



Academy  
**KINGDOM**

# PROFESSIONAL DECISION MAKING IN HOUSING

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# INTRODUCTION

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Most housing professionals do not struggle to recognise the difference between something that is clearly right and clearly wrong.

The challenge comes when situations involve competing responsibilities, safeguarding concerns, conflicting priorities, legal requirements, organisational pressures, risk, vulnerability, and limited resources, often in situations where there may not be a perfect outcome.

This guide is designed to support housing professionals to:

- assess situations clearly
- consider risk and impact
- challenge assumptions
- explore possible options
- support fair and consistent decision making
- record and evidence professional reasoning
- navigate complex housing situations with greater confidence

Using a structured decision making framework can help professionals make informed, balanced, and defensible decisions, particularly in situations where there is no straightforward answer.

# BEFORE TAKING ACTION

## DEFINE THE SITUATION

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Take time to understand the full picture before deciding on your next step. Use the checklist below to make sure you have a clear understanding of the situation.



### **Have all relevant facts been gathered?**

Gather the facts, history, background, and available evidence.



### **Is any information missing?**

Identify what information may still be missing.



### **Have assumptions been challenged?**

Avoid making assumptions or jumping to conclusions.



### **Has the wider context been considered?**

Consider the wider context surrounding the tenant, household, or community.



### **Are there legal or safeguarding concerns?**

What policy, legal, safeguarding or tenancy issues may apply?



### **Have all perspectives been understood?**

Have you fully understood the situation from all perspectives?



### **Remember**

Pause before acting.

Understand the full picture so you can make informed, fair and professional decisions.

# WHO IS AFFECTED?

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Understanding who is affected helps you make fair, balanced and person-centred decisions.



## **Who are the primary people affected by the situation?**

Identify the individuals, households or communities directly impacted.



## **Who may be indirectly impacted?**

Consider others who may be affected as a result of the situation or decision.



## **Are there vulnerabilities, support needs, or safeguarding concerns involved?**

Identify any risks, vulnerabilities or additional support needs.



## **What are the needs and priorities of different stakeholders?**

Consider the needs and priorities of everyone involved.



## **Have tenant voices and perspectives been properly considered?**

Ensure tenant views, experiences and preferences have been heard and understood.



### **Why it matters**

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Understanding who is affected ensures decisions are fair, proportionate and focused on positive outcomes.



### **Remember**

Different people will be affected in different ways. Take time to understand the full impact before moving to the next step.

# IDENTIFY POSSIBLE OPTIONS

Exploring different options helps you find the most effective and proportionate response.



## **Identify different possible responses or actions.**

List a range of potential options that could address the situation.



## **Consider both support and enforcement options where appropriate.**

Explore a balanced range of responses, including early help, support and enforcement where needed.



## **Think about the situation from different perspectives.**

Consider how different people may view the situation and what matters to them.



## **Are there colleagues or partner agencies who could provide additional insight?**

Seek input from others who have relevant knowledge or experience.



## **Have all reasonable options been explored?**

Challenge your thinking and ensure you have considered all viable options before moving forward.



### **Why it matters**

Taking time to explore options helps you make informed, balanced and defensible decisions.



### **Remember**

Good decisions come from exploring options, not jumping to conclusions. Be open, curious and thorough.

# ASSESS THE RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES

Carefully assessing risks and consequences helps you make informed, proportionate and defensible decisions.

- **Who could be positively or negatively affected by this decision?**

Consider the impact on tenants, households, colleagues, the wider community and other stakeholders.

- **What are the risks and possible consequences?**

Think about short-term and long-term impacts, both intended and unintended.

- **Are there legal, operational, safeguarding, or reputational considerations?**

Identify any legal duties, policies, regulatory requirements or potential risks.

- **Is the proposed response fair and proportionate?**

Ensure the response is appropriate to the situation and considers individual circumstances.

- **Could you clearly explain and evidence the rationale behind the decision?**

Be clear on why this is the right decision and what evidence supports it.

- **Does the decision align with policy, professional standards, and organisational values?**

Check the decision is consistent with relevant policies, values and ethical principles.



**This guide is designed to support housing professionals to:**

- Would this decision withstand scrutiny?
- Is the response proportionate to the situation?
- Have all reasonable options been considered?
- Does this decision support safe and professional practice?
- What could the unintended consequences be?



## **Remember**

A good decision balances risk, impact and ethics.  
Take the time to think it through and document your reasoning.

# MAKE THE DECISION

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A clear, well-recorded decision helps you act with confidence and deliver the right outcomes.



## **Consider likely outcomes and practical constraints.**

Think about the probable impact of your decision and any limits such as time, resources or policy.



## **Clarify actions, responsibilities, and next steps.**

Be clear about what will happen, who will do what, and when.



## **Record the rationale for the decision clearly.**

Document the reasons for your decision and the evidence or information used to support it.



## **Ensure communication is appropriate and professional.**

Share the decision with the right people, using clear, respectful and timely communication.



## **What support may be required moving forward?**

Consider what ongoing support, monitoring or referrals may be needed.



## **Why it matters**

A well-made decision, clearly communicated and properly recorded, builds trust, demonstrates professionalism and helps achieve better outcomes.



## **Remember**

A decision is not the end of the process. Continue to review, learn and respond as the situation evolves.

# REFLECT AND REVIEW

Taking time to reflect and review helps you learn, improve practice and deliver better outcomes in the future.



## **Did the decision achieve the intended outcome?**

Evaluate the impact of the decision and whether it resolved the issue or met the goals

## **Was the process fair and consistent?**

Reflect on whether the decision-making process was unbiased, transparent and applied consistently.

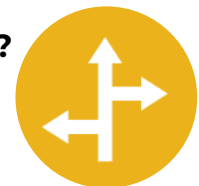


## **What learning can be taken from the situation?**

Identify what worked well, what didn't, and what insights can improve future practice.

## **Could anything have been handled differently?**

Consider alternative approaches and how the situation could have been managed.



## **What support or learning may help in future situations?**

Identify training, resources, or support that could strengthen skills and confidence for next time.



## **Why it matters**

Reflecting and reviewing helps you grow, strengthens practice, and ensures we continue to learn and improve for the people and communities we support.



## **Remember**

Reflection turns experience into improvement. Each review helps us make better decisions and create better outcomes.

# USING THIS FRAMEWORK

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Housing professionals regularly make decisions in complex situations where there may not be a straightforward answer.

Using a structured approach can help teams assess situations clearly, consider risk and impact, explore reasonable options, and make informed, proportionate, and professionally accountable decisions.

This framework is designed to support consistent practice across housing services while encouraging reflection, professional curiosity, and confidence in decision making.

Complex situations require balanced thinking, clear communication, and professional judgement. Taking time to pause, consider the wider context, and reflect on outcomes can support better decisions for tenants, communities, and housing teams alike.

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