

Wednesday 8th May 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

Urgent Call for Action on Floor Covering Provision in Social Housing

My name is Aileen Edmunds and I am the Chief Executive of Longleigh, a charitable foundation dedicated to supporting individuals and communities served by the social housing sector.

Alongside Altair, a consultancy specialising in the social housing sector, we have conducted extensive research into floor covering provisions at point of let in social housing across England, Scotland and Wales.

We have spoken to tenants, landlords and stakeholders. [Our final report has now been published](#) and contains recommendations for politicians, officials, and social landlords and their tenants.

Our research has revealed a deeply concerning reality: an estimated 760,000 adults in social housing may be living without floor coverings (which may be as many as 15% of households in social housing), with almost four in five social housing tenants moving into homes with partial or no floor coverings.

As an organisation with deep insight into welfare and social justice within social housing, **we are writing to ask you to raise awareness on the benefits of floor coverings in social housing and call on the government to fund an increase in floor covering standards** in social housing.




We find it unacceptable that individuals in social housing, who have the lowest level of income or savings of any housing tenure, are disproportionately affected by a lack of this necessity.

Wales has a new quality standard on floor coverings, and funding to meet this. Scotland has national welfare funding to provide flooring. Social housing tenants in England are not offered the same standards or funding. These disparities must be rectified to ensure that all social tenants have access to safe and comfortable living conditions.

Tenants have told us that:

- ▶ "I'm still trying to floor my house 6 years on."
- ▶ "People who end up in social housing and go into empty properties without flooring or furnishing - it is like a concrete prison cell."
- ▶ "I had a mosaic of different rugs in my house. The rugs weren't very aesthetically pleasing but it was something which is better than nothing."

Our research demonstrates several benefits associated with providing floor coverings, for both tenants and landlords. Some of these include:

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Increased tenancy sustainment |  30% decrease in turnover |
|  Greater tenant and staff satisfaction |  Increased community cohesion |
|  Lower rent arrears, with £0.25- £0.45 increase in rent collection per week per property |  Tenant health and wellbeing benefits |
|  Fewer repairs |  Fewer money worries for tenants |
|  10% reduction in void loss |  Fewer noise-related complaints |

The provision of floor coverings as part of a wider package of essential furniture has been found to provide a social return on investment of £7,673 (uprated from £6,472 in 2021).

By ensuring floor coverings are provided in all social housing at point of let, and existing good quality carpet is not removed at the end of a tenancy, we can make a tangible difference in the lives of thousands of individuals and families across England, Scotland and Wales. It would also create economic opportunities in floor fitting, including increased employment and development of skills.

We must work together to raise awareness and advocate for funding and policy changes to ensure all social renters have access to decent living conditions.

We need your help to raise awareness and drive improvements in standards

We would be grateful if you could reflect on the findings of the research and raise the issues with your network to lobby the government for an increase in funding to improve floor covering standards.

We appreciate your attention to this critical matter and eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,

Aileen Edmunds, CEO of Longleigh Foundation

