

**Reply to**

Tel 0800 694 0184

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Date 9 July 2024

Questions and Answers

Who is the Regulator for Social Housing?

The Regulator of Social Housing is responsible for ensuring good quality social housing standards. As a social landlord, Bristol City Council is expected to meet these standards and the Regulator has powers to investigate and hold us to account. For more information see - gov.uk/government/collections/regulatory-standards-for-landlords.

Why has the Regulator made a judgement about Bristol City Council?

Bristol City Council has been looking into possible failings for some time and asked an outside organisation, called Savills, to help us investigate. Following this, in April 2024, we self-referred to the Regulator because of our own concerns that we were not meeting health and safety standards.

What has the Regulator investigated? What did their investigation involve?

The Regulator's investigation has focused on safety and quality across five key areas (condition of homes, record keeping, health and safety, repairs and maintenance). Working with council officers, the Regulator has made a judgement on whether our service meets their standards. The council has been completely honest about its failures and has given the Regulator access to our records.

What has the investigation found?

The investigation has identified very poor record keeping and backlogs of some safety work. The judgement shows we must improve our records for electrical safety checks and actions, carbon monoxide alarms checks, communal asbestos surveys, fire safety actions and data management, survey data, damp and mould cases, and unresolved repairs. Bristol City Council has been given a 'C3' grade, which means serious failings and significant improvement is needed. We believe the Regulator's judgement is a fair reflection of the council's current housing service and accept their findings. The judgement is published online at gov.uk/government/publications/bristol-city-council.

Does my home need an inspection or safety works?

We will contact you if we need to inspect your home. As we catch up on the outstanding surveys and repairs, works will be planned for individual properties and blocks. If these works require people to temporarily move into alternative accommodation, the council will always speak to residents directly about the options

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and the support they can expect. If you think your home is not safe, contact us immediately on freephone 0800 694 0184 so we can investigate.

What do you mean by “good record keeping”?

When a repair or safety check is done, we should keep a record of that. This means we can keep track of the safety of all homes. We have failed to keep good records which means that even if the inspection or the repair was done, we can't always find the proof.

What is Bristol City Council doing to put things right?

The council has immediately started to improve things by developing a clear schedule to complete outstanding work – prioritising safety issues first. We are also improving our record keeping. Where this will take time, we are setting out a plan with targets that will be overseen by senior council officers and closely reviewed and checked by the council's new housing committee.

How long will the improvement works take?

Over the next 12 months we are prioritising the most important safety inspections, repairs, and improvement works. This will help us better understand where we are and reduce any risks to safety. Some of our larger improvement programmes are complex and will take longer to fully complete. Over the coming months we will work with you and be open about our plans to improve the health and safety of our homes and the records we hold about the condition of our homes.

Will you be sharing more findings about health and safety?

As part of our legal duties, we publish a number of reports and documents associated with the monitoring and survey work we carry out. More of this information will be made available regularly as we catch up with surveys and produce more reports. The reports can be found at gov.uk/government/publications/bristol-city-council.

Is there anything we can do to speed up our repairs requests if we've been waiting a long time?

We are already working through the backlog of repairs and maintenance cases. We always prioritise cases with the highest safety risk. If we can speed this up through further investment or by bringing in more contractors, these options will be explored.

When will you be sharing more information about what you will be doing in my home? How will I be contacted?

We will keep residents regularly updated on the progress of improvements and works. Where possible we will use email and text. We will also write to you by letter and provide information on our website. We will continue to prioritise housing forums and tenant meetings to give residents an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback.

Will we have the opportunity to voice our concerns and provide feedback?

Yes, there are already a number of routes you can take to share your views and concerns. Officers are working to produce an engagement plan that will set out what opportunities residents can expect from the council to have their voices heard. In the meantime, if you ever have a concern, please contact us by emailing HCS@bristol.gov.uk or calling freephone **0800 694 0184**.

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