.1 This policy will form a part of any subsequent Subcontract or Purchase order.
- 7.2 Contractors are deemed to have read and have understood all the above and will comply with all the requirements of the Code of Practice and Safety Standards when working on behalf of Housing Solutions.
- 7.3 Contractor policies and procedure shall comply with the Equality Act 2010 and cover the 9 protected characteristics
- 7.4 Contractors are deemed to have read and have understood Housing Solutions Policies:
- Health and Safety
 - Repairs and Maintenance
 - Asbestos Management
 - Electric Safety
 - Gas Safety
 - Water Hygiene & Legionella

- Fire Safety
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Anti-Fraud, Theft & Bribery Policy
- Data Protection

7.5 Housing Solutions reserve the right to remove or suspend contractors from our approved supplier list if we find them to be in breach of these standards or bring Housing Solutions into disrepute.

8. Probity

8.1 Contractors will carry out their work in an accountable and transparent manner and in accordance with the highest standards of probity, professionalism and integrity.

8.2 Contractors will not exploit their positions and relationship with Housing Solutions

8.3 Contractors will disclose any known relationships with Housing Solutions staff or residents where these may overlap with work carried out on behalf of the organisation

8.4 Contractors will disclose any other potential conflict of interest arising from work to be carried out on behalf of the organisation

9. Invoicing

9.1 Contractors will ensure they price and code completed repairs as per agreed rates. Invoices will be disputed and remain unpaid until disputed queries have been resolved to a satisfactory status.

9.2 Contractors are required to respond to invoice disputes within 2 working days of receipt. Housing Solutions will work collaboratively with contractors in pursuing an amicable resolution.

9.3 Contractors invoices must detail a full description of works carried out and a breakdown of labour and material costs. Invoices will be delayed for payment if this information is missing.