Knowing Our Tenants Policy

Reference	TM15	**Version**	1
Distribution	All staff	**Issue date**	August 2026
Approved by	ELT	**Review Date**	August 2029

Lead Officer	Director of Operations	Reviewed by	Head of Housing Operations

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy provides a framework for how Arches identifies, records and responds to individual tenant needs and household circumstances. It explains how we will tailor services where appropriate and evidence the outcomes of those adjustments.

1.2 Arches Housing is committed to ensuring tenants can access our services, and receive the assistance they need to sustain their tenancy.

1.3 We recognise that some tenants may need additional support due to personal and/or household circumstances, protected characteristics, health conditions, life events or temporary difficulties. These circumstances may affect their ability to access services, respond to contact, manage their home or sustain their tenancy.

1.4 This policy applies to tenants who have capacity to make their own decisions. Where a tenant has been assessed as lacking capacity, or is believed to lack capacity, we will work with their appointed representative and follow relevant safeguarding and mental capacity procedures.

2. Legislative and regulatory context

2.1 Arches will comply with all relevant legal, regulatory and statutory requirements when identifying tenant needs, making service adjustments and responding to household circumstances. This includes the Equality Act 2010, the Care Act 2014, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

2.2 Under the Equality Act 2010, Arches will have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Arches will also make reasonable adjustments for disabled tenants where this is required and reasonable.

2.3 The Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires registered providers to treat tenants with fairness and respect, take account of tenants' diverse needs, use relevant information and data, and ensure tenants can access services and information.

2.4 The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024 under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The Code requires landlords to ensure complaints processes are accessible, fair and effective, including making reasonable adjustments where appropriate.

2.5 The Care Act 2014 places statutory safeguarding duties on local authorities. Arches will support these duties by identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns, cooperating with relevant agencies and following its safeguarding policies and procedures where a tenant or household member may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

3. Understanding tenant needs and household circumstances

3.1 Arches recognises that a tenant's needs can change over time. A tenant may need support because of a long-term condition, a temporary situation, a change in household circumstances or a life event.

3.2 Arches will focus on the individual circumstances that may affect a tenant's ability to access services, engage with us or sustain their tenancy. We will identify what support or service adjustment may be needed rather than applying a fixed label.

3.3 For the purpose of this policy, Arches will consider whether a tenant requires support or a service adjustment where they:

- have a particular characteristic, health condition or disability;
- are experiencing an exceptional life event or change in circumstances; or
- need or request an adjustment to access or receive our services.

3.4 Examples may include tenants with disabilities, long-term health conditions, mental health needs, language or communication needs, or temporary circumstances that affect their ability to engage with services. A minor health condition or personal difficulty may also require consideration if it is made worse by housing-related issues, such as damp and mould, disrepair or anti-social behaviour.

4. Identifying additional needs or tailored services

4.1 A tenant's support needs or household circumstances may be identified through:

- information provided when an offer of accommodation is made;
- contact with Arches staff or contractors, whether in person, by telephone, in writing or through another communication channel;
- a referral from an external agency or organisation;
- a tenant telling us they need support or a service adjustment; or
- information already held on our systems, where it is relevant and appropriate to use.

4.2 All staff are expected to be alert to signs that a tenant may need additional support, either from information received or from their own observations.

4.3 Staff who deliver services to tenants will receive appropriate training to help them recognise potential indicators that support or service adjustments may be needed. Examples include:

- behaviour linked to mental health needs or distress;
- being a victim of anti-social behaviour;
- repeated failure to respond to correspondence or answer the door when visited;
- hoarding, self-neglect or other behaviour that may result in damage or neglect to the home or garden; or
- changes in communication, behaviour or engagement that may indicate the tenant needs additional support.

5. Our approach

5.1 Our objective is to ensure that tenants receive accessible, fair and appropriate services that help them sustain their tenancy. To achieve this, we will:

- record relevant support needs, adjustments and household circumstances on customer contact records;
- use available information to identify when a tenant may need additional support or a service adjustment;
- assist tenants to access additional services where needed;
- record any known representatives who act on a tenant's behalf;
- tailor service delivery where appropriate so tenants can receive an equitable level of service;
- make appropriate referrals for support; and
- complete Equality Impact Assessments for new strategies, policies and procedures, considering the impact on tenants and any mitigations required.

5.2 Each service area will consider what support, consideration or variation in service provision is reasonable and appropriate. Examples may include allowing longer for a tenant to answer the door or telephone, bringing forward repair appointments, arranging joint visits with carers, or explaining a letter by telephone as well as sending it in writing.

6. Measuring outcomes

6.1 Arches will evidence outcomes where support needs or service adjustments have been identified. A successful outcome is one where the adjustment has helped the tenant access the service, receive fair treatment or sustain their tenancy. We will seek feedback from tenants receiving adjusted services and make changes where necessary.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Chief Executive and Board

The Chief Executive, and ultimately the Board, have overall responsibility for this policy.

7.2 Director of Operations

The Director of Operations is responsible for implementing this policy and any associated procedures.

7.3 Head of Housing Operations

The Head of Housing Operations, supported by the Housing Operations Team, is the operational lead for the day-to-day delivery and implementation of this policy.

7.4 Employees

All employees are responsible for checking relevant information, identifying signs that a tenant may need support, recording information accurately and using that information appropriately when delivering services.

8. Governance and assurance

8.1 Arches will monitor implementation of this policy through relevant operational reporting, customer feedback, complaints learning, safeguarding processes and service performance information. Governance arrangements will be reviewed and confirmed following Board discussion.

9. Equality and diversity

9.1 This policy supports Arches' commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Everyone involved in delivering this policy must recognise their ethical and legal duty to advance equality of opportunity, prevent discrimination and ensure services are accessible and equitable for tenants.

10. Review

10.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Head of Housing Operations every three years, or sooner if there are significant legal, regulatory or operational changes.

11. Publicising this policy

11.1 This policy will be published on the Arches website and made available to staff through the appropriate internal channels.