

May 2024

The Provision of Floor Coverings in Social Housing

Final Report

Final Report

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About Altair

Altair Ltd is a specialist consultancy operating across the social housing sector. We have been providing varied and creative solutions to our clients for over ten years. Our consultancy and advisory services include supporting leaders on governance, regulation, transformation and change, strategy, policy and research, and property development strategy and delivery.



A grant-making partner for the social housing sector

About The Lingleigh Foundation

Lingleigh is a grant-making charitable foundation dedicated to supporting the individuals and communities served by the social housing sector.

Our mission is the reason why we exist. It is our purpose, our cause and it is: to support transformation in the lives of residents and communities, becoming the charity partner to the social housing sector.

Thank you

Longleigh Foundation funded this research, conducted by Altair Consultancy and Advisory Services Ltd (Altair). The research included a steering group to represent the key stakeholders within social housing, including social housing tenants and landlords.

Members of the steering group were involved in challenging and discussing the research. Longleigh Foundation has used the research findings to make several recommendations to the government and sector, including social landlords and tenants.

Please note that the recommendations are the views of Longleigh Foundation, based on the research, and do not necessarily represent the views of all members of the steering group.

Longleigh Foundation, and Altair, are grateful for the time and consideration of all members of the steering group, including their commitment to ensuring social housing is of the best quality.

Thank you to:

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Executive summary

This is the final report on research into floor coverings in social housing produced by Altair Consultancy and Advisory Services (Altair) and commissioned by Longleigh Foundation (Longleigh), a grant making partner for the social housing sector.

For those who are new to social housing, it can come as a shock that homes do not come with floor coverings as standard. After all, the people who need social housing are those least likely to have the income or savings needed for what can be quite a significant spend.

Longleigh Foundation has commissioned this research in response to their experience as a grant maker, often providing grant to families moving into social housing without floor coverings.

A lack of floor covering is most commonly an issue in social housing. End Furniture Poverty survey data found that there are an estimated 760,000 adults currently living in social housing with no carpet or flooring in their bedrooms and living areas. Given there is an estimated 4.9million social homes in the UK, this could be as many as 15% of households living in social housing.

During the course of this research, funded by Longleigh Foundation, the Welsh Government announced the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard which sets out the expectations for the provision of floor coverings at point of let in social homes. However, there remains no requirements for floor coverings in Scotland and for all rooms in England.

In our final report, we draw together the findings from our three learning reports, update our literature and insight on the policy and funding of floor coverings, and make recommendations to social landlords, government and tenants. We outline how floor coverings are funded and the landscape for procurement and skills.

We have been able to build on robust data exercises conducted by End Furniture Poverty and the Resident Voice Index survey of 7,955 social housing tenants. We have analysed the cost of floor covering provision to both tenants and landlords.

This research has been broad ranging, bringing in the voices of tenants, landlords and stakeholders through a range of surveys, interviews and focus groups. We've built on the findings from past research such as Tai Pawb's Floored Research¹ and 'House to home' research commissioned by JRF and conducted by Altair in 2018.²

The lack of floor coverings significantly impacts tenants financially; we estimate it takes at least 20 months for those on Universal Credit and 8 months for those on low incomes to repay the cost of floor coverings.

¹ [TPAS Cymru and Tai Pawb \(2020\) Floored](#)

² [JRF \(2018\) House to home: giving social housing tenants a place to call home | JRF](#)

Tenants have told us that they feel stigmatised by the lack of floor coverings, with those responding to the Resident Voice Index survey using the word 'poor' as the main singular word response.

They have also told us about issues with noise, the lack of feeling of home and their concerns about the environmental impact of disposing of floor coverings between lets.

Cost is the biggest barrier to landlords providing floor coverings. We have conducted analysis which identifies that this is a significant barrier for landlords. Where landlords do provide floor coverings, they generally do so for hard-to-let accommodation, provide them on a means-tested basis or as an improved void standard.

Floor coverings link to other wider policy considerations such as housing survivors of domestic abuse, tenancy sustainment for those who have experienced homelessness, community safety and to child development, as well as health.

Funding across England, Scotland and Wales has resulted in a postcode lottery for tenants, with some strong funding streams for tenants seeking to provide floor coverings and, in some places, little to no funding available. There are differing opportunities across England, Scotland and Wales for funding floor coverings for social housing tenants, including good use of procurement and partnerships.

Floor coverings are considered essential items for a home. Provision of these, as part of a wider package of furniture, has been found by End Furniture Poverty to provide a social return on investment of £6,472³ (or £7,673 in 2024 prices).

There are numerous benefits to providing floor coverings, for both tenants and landlords, including increased tenancy sustainment, greater pride in an area, increased community cohesion, and health and wellbeing benefits from less anxiety about money and reduced social isolation.

Given these benefits, it is shocking that floor coverings are not provided in social housing, which is driven by a social purpose and caters for those in society who are most in need. It shouldn't be that those who live in social housing are the least likely to have floor coverings.

Through our engagement with landlords in the sector, we have developed practical tools to help make a business case for a floor covering pilot, which are contained in the [appendixes of this report](#).

³ [End Furniture Poverty \(2021\) Social Return on Investment Study into the Provision of Essential Furniture Items](#)

What we are calling for

Longleigh Foundation is calling for specific actions from politicians, officials, social housing leaders and staff, and social housing tenants to improve floor covering standards in the social housing sector.

All political parties

Out of the 1.2 million people living without flooring in the UK, 61% live in social housing, according to data from End Furniture Poverty: an estimated 760,000 adults in social housing may be living without floor coverings. Wales has a new housing standard, with government funding to make improvements. Scotland has national funding to provide flooring. Social housing tenants in England are not offered the same standards or funding.

Social landlords, particularly local authorities, are facing unprecedented cost pressures and should not be expected to finance an improvement in standards.

With a general election and manifestos coming, funding raised standards around the provision of floor coverings in social housing is a relatively low-cost way of improving social housing and tenant wellbeing and satisfaction with home. The cost of funding will be recovered through increased trade value for floor fitters, increased employment, increased productivity, and increased tax receipts.

We recommend that:

- Manifestos include a funded commitment to raising the standard of floor coverings in social housing so that all new tenancies must have floor coverings in all rooms at point of let.
- We estimate the additional funding required in the first year would be £494.7m, which would reduce in subsequent years to £486.2m in years two to five and £346m annually from year six onwards. This is due to lower turnover of lets from improved standards and the floor covering programme moving to replacement only.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in England and Local Government and Housing Directorate in Scotland

With your responsibility for quality and supply of social housing, and, in England, the current review of the Decent Homes Standard, we recommend that Ministers and officials:

- Raise the standard of social housing by making floor coverings in all rooms at point of let a key priority for the new Decent Homes Standard in England and for a review of the Social Housing Quality Standard in Scotland.
- Fund improved standards at a national level. The cost of funding will be recovered through increased value of trade for floor fitters, increased employment, increased productivity, and increased tax receipts. Social landlords, particularly local authorities, are facing unprecedented cost pressures and should not be expected to finance an improvement in standards.

Senior leaders within social landlords – executives and board members of housing associations, lead members and directors of housing within local authorities

We know that you are facing significant cost pressures within your organisation. We know that operating and regulatory environments are more complex than ever. We appreciate the perceived risks and costs to providing floor coverings at point of let, or leaving existing floor coverings in-situ on change of tenancy. You should decide on the quality of your properties, based on your available resource. Yet our research shows that not providing floor coverings can be damaging to you as a landlord.

Not providing floor coverings may mean tenants and staff are less satisfied. Turnover of tenancies and rent arrears are likely to be higher, and there is an increased cost burden and potential impacts on your tenants' health and feelings of stigma.

If you do not provide floor coverings at point of let, we encourage you to reflect on the findings of this research and consider what the best approach might be for your staff and executive, your tenants and your board. We recommend you:

- Immediately stop removing floor coverings during the void process unless the incoming tenant has specifically asked for these to be removed.
- [Commit to undertaking a pilot on providing floor coverings in voids](#), using the business case and research outline in this report.
- Share, and act, on the findings of this pilot.

For those that provide floor coverings at point of let, we recommend you:

- Commit to sharing the benefits of your approach and why and how you do it with other social landlords in your network.

Voids and lettings staff within social landlords

You have insight into what is best for your organisation and your tenants. Floor coverings at the point of let has many evidenced advantages, including reduced turnover and higher tenancy sustainment, and improved tenant and staff satisfaction.

If your organisation doesn't provide floor coverings, we recommend you:

- Immediately stop removing floor coverings during the void process unless the incoming tenant has specifically asked for these to be removed.
- Use our [business case guidance](#) to convince your executive team to undertake a pilot of floor coverings within your homes for rent.
- Talk to those in your network who do provide floor coverings at point of let to learn from them.

If your organisation provides floor coverings at point of let, we recommend you:

- Commit to talking about the benefits of your approach with other housing providers, sharing your learnings and best practice. This might include suggesting it as a topic in any partnership or professional development meetings.

Tenants of social housing landlords

You should have a voice and influence in how your landlord manages homes, including the quality and standard of accommodation. We know that many of you may be living without carpets or linos to cover your floor. Some of you will have paid for floor coverings from your own pocket. You may have also received a grant to cover the cost of floor coverings from national, charitable organisations, such as Longleigh Foundation. Yet it doesn't have to be this way.

In Wales, the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard states that floor coverings must be present at change of tenancy. Across England, some social landlords provide floor coverings, and some local authorities provide welfare grants to help tenants purchase floor coverings. It shouldn't be a postcode lottery.

We believe that all social landlords should be providing floor coverings at point of let, whether this is carpet, lino or other floor coverings. This is why we recommend you:

- Write to your MP to ask the government in England and Scotland to fund improved standards on provision of floor coverings in social housing so that all rooms at point of let have floor coverings.
- Contact your landlord to ask about their standards around floor coverings. If they remove during the voids process and/or don't provide them as standard in all rooms when a home is let to new tenants, request they stop removing them during the voids process and ask them to consider a floor covering pilot to explore the feasibility of improved standards.
- If you have experienced hardship or other negative effects from a lack of floor coverings in your home, contact your landlord. They may be able to help or direct you to sources of funding to support you.
- Ask your landlord to consult with tenants when the new Decent Homes Standard is published, giving you a chance to contribute your experiences to what makes a decent social housing home. The government has said that it will [share next steps on the new standards as soon as possible](#).
- Sign up to free training on your rights as a tenant, provided by the government's [Four Million Homes](#) programme, so that you can continue to influence the quality of homes provided by your landlord.



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Introduction

About this project

Longleigh Foundation, a grant-making body founded in social housing, commissioned Altair to conduct research into the provision of floor coverings in social housing in England, Scotland, and Wales.

As a grant-making foundation, Longleigh provides much needed funding to families who have just moved into social housing and need support for the cost of flooring their homes.

The research aimed to investigate the impact of, and opportunities for, social housing provider floor covering standards, keeping tenant voice at the heart of the research, specifically to:

- Engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including social housing tenants, social housing landlords, grant making organisations, regulatory bodies and charities serving social housing tenants.
- Build on the findings from Tai Pawb's Floored Research⁴ and 'House to home' research commissioned by JRF and conducted by Altair in 2018.⁵
- Make practical recommendations to the sector that have a meaningful impact on provision of floor coverings to tenants.
- Articulate a business case that considers the financial, economic, and social benefits alongside the costs of any proposals versus maintaining the status quo.

Overall, we want this research to raise the profile of the lack of floor covering provision in social housing and create an opportunity to influence policy change on floor covering provision in social housing in England, Scotland and Wales.

⁴ [TPAS Cymru and Tai Pawb \(2020\) Floored](#)

⁵ [JRF \(2018\) House to home: giving social housing tenants a place to call home](#)

Research methods

Altair was commissioned by Longleigh Foundation in 2022 to undertake a research project on the impact of, and opportunities for, social housing provider's flooring standards in Wales, Scotland and England. A core requirement was to keep tenant voice at the heart of the research.

To understand current provision and challenges, Altair conducted qualitative and quantitative primary research, using interviews, roundtables and surveys. This included:

- A survey of social housing landlords, hosted by Altair between September 2022 and January 2023. This received 31 responses.
- A survey of grant making organisations, hosted by Altair between December 2022 and January 2023. This received four responses.
- A review of the current literature.
- A series of focus groups held with tenants between June 2023 and August 2023 with 13 participants.
- Seven individual interviews held with tenants between June 2023 and August 2023.
- Four stakeholder sessions with support organisations, Citizen's Advice Bureau, tenant representative bodies, homeless representative bodies and grant-making bodies in August 2023 with 15 participants.
- A survey of 7,955 social housing tenants, kindly provided by the Resident Voice Index (Data provider: MRI Software), running from June 2023 – August 2023.
- Three roundtables held with senior leaders of social housing landlords in October 2023.
- Five individual interviews held with landlords between August 2023 and October 2023.

We conducted our own cost analysis on the provision of carpets using data on average size of social housing properties and average cost of laying flooring, both from a tenant's and landlord's perspective.

We also undertook a thorough literature and policy review, which has been updated for this report.



Findings

Findings

Policy and legislation – current provision

- 1.1.** Current expectations for England and Wales for the provision of floor coverings in social rented properties are set within the guidance for the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which states that flooring in kitchens and bathrooms should be “capable of being readily cleansed and maintained in a hygienic condition”.⁶ There are no set expectations for the provision of floor coverings in Scotland.
- 1.2.** In England and Scotland there are no legal or regulatory requirements for social housing landlords to provide floor coverings in their homes. The Welsh Government has recently published a new Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which states that floor coverings must be present at change of tenancy.⁷ Table 1 sets out the differing expectations for the provision of floor coverings across England, Scotland and Wales.

Table 1: Expectations for the provision of floor coverings in social housing in England, Scotland and Wales

	England	Wales	Scotland
Housing Standard	Decent Homes Standard	Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)	Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)
Description	Standard refers to the age and condition of components, and being free from hazard, but makes no stipulation that flooring should be provided.	Standard requires all habitable rooms, staircases and landings should have suitable floor coverings at change of tenancy.	Standard requires homes must be energy efficient, safe and secure. As part of the standard internal floor structures should be free from rotting or structural issues but there is no mention of floor coverings.
Assessment standard	Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)		Social Housing Quality Standards Technical guidance for social landlords
Description	The HHSRS states flooring in kitchens and bathrooms should be easy to clean. Slip resistance flooring is highlighted as important in preventing falls, with particular reference to the increased probability of a fall on stairs without carpet coverings.		Technical guidance sets out how each of the 55 elements of the SHQS is measured to establish if a property reaches the required minimum.
Any requirement for flooring?	Yes	Yes	No
Legal standards	Flooring in kitchens and bathroom should be “capable of being readily cleansed and maintained in a hygienic condition”	Across the entire property	No requirements
Monitoring	Department for Communities and Local Governance and Regulator of Social Housing.	Welsh Government - a new property level data collection is being developed.	The Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator

⁶ [DLUHC \(2006\) Housing health and safety rating system \(HHSRS\) operating guidance: housing inspections and assessment of hazards](#)

⁷ [Welsh Housing Quality Standard \(2023\) welsh-housing-quality-standard-2023.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

- 1.3.** In England, the Government is reviewing expected standards in housing through the Decent Homes Standard.

Impact on tenants

- 1.4.** End Furniture Poverty, a campaign and social research group, commissioned NatCen to gather data on the extent of furniture poverty in the UK in 2022. They found that 760,000 adults living in social housing have no carpet or flooring in their bedrooms and living areas.⁸ Based on 4.9 million social homes in the UK in 2020, this could be as many as 15% of all households. In total, out of 1.2 million people living without flooring in the UK, 61% live in social housing.
- 1.5.** The Resident Voice Index survey found that almost four in five tenants (out of 7,955 tenants who responded) move into their homes either with partial or no floor coverings.
- 1.6. We found the following impacts on tenants from not having floor coverings:**
- Financial, for those surveyed by the Resident Voice Index, they shared that they had to pay for flooring through savings or a loan – 59% used their own savings, 24% took out a loan and 13% borrowed from friends or family. For nearly half of respondents (47%), costs of fitting floor coverings in their home exceeded £1,000.
 - Stigma, with tenants describing feelings of social housing stigma when being housed without floor coverings, including an experience of feeling 'poor': "*Horrid. Poor. Unworthy. Even though I work full time and earn a good wage, I felt stigmatised.*" (Resident Voice Index response)
 - Less community integration as tenants felt unable to invite people into their homes. 65% of tenants responding to the Resident Voice Index survey felt that a lack of floor coverings or furniture when they moved in impacted their ability to integrate into their community. This was also reflected in our focus group with tenants: "*I only brought my guests into the kitchen, not the living room. I only let my friends go into the living room four months after I moved in because then I had laminate and rugs down.*" (Tenant Focus Group attendee)
 - Noise more easily travelling between homes: "*I moved into my property from a mutual exchange and the flat had laminate flooring already laid. However, shortly after I moved in, I received noise complaints from my neighbour and my landlord told me I had to remove the laminate floor. I was left without flooring whilst my relationship with my new neighbour never recovered.*" (Tenant Focus Group attendee)

⁸ [End Furniture Poverty \(2023\) The Extent of Furniture Poverty in the UK](#)

- The feeling of home, with their property feeling less like a 'home', lacking comfort and the perception of warmth: *"Flooring should be standard when people move in, it's a necessity. My house has original floorboards but concrete flooring can get really cold in the winter months."* (Tenant Focus Group attendee)
- Tenants expressed concerns about the environmental impacts of usable flooring being sent to landfill: *"I understand if they are grubby, but they are throwing away perfectly good flooring, it is a cost to both the tenant and the environment."* (Tenant Focus Group attendee)
- Fitting flooring after moving in also led to disruption as tenants had to move furniture and belongings away for installation.

1.7. We found the following key themes in relation to those who had been let a home with floor coverings:

- Having flooring provided by their landlord saved tenants a huge additional cost that they would incur if they had to provide flooring themselves. For some, they would have not been able to afford it if their landlord did not provide it. *"Happy to finally be moving into a house that had carpets, it took away the worry of trying to find money to cover the floors on such a tight budget."* (Resident Voice Index response)
- Having flooring already provided at their new home made it easier for households to settle in.
- Some tenants recounted that the carpets provided by their landlord were not of good quality: *"Whilst some of the carpet was ok the rest had to be taken out and replaced- so might have been easier for it not to be left in."* (Resident Voice Index response)

1.8. Tenants consider floor coverings to be essential item for any furnished tenancy, important to their wellbeing. Research for End Furniture Poverty has identified that an essential package of furniture, including carpets, generates a social return on investment of £6,472 (or £7,673 in 2022 prices).¹⁰ The benefits identified and costed in this study, based on interviews and surveys of recipients of furniture packages, include:

- Worrying less about money.
- Feeling safer.
- Freedom and increased independence.
- Improved mental health.
- Being in control of life.
- Improved physical health.
- Improved relationships.
- Less isolated.
- Pride in their area, and
- Feeling of providing for family.

1.9. If the government improved standards for floor coverings in social housing in England and Scotland, including reappportioning available funding, there would clearly be a social return on this investment, as well as a boost to the floor fitting industry, increasing employment, productivity and tax receipts.

⁹ Ambrose, A., Batty, E., Eadson, W., Hickman, P. and Quinn, G. (2016). *Assessment of the need for furniture provision for new NIHE tenants*. Project Report. Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University. End Furniture Poverty (2022) *The essential items: What does a household need to escape Furniture Poverty?*

¹⁰ End Furniture Poverty (2021) *Social Return on Investment Study into the Provision of Essential Furniture Items*

Drivers and barriers around provision for landlords

1.10. Our research found the current provision of floor coverings at point of let for general needs accommodation is around 10% of landlords' homes, with floor coverings more likely to be provided in affordable and intermediate rent (21% of homes), older persons and supported housing (26% of homes) and shared ownership (28% of homes). We also found that 17% of landlords remove floor coverings for all new lets.

1.11. Where social landlords do provide flooring beyond legislative requirements, they told us they:

- Install floor coverings in hard-to-let properties.
- Gift the previous tenants' floor coverings to the new incoming tenant.
- Provide floor coverings in homes on a means-tested basis.
- Introduced a new void standard that includes floor coverings.
- Provide floor coverings in new build homes only, likely due to developer specifications.

1.12. From surveys and interviews, we found that the barriers to landlords providing flooring were:

- Financial cost.
- Delays to void and lettings processes.
- Ongoing maintenance and responsibility.
- Customer choice.
- Fleas and other infestation, and
- Supply line, in terms of goods and skilled labour.

1.13. Where flooring was provided in all rooms at point, our literature review and research with landlords told us that the benefits were:

- Reduction in void rent loss.¹¹
- Reduced void turnover – Thirteen saw a reduction from 600/year to 200/year and Citizen saw an 8% reduction in one pilot and between a 30% and 50% reduction over a 12-month period in another.⁶
- Reduced void costs as tenants felt happier in home and more likely to maintain tenancy – Thirteen saw void costs reduce by, on average, £500 per property.⁶
- Increased staff and tenant satisfaction.^{6, 12}
- Reduced refusal rate.⁷
- Improvements in tenant health and wellbeing from better quality.¹³
- Reduced likelihood and severity of falls.¹⁴
- Fewer complaints concerning noise.¹⁵

1.14. Throughout the research we have showcased examples of how social housing landlords have been able to implement the provision of flooring at the point of let. The case studies within our learning reports include Thirteen Housing Group, Teign, Monmouthshire and B3Living.

¹¹ [Donovan, C. and Hardman, B. \(2022\) A Blueprint for Furniture Provision in Social Housing. End Furniture Poverty](#)

¹² [TPAS Cymru and Tai Pawb \(2020\) Floored](#)

¹³ [With quality defined as tenant rating of the overall condition of the property – see Rolfe, S., Garnham, L., Godwin, J. et al. \(2020\) Housing as a social determinant of health and wellbeing: developing an empirically-informed realist theoretical framework. BMC Public Health 20, 1138.](#)

¹⁴ [DLUHC \(2006\) Housing health and safety rating system \(HHSRS\) operating guidance: housing inspections and assessment of hazards](#)

¹⁵ [Housing Ombudsman Service \(2022\) Spotlight on noise complaints](#)

Case studies



Teign Housing

Teign Housing is a charity and registered social landlord that manages over 3,700 homes across South Devon. It is dedicated to providing high-quality customer services and making the local area a better place to live by creating sustainable communities and working in partnership.

Teign Housing undertook a broader review of its voids process and identified that carpets with a good underlay would reduce the impact on noise nuisance in flats and minimise low-level noise nuisance complaints. As such, it introduced a new void standard in 2020 that included fitting carpets in all flats and sheltered accommodation, along with good quality underlay to improve soundproofing. Over half of Teign Housing's voids have carpets and underlay fitted each year.

As part of the new void standard, the resident is responsible for the care and upkeep of these, including cleaning and any treatment required. Residents are able to replace the carpets at any time, but any replacements have to remain in the property.

With nearly 200 voids per year, Teign Housing extended their void timeframe by three days to ensure the full remit of their standard could be delivered before the resident moved into their new home. The morale of the voids teams has noticeably increased since the introduction of the new void standard because, in the words of Teign Housing's Chief Executive, "they feel they now walk away from a job that they can be really proud of".

Teign Housing anticipates that by investing more initially and providing a better-quality property at the beginning, it will help keep the standard of the property and reduce the repair and maintenance costs over the life of the tenancy. They also anticipate a lower turnover of residents as a result of the new standard.



Melville Housing & Zero Waste Scotland: Repurposing Office Carpet Tiles for Homes

Melville Housing and Zero Waste Scotland collaborated on an initiative to provide flooring solutions to Melville residents. Melville Housing could see that flooring is a significant expense, particularly for those facing financial constraints. Recognising this challenge, they sought innovative solutions to support their tenants in accessing affordable and sustainable floor coverings. In partnership with Zero Waste Scotland, an organisation committed to reducing waste and promoting circular economy principles, Melville Housing initiated a program to repurpose carpet tiles sourced from commercial offices.

By rescuing carpet tiles from office blocks across Scotland, the partnership aims to alleviate the financial costs associated with floor coverings while simultaneously contributing to waste reduction. Sourcing of Carpet Tiles - Zero Waste Scotland facilitates the sourcing of carpet tiles from office blocks and the tiles are carefully selected based on their quality and condition, ensuring they meet standards for residential use. Melville Housing also recommends tenants visit the offices to see the floor tiles or their housing officer will send photos before the tenant decides if the tiles are right for their home.

Melville Housing requires their tenants to collect, lay and fit the tiles themselves but supply the glue required to secure the flooring in place. In addition, Melville Housing offer tenants access to a carpet cleaner to borrow and carpet shampoo to use of the tiles for free for a small, refundable deposit.



Wider policy considerations

Wider policy considerations

- 2.1.** This section of our report discusses how floor coverings can contribute to wider policy interventions, such as supporting survivors of domestic violence or abuse, benefits for people experiencing homelessness or around community safety, as well as child development and health.

Domestic abuse

- 2.2.** Survivors of domestic abuse may be more likely to return to perpetrators if they do not have suitable accommodation. Survivors often leave all their possessions, including furniture, when they leave their home to escape abuse or violence. This means leaving abuse has a financial cost from having to furnish a new property.¹⁶
- 2.3.** In a report on best practice in relation to dispersed accommodation, Refuge notes the importance of providing furnishings to survivors of domestic abuse. Their model of best practice includes fully furnished properties, paid for using Housing Benefit.¹⁷
- 2.4.** To meet survivors' needs around flooring and furniture, the charity Furnishing Futures was established in 2019. Recently, they have announced a pilot with Peabody in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. Peabody is providing three homes within the borough, taking responsibility for floor coverings, while Furnishing Futures will supply furnishings and interior design specialism.¹⁸

Homelessness

- 2.5.** The provision of floor coverings, alongside furniture packages, is one contributory factor for tenancy sustainment, particularly amongst those who have experienced homelessness, care leavers, young people and people with physical or learning disabilities.¹⁹ Pawson et al (2006) found that tenancy failure was 15% higher for unfurnished tenancies (25% tenancy failure) compared to furnished (10%).²⁰

¹⁶ Magnusson, L. and Davidge, S. (2020) *Domestic Abuse Report 2020: The Hidden Housing Crisis*. Women's Aid.

¹⁷ Airlie, A. (2023) *More than bricks and mortar: A feasibility study into delivery of best practice in domestic abuse dispersed accommodation*. Refuge

¹⁸ <https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2023/12/14/domestic-abuse-survivors-homes-to-be-professionally-furnished-in-new-scheme/>

¹⁹ Ambrose, A., Batty, E., Eadson, W., Hickman, P. and Quinn, G. (2016). *Assessment of the need for furniture provision for new NIHE tenants*. Project Report. Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University.

²⁰ Pawson, H., Donohoe, T., Munro, M., Netto, G. and Wager, F. (2006) *Investigating Tenancy Sustainment in Glasgow*. Report to Glasgow Housing Association and Glasgow City Council.

- 2.6.** Research has found that provision of furniture can create a “restorative home environment” to address health issues that arose over a period of homelessness.²¹ Multiple studies have found that furnished tenancies mean tenants can focus their attention on achieving other goals, such as seeking further education or employment.²²

Community safety

- 2.7.** There are also impacts on community safety. Research on families who have experienced homelessness found that parents living in un/under-furnished homes report that their children spent more unsupervised time in the neighbourhood and less time at home. Less parental guardianships may mean these children are more likely to engage in risk-taking or deviant behaviours, including gang involvement.²³ Furniture provision can also reduce social isolation and create more opportunities for collective efficacy.²⁴

Child development

- 2.8.** The NSPCC define child development as the ‘physical, cognitive, emotional and social growth that occurs throughout a child and young person’s life’ and can be affected by ‘various factors, including the environments they are raised in, the relationships they build and the experiences they have.’²⁵
- 2.9.** While the NHS highlight 90% of child brain growth occurs before the age of five²⁶ the home and its physical environment play a role in impacting child development.
- 2.10.** There is significant research around the quality of housing impacting child development²⁸ in various ways:
- The physical home environment plays a crucial role in child development. Well-designed, stimulating environments can foster cognitive skills such as problem-solving, creativity, and spatial awareness. On the other hand, overcrowded or chaotic living spaces may negatively impact development by limiting opportunities for exploration and learning.²⁹

²¹ Nubani L, De Biasi A, Ruemenapp MA, Tams LD, Boyle R. (2022) *The impact of living in an un- or under-furnished house on individuals who transitioned from homelessness.* J Community Psychol. 2022 Sep;50(8):3681-3699.

²² Pawson et al. (2006) and Nubani et al. (2022) – see above footnotes for full references.

²³ Nubani L, De Biasi A, Ruemenapp MA, Tams LD, Boyle R. (2022) *The impact of living in an un- or under-furnished house on individuals who transitioned from homelessness.* J Community Psychol. 2022 Sep;50(8):3681-3699.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ NSPCC (n.d.) ‘Child health and development’, NSPCC Learning, Available at: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-health-development>

²⁶ NHS (n.d.) ‘Early learning and development’, NHS UK, Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/early-learning-development/>

²⁷ Oloye, H., Flouri, E. (2021) ‘The Role of the indoor home environment in children’s self-regulation’, Children and Youth Services Review.

²⁸ Rollings, K. A., Wells, N. M., Evans, G. W., Bednarz, A., & Yang, Y. (2017). Housing and neighborhood physical quality: Children’s mental health and motivation. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 50, 17-23.

²⁹ Oloye, H., Flouri, E. (2021) ‘The Role of the indoor home environment in children’s self-regulation’, Children and Youth Services Review.

- Poor housing conditions can contribute to parental stress, which, in turn, can impact parenting quality and children's socio-emotional development. Stressed parents may have less time and energy to engage in positive parenting practices, such as reading to their children or providing emotional support.³⁰
- 2.11.** Although there is no literature that directly explores the role of floor covering in the home on child development, there is literature that suggests the physical environment of the home and the microenvironment can impact child development.
- 2.12.** The provision of floor coverings on child development within the educational setting of a classroom has been explored.³¹ The research found that the interior of a classroom including furnishing and flooring materials had an influence on the internal environment. This is because floor coverings have the largest surface area in a room and can affect indoor air, acoustical, lighting and thermal quality factors that can impact on child learning and subsequently child development.³²

Health

- 2.13.** Flooring, or lack of, can impact an individual's health from early years into later stages of life.
- 2.14.** Shu et. al's study into the impact of PVC flooring (also known as vinyl flooring) highlighted that PVC flooring material in early life was related to incidence of asthma during the following 10 years when compared with other flooring materials and especially when comparing with wood flooring types³³. The study also showed that exposure to PVC flooring during pregnancy could be a critical period in the development of asthma at a later time for children.
- 2.15.** Children and adults living in deprived communities are more likely to suffer from asthma. This is likely because they are disproportionately exposed to the causes of asthma and triggers of asthma attacks.³⁴
- 2.16.** Findings around asthma and their link to type of floor coverings are reflected in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Operational Guidance, which underpins the Decent Homes Standard. The guidance states that "Deaths from all forms of asthma in the UK are around 1,500 a year, of which around 60% has been attributed to dust mite allergy".³⁵ Floor coverings are important for the health of tenants, but also the suitability of accommodation for households owed a main homeless duty.³⁶

³⁰ Jones-Rounds ML, Evans GW, Braubach M. (2014) 'The interactive effects of housing and neighbourhood quality on psychological well-being', *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 68:171-175. Suglia, S. F., Duarte, C. S., & Sandel, M. T. (2011). 'Housing quality, housing instability, and maternal mental health', *Journal of Urban Health*, 88(6), 1105-1116.

³¹ [Bluyssen, P. \(2016\) 'The role of flooring materials in health, comfort and performance of children in classrooms', *Cogent Psychology*, 3\(1\), 1-8.](#)

³² [Bluyssen, P. \(2016\) 'The role of flooring materials in health, comfort and performance of children in classrooms', *Cogent Psychology*, 3\(1\), 1-8.](#)

³³ Shu H, Jönsson BA et. al (2014). PVC flooring at home and development of asthma among young children in Sweden, a 10-year follow-up. *Indoor Air*. 2014 Jun;24(3):227-35 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24118287/>

³⁴ Asthma UK (2018) *On the edge: How inequality affects people with asthma.*

³⁵ Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2006) *Housing Health and Safety Rating System: Operating Guidance*, Para 1.06.

³⁶ <https://qtstewart.co.uk/successful-s-202-suitability-review-where-carpeting-in-temporary-accommodation-exacerbated-health-conditions/>

- 2.17.** Internationally, studies have also shown there are links between flooring and health of infants. Household flooring is an important pathway for the transmission of diarrhoea pathogens, even in settings where other aspects of sanitation are sub-optimal³⁷, though the type of flooring itself does not have an association with childhood diarrhoea³⁸.
- 2.18.** Flooring can also have an impact on the health of older people. Inappropriate flooring can lead to falls, which is particularly a risk to older people. Unisha's study into flooring as a risk factor for fall-related injuries in elderly people found that to avoid the risk of falls in houses, older people preferred to have non-slippery flooring, different coloured flooring and sound-absorbing material³⁹.
- 2.19.** Dementia can impact how the brain processes visual information, which can mean that some floor coverings are more hazardous. Although this affects each dementia patient differently, some of the common experiences include⁴⁰:
- Dark mats or shadows can appear like holes.
 - Shiny surfaces can look wet and slippery.
 - Patterned carpets can look like there are objects, making it hard to distinguish between the actual objects and patterns on the floor.
 - Changes in colours can create the impression of a barrier or a change in depth.
 - Some floor patterns such as on lino can cause illusions.
- 2.20.** Some of the solutions to ensuring flooring does not risk harming dementia patients include⁴¹:
- Avoid heavily patterned carpets or vinyl flooring.
 - Have a matt finish on all non-carpeted area to help reduce falls risk.
 - Install plain carpets without a pattern and have a different colour on the riser from the tread if possible.
 - Painting skirting boards a different colour to the wall and the carpet to help the occupant to get a real perspective and understanding for the room layout.

³⁷ Koyuncu, Aybuj et. al (2020), Household flooring associated with reduced infant diarrhoeal illness in Zimbabwe in households with and without WASH interventions, *Tropical Medicine & International Health* 25(5), pp 635-643

³⁸ Sahiledengle B, et. al (2021), The Role of Household Flooring on Childhood Diarrhea Among Children 0 to 23 Months of Age in Ethiopia: A Nationally Representative Cross-Sectional Study Using a Multi-Level Mixed Effect Analysis, *Environ Health Insights*.

³⁹ R., Unisha. (2021). Flooring: A Risk Factor for Fall-Related Injuries in Elderly People Housing. *Techno-Societal* 2020 (pp.797-804)

⁴⁰ Greensleeves Care, Dementia Friendly Flooring, <https://www.greensleeves.org.uk/dementia-friendly-flooring/>

⁴¹ Greensleeves Care, Dementia Friendly Flooring, <https://www.greensleeves.org.uk/dementia-friendly-flooring/>



Funding

Funding

- 3.1.** This section will discuss insight into sources of funding for floor coverings within social housing in England, Scotland and Wales and the cost of floor coverings to tenants, landlords and grant-makers. We also provide analysis of the funding gap associated with the provision of floor coverings.

The financial cost to tenants

- 3.2.** The Resident Voice Index survey found that 31% of respondents spent between £501 - £1,000 and about 45% spent over £1,000 on providing floor coverings. As discussed, our survey of tenants from the Resident Voice Index found nearly a quarter got into debt (through taking out a loan) to pay these costs. A further 13% borrowed from friends or family.
- 3.3.** Our second learning report estimated the cost to a tenant of providing floor coverings in all rooms except the kitchen and bathroom ranges between £535 and £1,300. Costs depend on the number of rooms, household size and property type i.e. flat compared to a house. This calculation was based on:
- The cost of providing carpets by high street and online carpet shops, taking into account material and fitting costs.
 - The average size of a dwelling, modelled from the English Housing Survey 2021-2022⁴² and Nationally Described Space Standards data.⁴³
 - Assumption that 75% of the internal area is yet to be covered, based on findings from The Resident Voice Index survey.
- 3.4.** To show the impact on tenants if they were to pay for the flooring, we modelled these costs alongside average income/welfare payments. This suggests it could take an average of 20 months to fund floor coverings for those on Universal Credit and 8 months for low-income households not on Universal Credit:
- We calculated the total monthly income for a household on Universal Credit only and for a household on low income, using the ONS definition for a low-income household which is calculated as 60% of the median income.
 - The payback period could be longer than our estimate. To calculate pay back periods, we assumed that each household does not have access to previous savings but is able to save 6% of their monthly income to pay towards their flooring costs.⁴⁴ This is based on ONS data on forced saving rates during the pandemic. The saving rate during this period is likely to be higher than during other time periods due to the restrictions enforced on normal daily activities by the lockdowns, as well as more precautionary behaviour. The cost of living crisis since then also likely means that even 6% may be too high for low income households.⁴⁵

⁴² www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2021-to-2022-headline-report/english-housing-survey-2021-to-2022-headline-report

⁴³ [Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage \(sq. m\), Technical housing standards](#)

⁴⁴ [Economic modelling of forced saving during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, ONS](#)

⁴⁵ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/policy/publications/negative-budgets-data>

The cost to grant making organisations

- 3.5.** Some flooring is funded by grant making organisations, like Longleigh. In a survey, four grant making organisations told us that during 2021/22 they made 501 grants for flooring to social housing tenants. The cost of this was just under £174,000 representing 6% of their total grants for the year. Although each grant maker has its own separate criteria for an award of grant for floor coverings (including some who do not provide grant in this area at all) it is our understanding that grant is awarded in the most severe of circumstances, and therefore likely to be a small proportion of the provision gap.

Available funding

- 3.6.** Any social housing tenant seeking funding for carpets or other floor coverings has several routes they could go through to get a loan or grant to pay for costs. These include funding from the Scottish and Welsh government, local government funding and charitable grants. Funds are subject to eligibility and location⁴⁶.
- 3.7.** There is no single national scheme covering England, Scotland and Wales. As part of changes contained in the Welfare Reform Act 2012, the government abolished some elements of the discretionary Social Fund in April 2013. Provision was devolved to the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, and local authorities in England.
- 3.8. Available funding includes:**
- The Scottish Government provide for floor coverings through the Scottish Welfare Fund. This comprises Community Care Grants (CCGs), which help people to live independently, and Crisis Grants, which provide a safety net in a disaster or emergency.
 - The Welsh Government provide Emergency Assistance Payments, from £50 to £350, for individuals on a low income who meet eligibility requirements and are in unanticipated need. They also provide Individual Assistance Payments, from £50 to £350, for individuals on a low income who meet eligibility requirements, but these can only be used for white goods or home furniture.

⁴⁶ Please see the Child Poverty Action Group for more information.

- In England, local welfare assistance may be provided by some local authorities for those who are on a low income and need a grant or loan to meet a crisis or help with independent living.⁵¹ There is no requirement to fund this, however, and many local authorities have stopped providing assistance due to national funding cuts. Research by End Furniture Poverty has found 71% of local authorities in England do not provide any support with funding of floor coverings.⁵²
- Some local authorities also allow applications for a one-off payment from their Household Support Fund (HSF) for floor coverings. The government has confirmed HSF will continue at current levels until 30 September 2024.
- Those on benefits may be able to get a budgeting advance (Universal Credit) or budgeting loan (those on income support, such as income-based jobseeker's allowance), but these will need to be paid back from future welfare payments.
- Funding through grant makers, such as [Longleigh Foundation](#), [Buttle UK](#) and [Family Fund](#), as well as those identified on [Turn2Us](#) or [Lightning Reach](#) grants checker.⁵³
- Charities that offer goods at low or no cost, such as [British Heart Foundation](#), [Emmaus](#), or [Re-use Network](#).

3.9. There is limited data on spend on carpets or floor coverings from the above sources, which is why our first learning report included survey data from grant-making organisations.

3.10. The Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 included a major repairs allowance for local authorities who own and manage social housing and dowry gap funding for large-scale voluntary transfer organisations, to help improve social housing.⁵⁴ The total value of this funding is £104.2million. The new standards included an additional £22.5m in funding.⁵⁵

⁵¹ See data from End Furniture Poverty on local authority funding availability for flooring

⁵² End Furniture Poverty (2023) On the Cliff Edge: Crisis Support 2022/23

⁵³ <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/grants-low-income/>

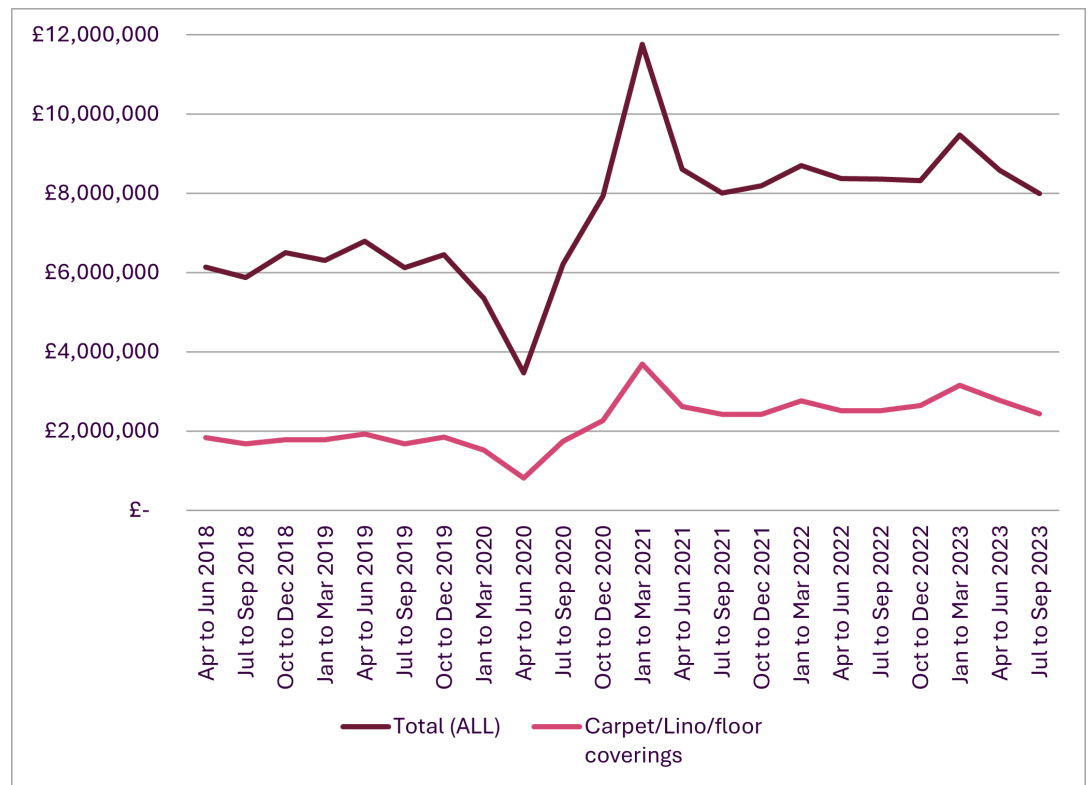
⁵⁴ <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-housing-quality-standard>

⁵⁵ Delahunty, S. (2023) New Welsh Housing Quality Standard introduced with £22.5m in extra funding. Inside Housing, 24.10.23.

Scottish Welfare Fund

- 3.11.** The latest data on the Scottish Welfare Fund for July to September 2023 shows that 24% of Community Care Grants were for carpet/lino/floor coverings – 13,805 grants out of a total of 58,100 – at a total cost of £2,443,651 (31% of total grant value). It was the most common reason for requesting a grant.⁵⁶
- 3.12.** The value of grants for carpet/lino/floor coverings increased during and after the coronavirus pandemic and cost of living crisis. There has been a recent year-on-year fall of 3% from July to September 2022 (£2,517,569) to the same quarter in 2023 (£2,443,651) – see Figure 1. The annual average grant value for carpet/lino/floor coverings from 2018/19 to 2022/23 was £8.5million. In the 12-months from October 2022 to September 2023, over £11million was granted with an average grant of £180. This was 32% of total Community Care Grant value.
- 3.13.** Crisis Care Grants (for use in an emergency) are less likely to be for floor coverings, with 220 in the 12-months from October 2022 to September 2023 (out of a total of 326,120 grants). They represent 0.1% of grants. In terms of value, £46,529 has been awarded over this period, an average of £216 per grant.

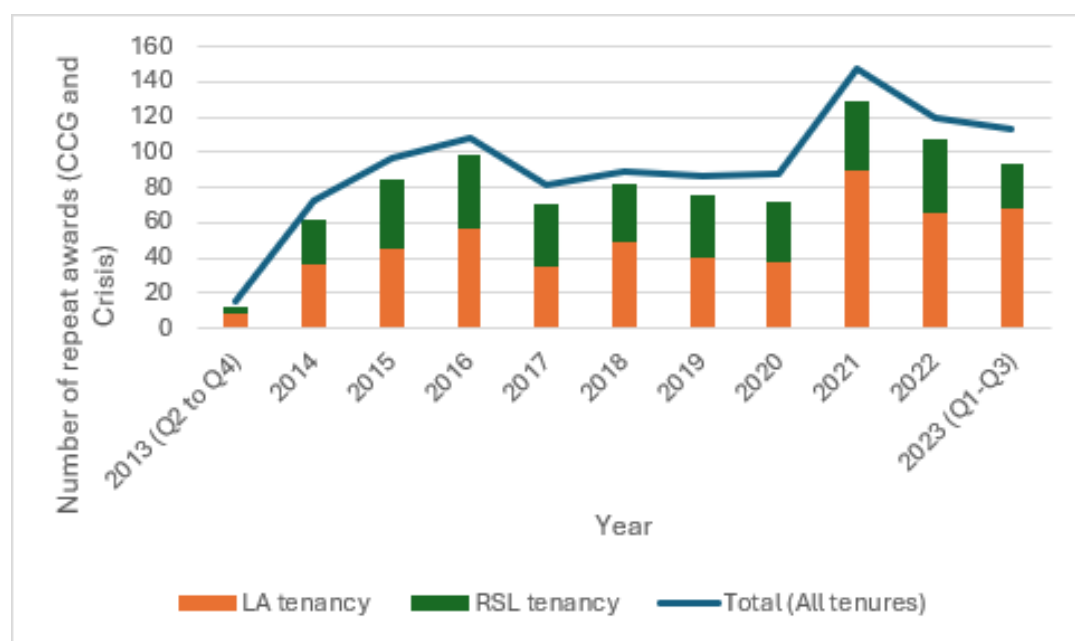
Figure 1 Total value of Community Care Grants in total and for floor coverings in Scotland over time. Source: Scottish Government, *Scottish Welfare Fund Statistics, Table 28: Community Care Grants - Value of Items Awarded – Quarterly, 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2023.*



⁵⁶ Scottish Government (2024), *Scottish Welfare Fund Statistics, Table 28: Community Care Grants - Value of Items Awarded – Quarterly, 1 April 2018 to 30 September 2023.*

- 3.14.** Altair made an enquiry to the Scottish Government on repeat applications and awards for floor coverings. Repeat applications are defined as an application from the same household within 365 days of the previous one.
- 3.15.** There were 1,925 repeat applications for floor coverings from Q2 2013 (when the welfare scheme started) to Q3 2023, 87% of which were from tenants of local authorities or registered social landlords (1,675 applications). Almost all bar one of these applications were for Community Care Grants.
- 3.16.** When it comes to awards from successful applications, there have been 1,017 repeat awards of Community Care Grants for floor coverings since 2013. Of these, 888 have been to tenants of local authorities or housing associations, 87% of total awards from Q2 2013 to Q3 2023. On average, there were 89 households with repeat awards each year, 80 of which live in social housing (89%) – see Figure 2.

Figure 2 Number of repeat awards to households for floor coverings in total and by social landlord, 2013-2023. Source: Scottish Government, ad hoc data request to Scottish Welfare Fund.



- 3.17.** This suggests that funding for grants could be used more efficiently through improving floor covering standards within social housing.

Cost to landlords and funding gap

- 3.18.** In our third learning report, we estimated the cost to a social landlord of providing floor coverings in all rooms would be, on average, £1,000 per home. This was based on the following assumptions:
 - The cost of providing carpets by high street and online carpet shops, taking into account material and fitting costs.

- The average size of a flat/house as two bedrooms, based on registered provider stocks data for 2022/23.⁵⁷
- 20% savings in the material costs, from working closely with suppliers and leveraging purchasing power through the volume of work.
- This brings the average cost of materials and fittings for a two-bedroom unit to £885 for a flat and £1,090 for a house, or £1,000 per property.

3.19. There will be regional differences in these costs. Labour and materials will vary across countries and between the English regions. In addition, where there is greater churn of social housing (the proportion of existing social stock that is relet), there may be greater costs if carpet is removed as part of void standards. In 2022/23, the North East had the highest rate of social housing churn in England, at 7.1%.⁵⁸

3.20. For the cost to landlords, we used data from England as this provided the largest dataset out of the three nations (England, Scotland and Wales) with an assumption of similar operating environments across the three nations.

- To understand scale, we used representative survey data conducted by NatCen on behalf of End Furniture Poverty, a campaign and social research group. This found that 760,000 adults living in social housing have no carpet or flooring in their bedrooms and living areas. This is as much as 15% of social rented homes. We have assumed it would take five years to lay floor coverings in these homes, which is a slight increase from the three years in our landlord report (learning report 3).
- Based on market research indicating budget carpets have a lifespan of between five and seven years,⁵⁹ we made the assumption that carpets would need to be replaced every six years. Following feedback from our steering group, we revised our assumptions on how frequently carpets are replaced to every 12.7 years, which last available data shows is the average length of residence for social renters in England.⁶⁰
- Our research found that providing flooring has a benefit on turnover rates and rental arrears. The rental arrears for the English RP sector stood at 3.3% on average, which translates to £752m and void losses in the sector were £282m, according to the latest set of Global Accounts (2022)⁶¹ published by the RSH. We assumed that rental arrears improve by 0.5% as tenants no longer need to save for flooring costs, which could lead to an increase in rent collection of £0.75 per week per property.
- Speaking with landlords as part of this research showed that providing flooring led to a 30% decrease in turnover rates. However, adding flooring to the void standard could lead to delays in letting the property. Therefore, taking a conservative assumption of void loss decreasing by 10% as a result in the fall in tenant turnover, could lead to an increase in rental income of £0.25 per week per property on average.

3.21. If social landlords were to provide floor coverings at point of let, Altair estimates it would cost £2.85 per week for a flat and £3.50 per week for a house.

⁵⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/registered-provider-social-housing-stock-and-rents-in-england-2022-to-2023>

⁵⁸ [DLUHC \(2024\) Social housing lettings in England, tenancies: April 2022 to March 2023.](https://www.dluhc.gov.uk/2024/04/social-housing-lettings-in-england-tenancies-april-2022-to-march-2023)

⁵⁹ <https://www.homestyle-carpets.co.uk/blog/2020/2/28/how-long-should-carpet-last>

⁶⁰ [English Housing Survey, 2021-22, Private Rented Sector Annex Table 3.2](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2021-22-private-rented-sector-annex-table-3.2)

⁶¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2022-global-accounts-of-private-registered-providers>

- 3.22.** We estimate the total worth of the benefits of providing flooring on turnover rates and rental arrears might be around £1.00 per week to the landlord, meaning net cost of provision would be £1.85 per week for a flat and £2.50 per week for a house.
- 3.23.** Based on these assumptions and estimated costs, Table 2 below shows the costs to provide floor covering borne in Year 1 would be £522.9m. This would reduce to £494.7m if potential landlord benefits (such as reduced rent arrears) and existing funding (Scottish Welfare Fund) were taken into account.
- 3.24.** We have assumed that providing flooring for the properties that do not currently have carpets would be phased over a five-year period to allow organisations to put measures in place and to relieve pressure on the supply chain.

Table 2: the costs in Year 1

Costs in Year 1	England	Scotland	Wales	Total Sector including England, Wales and Scotland
Total social housing units ('000s)	4,088	608	230	4,926
Number of properties without floor coverings <i>(assumed to be 15% of total stock based on the research conducted by End Furniture Poverty. We have assumed these to be phased over a five-year period)</i>	122,640	18,240	6,900	147,780
Number of void properties that are hard-to-let <i>(assumed 1% of properties fall into this category)</i>	40,880	6,080	2,300	49,260
Remainder properties that require carpet replacements <i>(with a lifespan of 12.7 years and a rolling schedule of properties that require carpet replacement, we assume a 1/12 of properties require replacement in any given year)</i>	270,387	40,214	15,213	325,814
Total Properties that require floor covering	433,907	64,534	24,413	522,854
Average cost per property	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Total cost in Year 1	£433.9m	£64.5m	£24.4m	£522.9m
Potential benefit to landlord – reduced rental arrears and lower void loss. <i>(estimated to be £1 per week per property that did not have floor coverings or void properties that are hard-to-let)</i>	£8.5m	£1.3m	£0.5m	£10.3m
Scottish Welfare Fund <i>(value of Community Care Grant Oct 22 to Sep 23 - redirected to provide funding for flooring)</i>	-	£11m	-	£11m
Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 <i>(assumes 31% of the additional £22.5m funding is for flooring – same as grant value for floor coverings as proportion of total CCG in Scotland)</i>	-	-	£6.9m	£6.9m
Funding gap	£425.4m	£52.3m	£17m	£494.7m

3.25. Table 3 shows the costs borne in Years 2 and 5:

Table 3: The costs borne in Years 2 and 5

Costs in Year 2 - 5	England	Scotland	Wales	Total Sector including England, Wales and Scotland
Total social housing units ('000s)	4,088	608	230	4,926
Number of properties without floor coverings <i>(assumed to be phased over a five-year period – same as in Year 1)</i>	122,640	18,240	6,900	147,780
Number of void properties that are hard-to-let <i>(assumed 0.75% of properties fall in this category, a slight reduction from Year 1 due to the positive impact of flooring on these properties)</i>	30,660	4,560	1,725	36,945
Remainder properties that require carpet replacements <i>(with a lifespan of 12.7 years and a rolling schedule of properties that require carpet replacement, we assume a 1/12 of properties require replacement in any given year)</i>	271,192	40,334	15,258	326,784
Total Properties that require floor covering	424,492	63,134	23,883	511,509
Average cost per property	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Total cost per year in Years 2 and 5	£424.5m	£63.1m	£23.9m	£511.5m
Potential benefit to landlord – reduced rental arrears and lower void loss. <i>(estimated to be £1 per week per property that did not have floor coverings or void properties that are hard-to-let)</i>	£8.0m	£1.2m	£0.4m	£9.6m
Scottish Welfare Fund <i>(taking the median figure over the last five years uplifted by inflation at 2%)</i>	-	£8.7m	-	£8.7m
Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 <i>(assuming an inflationary uplift of 2% from the previous year)</i>	-	-	£7m	£7m
Funding gap	£416.5m	£53.2m	£16.4m	£486.2m

3.26. In subsequent years (year six onwards) costs would be £346m (in today's prices) as the programme moves to one of replacement only. This comprises an estimated £300m annually for England, £36m annually for Scotland and £10m annually for Wales.

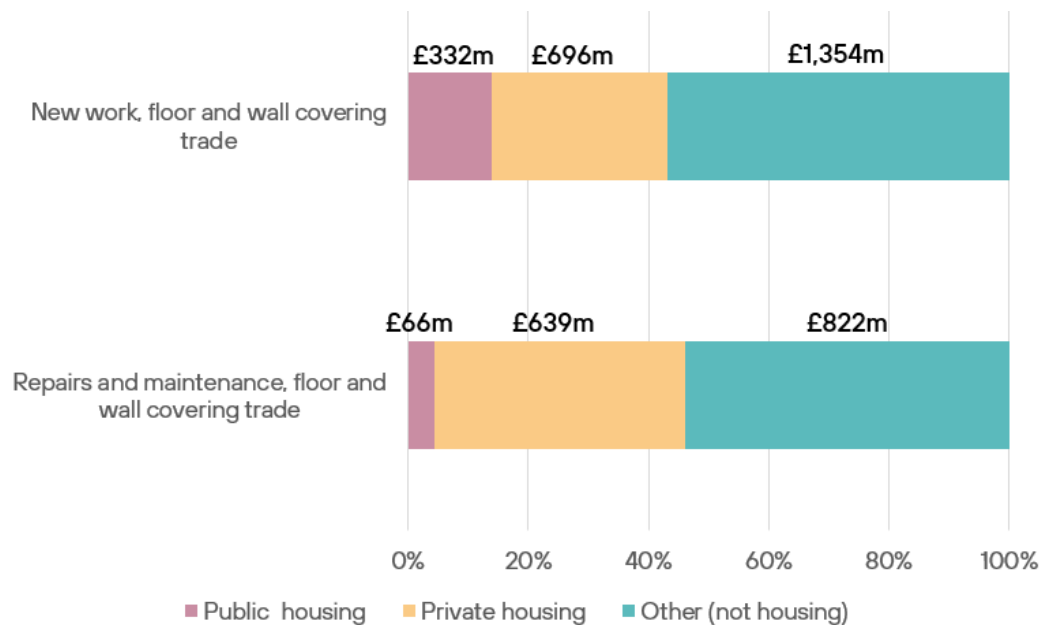


Procurement and skills

Procurement and skills

- 4.1. This section of the report considers the nature of the floor fitting industry and the procurement of floor coverings. We also explore the opportunities available to landlords for how they might want to approach procurement decisions.
- 4.2. In terms of the value of work done by floor and wall covering firms for new public housing in 2022 the value was £332 million – this was 32% of the total value of floor and wall covering work for new housing in that year (£1,028 million). This is a small contribution to the total value of work for all trades in new housing in 2022, which was £56,583 million. The value of floor and wall covering firms' work in public housing from repairs and maintenance was even lower – just 4% of the total value of all work. Figure 3 has more details.

Figure 3 Proportion and value of trade by floor and wall covering firms and type of work in Great Britain. Source: Office for National Statistics (2023) Construction Statistics annual tables, Table 1.4: Construction firms: Value of work done by trade of firm and type of work in 2022: Great Britain, Current Prices.



- 4.3. When we look at the value of floor and wall covering work by firms in terms of housing only, the value for new social housing is greater than the proportion of new housing being built by housing associations and local authorities. While the value of new work on public housing was 32% of all

new work for housing by floor and wall covering firms, social housing made up just 19% of house building starts and completions in 2022 in England.⁶² Private enterprise contributed to 81% of starts and completions.

- 4.4.** For repairs and maintenance, only 9% of the value of trade for housing by floor and wall covering firms was for public housing (£66million out of a total of £705million). This is far lower than the proportion of dwellings that are social housing in England. In 2022, 16% of all dwellings in England were social housing.⁶³ If spend on social housing were to increase to the proportion of dwellings that are social housing, the value of repairs and maintenance trade could potentially increase by 78% to £117m (an increase of £51m).

Procurement

- 4.5.** The procurement of floor fitters, floor coverings and the supply chain were key concerns expressed by landlords we spoke to during the research as well as an opportunity highlighted to us by tenants. Having a commercial procurement approach which delivers the intended outcomes, adds value and fosters innovation is crucial.
- 4.6.** If an organisation decides that providing floor coverings aligns with its organisational objective a business case should articulate the rationale, benefits, and feasibility of the procurement decision.
- 4.7.** The procurement approach is an opportunity to maximise value for both the procuring organisation and their customers. Examples of procurement approaches include, but are not limited to:
- In-house provision
 - External procurement through a framework agreement
 - Competitive tender
 - A sector framework or a dynamic purchasing system (“DPS”)
 - Collaboration with other landlords – a procurement consortium
 - Partnerships with major suppliers
- 4.8.** Throughout the research, social housing landlords have told us about difficulties in procuring floor fitters and floor coverings, specifically in relation to availability and financial costs, making service delivery difficult to finance. For this reason, collaboration through a DPS or consortium is likely to leverage the most benefit.

⁶² DLUHC (2024) [Live tables on housing supply: indicators of new supply](#), Table 213: Housing supply: indicators of new supply, England. [While UK house building data is available from the ONS](#), complete data for all countries is not available for 2022.

⁶³ DLUHC (2023) [Live tables on dwelling stock \(including vacants\)](#), Live table 104 Dwelling stock: by tenure, England (historical series). Again, [ONS data for the UK is not yet available](#).

- 4.9.** Greater collaboration within the sector could allow landlords to influence the price or service offering from carpet fitters and flooring by leveraging collective purchasing power and influence across the supply chain.
- 4.9.1** Procurement consortiums of multiple social housing landlords pooling resources and expertise to achieve economies of scale would enhance bargaining power in relation to the provision of floor fitters and floor coverings. This approach allows landlords to negotiate favourable terms with suppliers, access volume discounts, and share best practices with other landlords and suppliers within the supply chain. It fosters collaboration, knowledge exchange, and cost savings while maintaining autonomy over procurement decisions.
- 4.9.2** Given the nature of the market, implementing a DPS can offer several advantages, particularly in facilitating the inclusion of new suppliers as they enter the market. It ensures a dynamic and competitive supplier base and provides flexibility for landlords to adapt to changing market conditions and requirements.
- 4.9.3** Another procurement option would be to consider forming partnerships with major supplier of floor coverings, an approach similar to Carpetright’s Social Housing Support Initiative and use of e-gift cards to support customer choice⁶⁴.
- 4.9.4** Further development of collaboration between landlords and suppliers in procuring and providing floor fitters and coverings has the potential to unlock benefits and value, increasing the viability and feasibility of providing floor coverings in social housing.

Skills

- 4.10.** Qualifications are not needed to become a floor fitter.⁶⁵ The National Institute of Carpet and Floorlayers is the trade body for domestic floor fitters.⁶⁶ The first level of membership is trainee fitter. For the next level, NICF Fitter Member, installers must provide three references and pass an exam. Further assessments allow the installer to use the Accredited Fitter or Master Fitter title.⁶⁷
- 4.11.** According to the NCIF Directory, there are:
- 198 fitter members in England
 - 13 fitter members in Wales
 - 17 fitter members in Scotland
 - 36 retail members, who may employ NICF Fitters

⁶⁴ www.contractflooringjournal.co.uk/latest-news/carpetright-partners-with-social-housing-providers-to-lay-on-flooring-for-most-vulnerable-tenants/

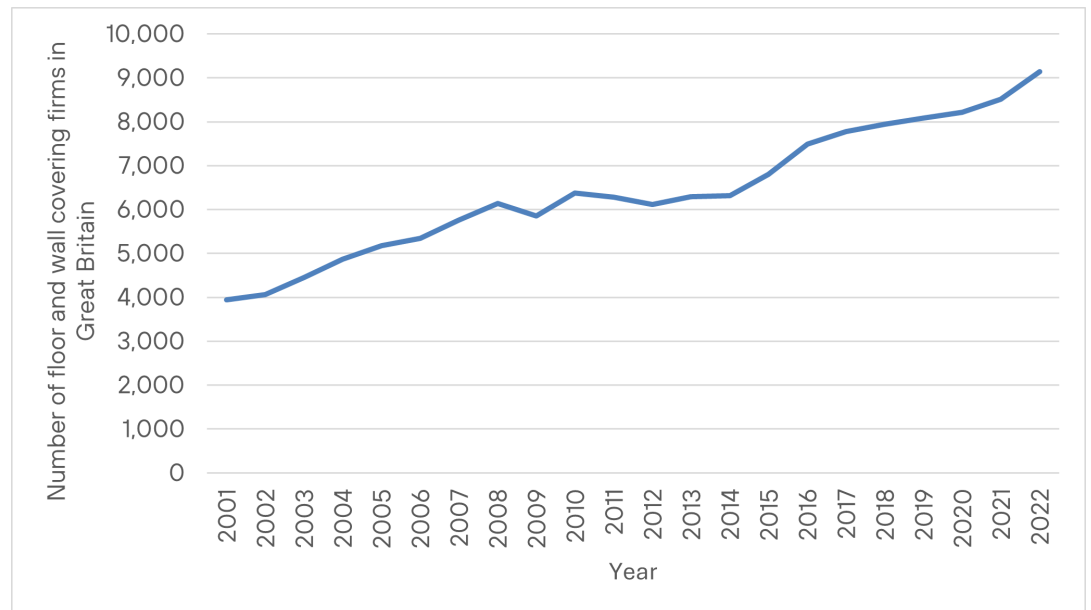
⁶⁵ www.checkatrade.com/blog/trade/how-much-do-floor-fitters-earn/

⁶⁶ <https://nicfited.org.uk/>

⁶⁷ [NICF \(2024\) NICF Guide to Domestic Flooring](#)

- 4.12.** The average floor fitter can expect to earn £32,500 annually, according to data from Talent.com (based on 575 salaries).⁶⁸
- 4.13.** While we cannot tell whether there is adequate supply of floor fitters to meet demand, construction data gives an indication of healthy growth within the trade. The number of firms in Great Britain who trade in floor and wall coverings most recently had a year-on-year increase of 7%, from 8,512 in 2021 to 9,140 in 2022 – see Figure 4.

Figure 4 Number of floor and wall covering firms in Great Britain, over time.
Source: Office for National Statistics and Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) (2023) *Construction Statistics annual tables, Table 3.2: Construction firms: Number of Firms, by trade of firm, Great Britain*



⁶⁸ <https://uk.talent.com/salary?job=fitter+floor+fitter>



Conclusion

Conclusion

- 5.1.** Out of the 1.2 million living without floor coverings in the UK, 61% live in social housing, as many as 760,000 adults, according to data from End Furniture Poverty. Wales has a new housing standard. Scotland has national funding that floor coverings for those in need. Social housing tenants in England have neither standards nor national funding.
- 5.2.** The lack of floor coverings significantly impacts tenants, their households and wider communities. The association with a lack of floor coverings at point of let social housing stigma and tenants have told us that a lack of floor coverings makes them feel 'poor'.
- 5.3.** Floor coverings intersect with other policy areas such as housing those fleeing domestic abuse, increasing tenancy sustainment after homelessness, child development and health. It is not surprising to read that young people are more likely to spend more time in the home if they have a provision of furniture.
- 5.4.** Tenants talked strongly about thermal comfort and acoustic benefits, including how the right floor coverings can reduce noise travelling between properties. We know that landlords grapple with noise disputes between neighbours and tenant complaints about thermal comfort and warmth. Considering both factors together, it takes us to the common-sense conclusion of installing floor coverings at point of let.
- 5.5.** There are opportunities for landlords to install floor coverings at point of let and the landlords we have spoken to throughout this research have shared incredible outcomes such as reduction in void turnaround time, improved satisfaction levels and a reduction in void turnover. Nonetheless, landlords main concern about financing of floor coverings is a significant barrier and our analysis has supported this.
- 5.6.** When funding is considered as a whole, there is a funding gap across the nations of England, Scotland and Wales of £494.7 million in the first year. We've suggested that some funding is picked up in Scotland by the Scottish Welfare fund and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard has been introduced with extra funding of £22.5million, some of which may be directed to the cost of floor coverings.
- 5.7.** The sector has multiple opportunities to take advantage of economies of scale as well as offering broader economic opportunities for the development of work and skills through increased value of trade for floor fitters, increased employment, increased productivity, and increased tax receipts.
- 5.8.** The social housing sector is good at responding to problems, that is, in essence, why it exists. If you are a social landlord who does not provide floor coverings at point of let, we encourage you to reflect on the findings of this research and consider your approach for your staff and executive, your tenants and your board. This might include conducting a pilot on floor coverings to test what the best approach is. Consider whether it is morally right that any of your tenants are living without floor coverings.





Recommendations

Recommendations

- 6.1. Longleigh Foundation is calling for specific actions from politicians, officials, social housing leaders and staff, and social housing tenants to improve floor covering standards in the social housing sector.**

All political parties

- 6.2.** Out of the 1.2 million people living without flooring in the UK, 61% live in social housing, according to data from End Furniture Poverty: an estimated 760,000 adults in social housing may be living without floor coverings. Wales has a new housing standard, with government funding to make improvements. Scotland has national funding to provide flooring. Social housing tenants in England are not offered the same standards or funding.
- 6.3.** Social landlords, particularly local authorities, are facing unprecedented cost pressures and should not be expected to finance an improvement in standards.
- 6.4.** With a general election and manifestos coming, funding raised standards around the provision of floor coverings in social housing is a relatively low-cost way of improving social housing and tenant wellbeing and satisfaction with home. The cost of funding will be recovered through increased trade value for floor fitters, increased employment, increased productivity, and increased tax receipts.

We recommend that:

- Manifestos include a funded commitment to raising the standard of floor coverings in social housing so that all new tenancies must have floor coverings in all rooms at point of let.
- We estimate the additional funding required in the first year would be £494.7m, which would reduce in subsequent years to £486.2m in years two to five and £346m annually from year six onwards. This is due to lower turnover of lets from improved standards and the floor covering programme moving to replacement only.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in England and Local Government and Housing Directorate in Scotland

6.5. With your responsibility for quality and supply of social housing, and, in England, the current review of the Decent Homes Standard, we recommend that Ministers and officials:

- Raise the standard of social housing by making floor coverings in all rooms at point of let a key priority for the new Decent Homes Standard in England and for a review of the Social Housing Quality Standard in Scotland.
- Fund improved standards at a national level. The cost of funding will be recovered through increased value of trade for floor fitters, increased employment, increased productivity, and increased tax receipts. Social landlords, particularly local authorities, are facing unprecedented cost pressures and should not be expected to finance an improvement in standards.



Senior leaders within social landlords – executives and board members of housing associations, lead members and directors of housing within local authorities

- 6.6.** We know that you are facing significant cost pressures within your organisation. We know that operating and regulatory environments are more complex than ever. We appreciate the perceived risks and costs to providing floor coverings at point of let, or leaving existing floor coverings in situ on change of tenancy. You should decide on the quality of your properties, based on your available resource. Yet our research shows that not providing floor coverings can be damaging to you as a landlord.
- 6.7.** Not providing floor coverings may mean tenants and staff are less satisfied. Turnover of tenancies and rent arrears are likely to be higher, and there is an increased cost burden and potential impacts on your tenants' health and feelings of stigma.
- 6.8.** If you do not provide floor coverings at point of let, we encourage you to reflect on the findings of this research and consider what the best approach might be for your staff and executive, your tenants and your board. We recommend you:
- Immediately stop removing floor coverings during the void process unless the incoming tenant has specifically asked for these to be removed.
 - [Commit to undertaking a pilot on providing floor coverings in voids](#), using the business case and research outline in this report.
 - Share, and act, on the findings of this pilot.
- 6.9.** For those that provide floor coverings at point of let, we recommend you:
- Commit to sharing the benefits of your approach and why and how you do it with other social landlords in your network.

Voids and lettings staff within social landlords

- 6.10.** You have insight into what is best for your organisation and your tenants. Floor coverings at the point of let has many evidenced advantages, including reduced turnover and higher tenancy sustainment, and improved tenant and staff satisfaction.
- 6.11.** If your organisation doesn't provide floor coverings, we recommend you:
- Immediately stop removing floor coverings during the void process unless the incoming tenant has specifically asked for these to be removed.
 - Use our [business case guidance](#) to convince your executive team to undertake a pilot of floor coverings within your homes for rent.
 - Talk to those in your network who do provide floor coverings at point of let, to learn from them.

6.12. If your organisation provides floor coverings at point of let, we recommend you:

- Commit to talking about the benefits of your approach with other housing providers, sharing your learnings and best practice. This might include suggesting it as a topic in any partnership or professional development meetings.

Tenants of social housing landlords

6.13. You should have a voice and influence in how your landlord manages homes, including the quality and standard of accommodation. We know that many of you may be living without carpets or linos to cover your floor. Others of you will have paid for floor coverings from your own pocket. You may have also got a grant to cover the cost of floor coverings from national, charitable organisations, such as Longleigh Foundation. Yet it doesn't have to be this way.

6.14. In Wales, the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard states that floor coverings must be present at change of tenancy. Across England, some social landlords provide floor coverings, and some local authorities provide welfare grants to help tenants purchase floor coverings. It shouldn't be a postcode lottery.

6.15. We believe that all social landlords should be providing floor coverings at point of let, whether this is carpet, lino or other floor coverings. This is why we recommend you:

- Write to your MP to ask the government in England and Scotland to fund improved standards on provision of floor coverings in social housing so that all rooms at point of let have floor coverings.
- Contact your landlord to ask about their standards around floor coverings. If they remove during the voids process and/or don't provide them as standard in all rooms when a home is let to new tenants, request they stop removing them during the voids process and ask them to consider a floor covering pilot to explore the feasibility of improved standards.
- If you have experienced hardship or other negative effects from a lack of floor coverings in your home, contact your landlord. They may be able to help or direct you to sources of funding to support you.
- Ask your landlord to consult with tenants when the new Decent Homes Standard is published, giving you a chance to contribute your experiences to what makes a decent social housing home. The government has said that it will share next steps on the new standards as soon as possible.
- Sign up to free training on your rights as a tenant, provided by the government's [Four Million Homes](#) programme, so that you can continue to influence the quality of homes provided by your landlord.



Appendixes

Appendix 1

Landlord tools: developing the business case for a floor covering pilot

One of our recommendations is for social landlords to conduct a floor covering pilot to challenge their thinking on whether floor coverings should be provided in all rooms of their homes at point of let. This appendix sets out how to undertake a pilot on the provision of floor coverings. It outlines a business case for conducting a pilot and a research outline for the pilot.

We have designed a research project that would involve:

- Collecting data at the start of the tenancy and at two follow up points (two different time points) to track outcomes for two different groups of tenants, one with floor coverings at point of let and one without floor coverings at point of let.
 - There are a number of suggested data points, including provision of floor coverings in the home, funding of floor coverings, number of vacant days prior to let, tenancy sustainment, rent arrears, and staff satisfaction.
 - This data will come from housing or asset management data but might involve surveys of tenants and also potentially of staff.
- Interview questions for research with tenants who have and have not got flooring. The interviews focus on experiences and perceptions of floor covering in social housing, as well as impacts on floor covering provision.

Research tools, including information sheet, consent form and suggested interview questions, are in appendix two.

Making a business case – why provide floor coverings at point of let

A business case should include:

- Background information (including scope of the service, rationale, alignment with strategic organisational objectives, the anticipated value, timescales).
- Options appraisal of different strategies.
- Market analysis of floor coverings and floor fitters, both nationally and within the local context.
- Key organisational considerations (customer service and satisfaction, social value, contract management, value for money (VfM), small-medium enterprise (SMEs))
- Financial analysis and evaluation (budget allocation, total costs (including total contract whole life costs if procuring floor fitters), financial savings and non-financial savings and benefits).

- Assessment of the business and operational risks.
- Initial implementation plan, which might include a pilot.
- Recommendations.

When making a business case, you can refer to our learning reports, including case studies of landlords who are providing floor coverings, and the analysis in this final report.

You might like to highlight these key findings within your business case:

- Out of the 1.2 million living without flooring in the UK, 61% live in social housing.
- Our survey of 7,922 social housing tenants, conducted by MRI The Resident Voice Index, found 49.5% of tenants did not have floor coverings when they moved in and 28% only had floor coverings in some rooms (mainly bathrooms and kitchens).
- Of those with no or partial floor coverings, 31% of respondents spent £501 - £1,000 and 47% spent over £1,000 on providing floor coverings, most likely paid for using either savings or a loan.
- Nearly a fifth (19.2%) of those who didn't have floor coverings at point of let are still living without floor coverings. This is 9% of all tenants surveyed.
- **Provision of floor coverings at point of let has been found to:**
 - Reduction in void rent loss.⁶⁹
 - Reduced void turnover – Thirteen saw a reduction from 600/year to 200/year and Citizen saw an 8% reduction in one pilot and between a 30% and 50% reduction over a 12-month period in another.⁶
 - Reduced void costs as tenants happier in home and more likely to maintain tenancy – Thirteen saw void costs reduce by, on average, £500 per property.⁶
 - Increased staff and tenant satisfaction.^{6 70}
 - Reduced refusal rate.⁷
 - Improvements in tenant health and wellbeing from better quality.⁷¹
 - Reduced likelihood and severity of falls.⁷²
 - Fewer complaints concerning noise.⁷³
- If social landlords were to provide floor coverings at point of let, Altair estimates the net cost of provision (accounting for benefits such as lower rental arrears, void losses and turnover rates) would be £1.85 per week for a flat and £2.50 per week for a house (assuming carpets are replaced every six years).

⁶⁹ [Donovan, C. and Hardman, B. \(2022\) A Blueprint for Furniture Provision in Social Housing. End Furniture Poverty.](#)

⁷⁰ [TPAS Cymru and Tai Pawb \(2020\) Floored.](#)

⁷¹ With quality defined as tenant rating of the overall condition of the property – see [Rolfe, S., Garnham, L., Godwin, J. et al. \(2020\) Housing as a social determinant of health and wellbeing: developing an empirically-informed realist theoretical framework. BMC Public Health 20, 1138.](#)

⁷² [DLUHC \(2006\) Housing health and safety rating system \(HHSRS\) operating guidance: housing inspections and assessment of hazards.](#)

⁷³ [Housing Ombudsman Service \(2022\) Spotlight on noise complaints.](#)

Appendix 2

Landlord tools: Conducting a floor covering pilot

The aim of the pilot is to test whether floor coverings at point of let are better or worse in terms of your organisation's chosen outcomes compared to no floor coverings at point of let. To do this, you need to collect data for one group of tenants with floor coverings at point of let and one group of tenants who do not have floor coverings at point of let. This is to evidence any impact that providing floor coverings might have.

For the pilot, you need to consider:

- How you define floor coverings.
- Which outcomes you want to measure.
- How you will measure these outcomes.
- Where and how to undertake the pilot.
- Reporting of findings.

Definition of floor coverings

Definition of floor coverings for the research should be whether any type of floor covering (vinyl, carpet, etc.) is provided in all rooms of a home at point of let. If only some rooms have floor coverings then they are categorised as not having flooring in all rooms at point of let.

Outcomes

This will depend on priorities for your organisation in terms of introducing floor coverings. Based on our research and evidence review, we suggest collecting data on the following outcomes:

- Tenant satisfaction.
- Financial and general wellbeing of tenant.
- Staff satisfaction.
- Refusal rate of property.
- Level of void rent loss.
- Level of void turnover.
- Noise complaints.

At the design stage, you may want to test all your outcomes and research tools (survey and interview questions) with tenants to get their insight and feedback. Suggested questions for capturing more in-depth insight on floor covering provision are in the interview topic guide. Suggested outcome wording and sources of data follow the topic guide.

Measuring the outcomes

Data for measuring the outcomes will come from existing data sources, including housing and asset management data and performance data. Some of the questions will need to be asked in surveys of tenants and staff.

We advise three data collection periods:

- Baseline (new tenants during this period).
- Follow up one, and
- Follow up two.

Follow up one and follow up two would collect data as at a specified time point after the start of the tenancy.

Ideally, if flooring wasn't provided at point of let, follow ups should collect data on whether floor coverings have been laid by the tenant. This is because it is important to capture and understand data that accurately reflects the difference between having floor coverings and not having floor coverings.

All data at the start of the tenancy and follow up should be collected for new tenants within the same time period. This is to make the data comparable. For example, you might decide to install floor coverings in half your properties let between January and June and not install floor coverings in the other half let during this period. You would capture data for all new lets during January and June at the start of the tenancy and then at follow up one, which might be six months after the start of the tenancy, and follow up two, which might be 18 months after the start of the tenancy.

You will need to decide how long the pilot will be and at what point to collect the data. Your decision should be based on what is the most reasonable and achievable for your organisation, taking account of key decision dates and budget.

Where and how to undertake the pilot

Where to undertake the pilot will largely be determined by the budget available for the pilot and what is feasible in terms of this and data collection.

The number of homes you own will also be important. If you are a small housing association, you might choose to do it for half of your lets over the length of the pilot. For a large housing association, you might choose a geographic patch, such as one estate or one local authority area.

Considerations of where to undertake the pilot will be the outcomes you are looking for from the pilot, whether the two groups (with/without flooring) are comparable (such as including the same broad mix of household composition, housing situation of the tenant prior to let, and economic status), and what type of tenure you wish to include.

You may also want to conduct a small-scale pilot first before extending to a larger number of properties.

Any surveys needed should be timed with larger surveys of tenants, such as the tenant satisfaction measures or any tenancy audits or censuses, and any regular staff surveys. If surveys are needed, you should aim to include a range of options for data collection, such as face-to-face and telephone, to account for different preferences.

Reporting findings

The report should clearly set out the reasons for the pilot, including strategic priorities, how the pilot was designed, findings and recommendations, including suggested next steps.

This section consists of:

- Information sheet for tenants participating in research
- Consent form for participants of research
- Suggested interview questions

Information sheet for tenants

This should include the following information as a minimum:

- What is the research.
- Why being asked to take part.
- Whether tenants have to take part.
- What is involved in taking part.
- Any risk of harm from participating.
- What will happen to data.
- How data will be used/shared, including any anonymity.
- Contact information for research team.

Consent form

This should take the form of positive consent, which would mean selecting between yes and no on the following questions:

- Whether been given information sheet and understand this information.
- Understand how to withdraw.
- Understand can stop interview.
- Understand how data will be used.
- [If applicable] Understand participation is anonymous.
- Agree to take part.
- [If applicable] Agree to be recorded.

Suggested interview questions for tenants

Before the interview

Overview of project, how data will be used, any further consent needed from participant, opportunity for participant to ask questions.

About you

1. Tell me a bit about yourself, such as how you typically spend your week and whether anyone else lives with you.

About your home

2. How long have you lived in your home?
3. When you moved in, did all rooms of your current home have floor coverings (vinyl, tiles, carpet etc.)?
4. What did you know about your landlord's policy on flooring before you moved in?
 - a. Was it explained to you?
 - b. Would you like to have known more?
5. I'm going to show you some photos of homes and I want you to tell me the words that spring to mind when looking at them.

Props needed: photos of same or similar homes with/without flooring

6. Which one do you prefer and why?

If no flooring

7. Do you have floor coverings now?
8. What's it been like/was it like living without flooring?
9. [If flooring covering installed since moving] How did you get floor coverings?
10. [If flooring covering installed since moving] Who funded these? [prompt on how long it took to get funding, impact of this funding, including finding this funding]
11. [If flooring covering installed since moving] What do you like about your floor coverings?
12. [If flooring covering installed since moving] What don't you like?
13. [If flooring covering installed since moving] How have you found maintenance?
14. Has it made any difference to you or your home? [prompt on debt, noise complaints, level of comfort, heating]
15. [If no flooring] Do you think you will be able to afford or access funding for floor coverings in the future?
16. How important or not do you think floor coverings are to a home?

If flooring

17. What do you like about your flooring?
18. What don't you like?
19. Has it made any difference to you or your home?

If flooring cont.

20. Have there been any issues with floor coverings since you moved? What were these and (how) were they solved?
21. How have you found maintenance?
22. How important or not do you think floor coverings are to a home?

Now and the future

23. What makes you proud or embarrassed about your home?
24. Do you have any plans to move in the future? Has flooring had any effect on your plans?
25. What do you think your landlord, or social housing landlords in general, should do about floor coverings in homes?

Next steps

- Any questions or anything else want to say before finish?

Outline next steps for research, including any reporting. Check if participant want to have a copy of the findings.

Copy of data points and questions for pilot

Measure	Source	When to ask/ complete	Question
Your tenant code	Housing management data	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	This is how you usually refer to this tenancy on your own systems.
Your property code	Housing management data	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	This is how you usually refer to this tenant's property on your own systems. You could use the Unique Property Reference Number.
Tenancy start date	Housing management data	Start of tenancy	What is the tenancy start date? <i>Day, month, year DDMMYY</i>
Vacant days prior to let	Housing management data	Start of tenancy	How many days was the property vacant for? <i>Whole number</i>
Number of refusals before let	Housing management data	Start of tenancy	How many times was the property offered between becoming vacant and this letting? <i>Whole number</i>

Measure	Source	When to ask/ complete	Question
Whether floor coverings in all rooms at let	Asset management data	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	<p>Start of tenancy: When tenant moved in, did all rooms of home have floor coverings (vinyl, tiles, carpet etc.)? If only some rooms had floor coverings, please select no.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No - Don't know <p>Follow up: Do all rooms of tenant's home have floor coverings (vinyl, tiles, carpet etc.)? If only some rooms have floor coverings, please select no.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No - Don't know
Whether part of furniture package	Asset management data	Start of tenancy	<p>Were the floor coverings provided as part of a furniture package?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No - Don't know
Main type of floor coverings	Asset management data/Tenant survey	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	<p>Excluding the bathroom(s) and kitchen, what type of floor covering is mainly in tenant's home? Please select one main floor covering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carpet - Vinyl - Laminate - Linoleum - Stone and tile - Wood or parquet - Don't know
Who provided floor coverings	Asset management data/Tenant survey	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	<p>Excluding bathroom(s) and kitchen, who provided floor coverings in tenant's current home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current tenant - Landlord - Previous tenant - Don't know
Void costs prior to let	Asset management data	Start of tenancy	<p>What were the total costs to bring the property up to your void standard? If there were no costs, type 0 rather than leave blank.</p> <p><i>Cost in GBP £</i></p>

Measure	Source	When to ask/ complete	Question
Void costs related to floor coverings	Asset management data/Tenant survey	Start of tenancy	How much of these total void costs were related to provision of floor coverings? This includes lifting old flooring, disposal costs, laying new flooring or any repairs/cleaning. If there were no costs, type 0 rather than leave blank. <i>Cost in GBP £</i> [If tenant fitted floor coverings, a tenant survey should ask 'How much did it cost you to remove and fit floor coverings in all rooms?' with answers in £GBP.]
Rent arrears	Housing management data	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	Start of tenancy: What is the value of arrears on the account? <i>Cost in GBP £</i> Follow up: What is the value of arrears on the account? <i>Cost in GBP £</i>
Staff satisfaction	Performance data	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	What is staff satisfaction (lettings, housing management and asset management) for the area within which the property is located?
Tenant satisfaction	Performance data	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	TP01 of Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by your landlord? - Very satisfied - Fairly satisfied - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied - Fairly dissatisfied - Very dissatisfied
Tenant wellbeing (anxiety)	Tenant survey	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? <i>0 to 10</i>
Noise complaints	Asset management data	Follow up one/ follow up two	How many noise complaints have been made in relation to the property?

Measure	Source	When to ask/ complete	Question
Household composition	Asset management data	Start of tenancy/ follow up one / follow up two	<p>Which of the following best describes household living with in home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Couple, no dependent children - Couple with dependent child(ren) - Lone parent with dependent child(ren) - Other multi-person household - One person
Reason for leaving last settled home	Asset management data/Tenant survey	Start of tenancy	<p>What is the tenant's main reason for the household leaving their last settled home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End of social housing tenancy - no fault - End of social housing tenancy - evicted due to anti-social behaviour (ASB) - End of social housing tenancy - evicted due to rent arrears - End of social housing tenancy - evicted for any other reason - Permanently decanted from another property owned by this landlord - Left home country as a refugee - Discharged from prison - Discharged from long-stay hospital or similar institution - Loss of tied accommodation - Asked to leave by family or friends - Relationship breakdown (non-violent) with partner - Death of household member in last settled home - To move nearer to family, friends or school - To move nearer to work - Domestic abuse - previous joint tenancy with partner - Domestic abuse - other Racial harassment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hate crime - Other problems with neighbours - Repossession - Could no longer afford rent or mortgage - Property unsuitable - Under occupation - To move to accommodation with support - To move to independent accommodation - Don't know - Tenant prefers not to say

Measure	Source	When to ask/ complete	Question
Economic status of lead tenant	Housing management data	Start of tenancy/ follow up one/ follow up two	Which of these best describes the tenant's working situation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full-time (30 hours or more) - Part-time (less than 30 hours) - Full-time student - In government training into work - Jobseeker - Not seeking work - Unable to work because of long-term sickness or disability - Retired - Other - Tenant prefers not to say
Whether tenancy is still in place	Housing management data	Follow up one/ Follow up two	Has the tenancy been sustained? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No
Tenancy end date	Housing management data	End of tenancy	What date did the tenancy end? <i>Day, month, year DDMMYY</i>



Steering group



Claire Donovan – Chair

Claire Donovan is the Head of Policy, Research and Campaigns at End Furniture Poverty, the campaigning arm of FRC Group, former Social Enterprise of the Year. FRC Group has been providing support to people in furniture poverty for 34 years with the provision of both new and preloved furniture.

A former journalist, Claire joined FRC Group as Communications Manager, before taking over the delivery of the End Furniture Poverty (EFP), campaign, which raises awareness of the issue of Furniture Poverty; carries out research to highlight the consequences and reality of living in Furniture Poverty; and develops solutions to ensure that everyone has access to the essential furniture items that they need to participate in society and lead a secure life. Flooring is one of EFP's essential furniture items and one of the hardest items for people to access so Claire was very keen to be involved in this key project. Claire is also a trustee of the Reuse Network, the membership body supporting furniture reuse charities across the UK.



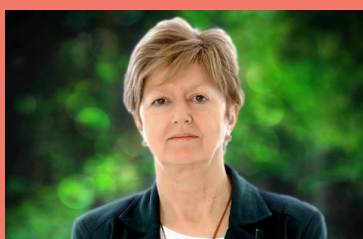
Alison Inman

Alison Inman is Past President of the Chartered Institute of Housing. She currently sits on the boards of Saffron Housing Trust, Tpas and Housing Diversity Network and is a former Chair of the National Federation of ALMOs. She is a co-founder of SHOUT, the social housing campaign group and has written extensively in the housing press.



Alicja Zalensinka

Alicja is the Chief Executive Officer of Tai Pawb – an organisation working to advance equality and social justice in housing in Wales. Alongside colleagues from TPAS Cymru, she has lead on the development and implementation of recommendations of FLOORED report, which highlighted the lack of appropriate flooring in social housing in Wales.



Anne Dokov

Anne is a trustee of two charities that work with people in the social housing sector, one being the Loughleigh Foundation which is funding this study and the other which helps people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. She is also a Board Member of a housing association that provides specialist quality housing and support services in the Midlands and North West.

Prior to that she spent nine years as a Board Member with a large Housing Association where she had a particular interest in Customer Care, Housing Operations, Governance and People issues.



Brian Robson

Brian Robson is the former Executive Director (Policy and Public Affairs) at the Northern Housing Consortium, a membership body for 133 councils, housing associations and ALMOs across the North of England.

Brian also served on the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Decent Homes Review Sounding Board.

Prior to joining the NHC, Brian led the housing policy and research programme at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation for four years, where he commissioned Altair to develop policy and practice proposals on furnished tenancies as a way to mitigate and relieve poverty in the social rented sector.



Fayann Simpson OBE

Fayann, who joined the L&Q's Group Board in 2018, has devoted nearly 20 years to working as an involved resident. For two decades she has worked tirelessly with L&Q and the wider social housing sector to drive continuous improvement in the quality of homes and services. Following the Grenfell tragedy, she has also taken a place on Industry Safety Steering Group chaired by Dame Judith Hackitt's. Fayann is also a board member at Sustainability for Housing. Her expertise sees her taking part in various high-profile debates with stakeholders and industry experts, and she is a regular media commentator.

Fayann is pleased to be involved in this work as she thinks it is so important for the sector to understand the impact of flooring provision for residents and how residents feel in their homes. Fayann hopes this research will really improve our understanding of the significance of floor covering and help the sector make better decisions on how to invest in homes.

National Housing Federation

The National Housing Federation (NHF) are the voice of England's housing associations. The NHF support our members to deliver that social purpose, with ambitious work that leads to positive change.



Glossary of terms

Social housing landlords

A provider of social housing as defined by:

- The Regulator of Social Housing (England)
- The Scottish Housing Regulator (Scotland)
- The Welsh Ministers (Wales)

Social rent

The rental charge for sub-market rent products including:

- Social rent properties
- Affordable rent properties
- Intermediate rent properties

Social housing

Housing provided by social housing landlords. This includes:

- Housing association properties
- Local authority properties (including those rented at a social rent and managed by Arms-length management organisations)

Floor coverings

A material to cover the floor of a room including carpets and hard floor coverings i.e., laminate and floor tiles.

Tenants

The named tenant living in a property provided by a social housing landlord. Our terminology throughout this report includes:

- Shared owners living in shared ownership homes
- Temporary and licensees tenants living in supported accommodation

General needs accommodation

Social housing that is not purpose-built, adapted or managed for a specific group.

Sheltered accommodation

Historic housing type specific to the social sector where apartments or homes are clustered usually around a shared communal space. A scheme manager may or may not be on site. Care services may be offered to tenants through the landlord or a separate agency.

Supported accommodation

Accommodation which is provided alongside support, supervision or care to help people live as independently as possible in the community.

Thank you to the Altair team:

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