

Inclusive Service Policy

Policy ref:

Policy author/holder Director of Neighbourhoods

Date approved: December 2025

Approved by: Operations Meeting - Strategy

Effective date: December 2025

Review date: December 2028

1 Introduction

1.1 At LiveWest, our foremost commitment is to provide safe, secure, and affordable housing to all our customers, including those who have support needs and may need extra help.

We recognise that customers with support needs may face unique challenges that require tailored, flexible services to ensure their wellbeing and the successful sustainment of their relevant occupation agreement.

1.2 This policy sets out our commitment to helping customers access our services, and ensure they receive the assistance they need to sustain their tenancy.

1.3 There is a focus on customers who have support needs, but may also lack capacity to make their own decisions. Where a customer has been assessed as lacking, or believed to lack, capacity to make decisions we will work with their appointed representative as set out in section 7.

1.4 We have an obligation to act where we have concerns about customer safety or mental capacity. We will alert those who have a statutory duty to investigate, support investigations and offer support to customers as appropriate. Our expectation is that customers will engage with us and the services that are able to provide support. At all times we will work in accordance with our Safeguarding policies, procedures, and interagency protocols.

2 Definition & Scope

Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all LiveWest customers where we have a legal or contractual obligation to provide services under their tenancy agreement or lease.
- 2.2 Our commitment to inclusive service is limited to those obligations. While we will always seek to act fairly and inclusively, this policy relates directly to the services, processes, or premises for which LiveWest is responsible under the terms of the customer's tenancy or lease.

Definition

- 2.3 Our definition of a customer with a support need is:

“A person with a support need is an individual who due to a particular characteristic or exceptional life event may need additional help to manage their home, access our services and/or to protect themselves from harm or exploitation. We recognise support needs can be temporary or permanent.”

3 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that LiveWest's approach to providing services to those with support needs aligns with the most current legislation, regulations, guidelines, and expectations set by the Social Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman Service. It also aims to ensure we are consistent in our approach by providing colleagues with the information, understanding, and authority to respond appropriately to customers' needs. This policy sets out the steps we will take to achieve this.

We aim to:

- Have a service offer that caters to the diverse needs of customers by implementing a flexible and personalised service, known within LiveWest as our Customer Offer.
- Strengthen accountability by incorporating measures and regular assessments to monitor the effectiveness of the policy.
- Provide comprehensive training to colleagues to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to deliver high-quality services ensuring consistency and excellence in our approach.
- Collaborate with statutory and third-party agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance the breadth and depth of support services available to customers with support needs.

- 3.2 As a responsible social landlord, our overall objective is to ensure that customers can access the services and assistance they require, and for our rented customers to sustain their tenancy. To achieve this, we aim to:
- Record any support needs on the residents contact record and keep this up to date.
 - Use all available information to identify if a customer has support needs.
 - Put the customer at the centre, and where appropriate, adapt our service so that those with support needs receive the same quality of service and outcomes as those without.
 - Take account of known support needs in decisions about tenancy management and enforcement.
 - Record any known representatives who act as a 'delegated authority' or with power of attorney to act on the resident's behalf.
 - Make appropriate referrals to LiveWest's tenancy sustainment services to provide enhanced support where appropriate.
 - Refer to statutory agencies and other external partner support agencies where appropriate.
 - Make safeguarding referrals whenever needed.

4 Key Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of all colleagues, contractors, and Board Members to identify how their own area or function may be improved to meet the needs of customers with support needs.
- 4.2 Our responsibilities include offering ongoing support and guidance to customers throughout their tenure, ensuring they are aware of their rights as tenants, shared owners, or leaseholders and have the necessary resources to exercise them effectively. The level of input varies by tenure type, from signposting and referring, to general advice and in high need cases, intervention.
- 4.3 Each service area will consider what additional support, consideration or variation in usual service provision is appropriate for customers with support needs and take steps to implement this.

This may vary from service to service, some examples are (but not limited to):

- Allowing longer for customers to answer their door when we call.
- Arranging for carers to be present during home visits or maintenance.
- Doing visits in-person where we would normally provide a phone service.
- Explaining a letter over the phone in addition to sending it.
- Provide or obtain additional support for an ASB perpetrator with mental health issues instead of taking enforcement action.
- Completing small repairs that are normally a tenant responsibility for frail customers with no family support.

5 Identifying support needs

- 5.1 It is important that support needs are identified with and by our customers. We will use a two-stage approach. The first is recognising that certain situations could increase the likelihood of a customer needing extra help, and assessing this by means of professional judgement. The second is the customer's own view of their situation. In some instances, we may use one of these approaches only to identify a support need, though will make every effort to complete the two-stage approach.

6 Support providers

- 6.1 Often, we will not be the most appropriate organisation to provide the necessary support, and we will seek to access specialist support services provided by third parties. Relevant colleagues will be proactive in developing relationships with advice, support and mediation services, which we are able to access for our customers.
- 6.2 In order to ensure the best outcome for our customers, we will:
- Ensure colleagues are competent and knowledgeable about how and where to make effective referrals with partner agencies and understand the referral requirements/thresholds.
 - Work collaboratively with agencies supporting customers, implementing efficient information sharing and co-operation, ensuring that the understand that safety is our first priority.

7 Mental Capacity

- 7.1 When considering an individual's mental capacity, we will apply the five key principles of the Mental Capacity Act:
- A presumption of capacity - every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise.
 - The right for individuals to be supported to make their own decisions - people must be given all appropriate help before anyone concludes that they cannot make their own decisions.
 - That individuals must retain the right to make what might be seen as eccentric or unwise decisions.
 - Best interests – anything done for or on behalf of people without capacity must be in their best interests.
 - Least restrictive intervention – anything done for or on behalf of people without capacity should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms.

7.2 In line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, we will liaise with those who have legal authority to act on behalf of our customers who lack capacity. That may be a representative who has or is, a/an:

- Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA).
- Deputyship Order from the Court of Protection.
- Litigation friend appointed in Court proceedings if the resident lacks capacity to litigate.
- Appointee appointed by the DWP to manage a person's benefits if they lack capacity.
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) commissioned by the local authority who are appointed where a person aged 16 or over lacks ability to act to decide for themselves where to live and has no-one, such as a friend, relative, attorney or deputy to advise or support them.

8 Communication needs

8.1 We will endeavour to tailor our communications to suit our individual customer's requirements, making them accessible in both written and verbal format.

8.2 Rented customers are asked about any communication needs when they attend the tenancy sign up and at other opportunities during their tenancy and this is recorded on our housing management system.

8.3 We can translate our written communications into over 240 different languages and provide formats suitable for visually impaired customers including Braille, Moon and large print. Our colleagues have access to spoken translators for conversations, which is available when we speak with the customer in person or on the phone, this includes British Sign Language.

8.4 Customers can also ask that correspondence is sent to someone who has 'delegated authority' to act on their behalf.

8.5 Our website has achieved W3C's Web accessibility standards, and we provide a range of accessibility services through our website, email and telephone services, to make our communications inclusive for everyone.

8.6 We commit to tailoring our communications once a customer has shared with us their required language or format, for example, large print.

9 Reasonable adjustments

9.1 A Reasonable Adjustment is a legal term described in the Equality Act (2010). It means that LiveWest has a duty to make reasonable adjustments where its working practices (including policies and procedures, or physical premises) put a customer living with disability at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with customers who are not.

9.2 Our approach is set out in our Reasonable Adjustments policy. This policy supports us to deliver on the commitments set out in that policy by describing ways in which we may flex our services for customers, including those who live with a disability and/or lack mental capacity.

10 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and support needs

10.1 We recognise that some residents may act in an anti-social way due to behaviours related to their support needs, and we will try to engage them, their carers, and relevant support services to improve the situation before taking enforcement action. However, we will balance the safety and well-being of neighbouring residents, who may themselves have support needs, against those of the ASB perpetrator in considering the most appropriate response.

10.2 We also recognise that some customers with support needs are at higher risk of becoming victims of ASB and may be impacted more significantly by ASB than those without. To help us safeguard customers impacted by ASB we will adopt a best practice multi-agency approach, working closely with partner agencies to minimise risk.

10.3 We will follow our ASB policy and procedure in ensuring a risk-based approach when dealing with both perpetrators and victims of ASB; where the ASB is serious we will prioritise our response and provide the support of an ASB expert. Where there is a significant risk of harm from others, we will take a victim centred approach.

10.4 We will provide a range of methods to report ASB including Noise and ASB Apps to record noise and other nuisance in real time. For customers without digital access, we will provide diary sheets and advice on how to complete these. We will tailor our support to meet the needs of our customers which can extend to supply of video doorbells and additional security. We will focus on early intervention and the use of methods such as mediation and support referrals wherever possible.

10.5 In managing tenancies and leases and delivering services, we will consider whether our decision would have an unfair or disproportionate impact on the resident compared with another resident who does not have a protected characteristic

10.6 During legal proceedings, we can provide impact statements and where appropriate, professional witnesses. Civil courts can take account of witnesses needs and provide screens and other measures for people giving evidence.

10.7 Where the risk to a customer is exceptionally high, we will work closely with the local authorities to consider moving options.

10.8 Where legal action is being considered, we will ensure that prior to issuing notice, or starting a legal process, consideration is given to:

- Whether the residents' behaviour, actions or lack of action is related to a disability.
- Whether the behaviour is putting the health and safety of others at risk e.g. neighbours.
- Alternatives to possession action and why they were not suitable.
- Whether possession action is justifiable and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Whether the effect on the customer is outweighed by the advantages of our action.
- Whether there is a right to review in mandatory possession cases.

11 Complaints

11.1 We will triage each complaint we receive, speaking with the customer to understand if they have a support need.

We will:

- Make our complaints process easy and accessible for all customers.
- Advertise the ways that a customer can complain and what support is available to assist them.
- Provide clear outcome letters that makes it easy for customers to understand what has been agreed upon and our findings.

12 Repairs

12.1 We recognise that customers with a support need may be disproportionately affected if they need a repair, or that they may require additional support in ensuring that their home is well maintained.

12.2 When a customer contacts us to request a repair, colleagues will confirm if there are support needs which should be considered to enable the repair to be carried out effectively.

12.3 This should be recorded on the customers record so that the service can be delivered appropriately, aligned to the needs of the household. In cases where a customers' support need is preventing repairs from being carried out to their home, the repairs, tenancy sustainment and housing teams will work together to assess the situation and explore solutions with the customer.

13 Lettings

- 13.1 New tenants will be asked to tell us about the support needs of any household member and any existing care and support services received. Where appropriate, a referral can be made to an external support agency, or to our own tenancy sustainment services.
- 13.2 When allocating our homes, we will review any information we receive on support needs to help us ensure any offer of housing is right for the individual and their family and will be sustainable.
- 13.3 We will require confirmation from a medical professional or other support agency of the tenants' circumstances before giving any additional priority due to support needs in line with our Allocations Policy.

14 Rent arrears

- 14.1 It is essential that our customers maintain rent payments. Where a customer needs help to set up a regular and reliable rent payment method, we will do this. This can include rent and/or rent arrears payments being made directly from welfare benefits to LiveWest.
- 14.2 We recognise that some customers with support needs may encounter financial struggles related to their circumstances, and we are committed to providing support with this. Eviction is considered a last resort, and instead, the focus is on offering tailored assistance, such as financial guidance, access to welfare benefits, or referrals to relevant support services, to help customers overcome any financial difficulties.

15 Performance monitoring

- 15.1 We will monitor the number of customers with support needs and the ways in which we provide flexible services to them.
- 15.2 We will complete an annual comparison of our tenant satisfaction measure results for customers with support needs (and other protected characteristics) compared to those who do not have a support need, reporting the findings and any identified actions to our Customer Service Committee.

16 Record keeping

- 16.1 We will record information about customers with support needs in a consistent and secure way. We will make sure that all information is managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

- 16.2 We will record risk information to protect the health and safety of colleagues and contractors in line with our Sensitive Customer Information procedures.
- 16.3 The consent of the individual will be sought in advance of information being disclosed to third parties unless exceptional circumstances apply when LiveWest’s Data Protection and Confidentiality Policies will be followed.

17 Linked or associated policies

- Allocations and Lettings policy
- Anti-social behaviour policy
- Challenging behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Data protection policy
- Domestic Abuse policy
- [Equality](#), Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Income policy
- Neighbourhood Management policy
- Reasonable Adjustments policy
- Safeguarding children and adults at risk policy
- Tenancy management policy and procedures

Version Control

Version Ref:	Date of change	By whom	Reason
1	December 2025	Director of Neighbourhoods	New Policy