



Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 9 June 2026  
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier, Housing  
 Director Lead: Suzanne Shead - Housing, Health & Wellbeing  
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<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Open Report / Non-Key Decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Getting to Know You (GTKY) Visits Programme
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide Cabinet with an update on progress and outcomes arising from the Getting to Know You (GTKY) visits programme undertaken by the Housing Services Business Unit.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) note the progress and outcomes and feedback on the GTKY visits programme to March 2026;</li> <li>b) support the continued delivery of the GTKY programme as a key assurance and tenancy sustainment mechanism;</li> <li>c) note the link to the Tenant Census planned for 2026;</li> <li>d) support the risk-based approach to determine whether tenancy enforcement action is progressed regarding failed access; and</li> <li>e) note the onward progression of the report to Tenant Engagement Board</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	None, GTKY visits are an essential activity to ensure we know our tenants and that they are safe in their homes.
<b>Reason for Recommendations</b>	This vital activity aligns with several Community Plan 2023 – 27 Ambitions: 2,3,4 5 & 7 (see section 1.6)

## **1.0 Background**

1.1 The Getting to Know You (GTKY) visits programme commenced in October 2021 in response to increasing sector emphasis on landlords proactively knowing their tenants and understanding who is living in their homes.

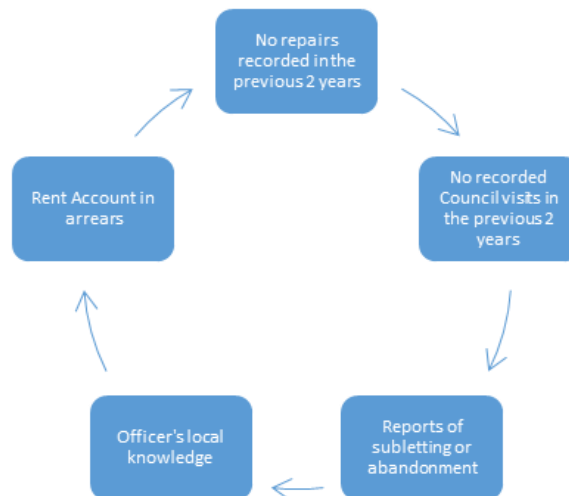
1.2 The revised Consumer Standards placed a stronger focus on transparency, tenant safety, understanding diverse needs, and landlord accountability. In particular, the Transparency, Influence & Accountability Standard and the Tenancy Standard require landlords to demonstrate how they:

- Know their tenants and understand household circumstances
- Identify vulnerability and barriers to access
- Support sustainable tenancies
- Maintain safe, decent homes
- Prevent and address tenancy fraud

1.3 GTKY visits provide a structured and proactive mechanism to meet these requirements. They enable planned, face-to-face engagement with tenants, moving away from reliance on reactive or crisis-led contact and strengthening early intervention.

1.4 The programme aims to visit 5,379 households, using a standardised questionnaire to verify occupancy, identify support and safety needs, check the condition of the home, update tenant profiles and capture communication preferences. Housing with Care schemes are excluded as tenants in those schemes receive regular reviews through alternative arrangements.

1.5 The programme was developed using a risk-based approach:



1.6 The GTKY visit programme aligns with several Community Plan 2023 – 27 Ambitions, these are:

*Ambition 2 - Increase the supply of housing, in particular decent homes that residents can afford to buy and rent, as well as improving housing standards*

*Ambition 3 - Improve health and wellbeing, with an emphasis on communities with lower levels of life expectancy*

*Ambition 4 - Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, improving community feelings of safety*

*Ambition 5 - Promote, maximise and celebrate the diversity of Newark and Sherwood's heritage, culture and community spirit*

*Ambition 7 - Be a top performing, modern and accessible Council that get its everyday services right for the residents and businesses that it serves*

## 1.7 The Current Picture

1.7.1 Progress against the GTKY programme stands at 81%, this includes a successful visit rate of 66% and a failed access rate of 15%.

1.7.2 Members will fully appreciate the multi-faceted and varied priorities required of the tenancy and estates team which have impacted on the progress of the programme since its inception. Progress has been influenced by access challenges, the complexity of issues identified during visits, and competing statutory priorities including compliance programmes and system change:

- Providing ongoing support to the Compliance Team to secure access for gas and electrical servicing, ensuring continued regulatory compliance.
- Managed responses to severe flooding incidents, supporting affected tenants, including temporary relocations where repairs were required.
- Continued implementation of the new Housing Management System, including training all staff and overseeing the transition from the legacy system in May 2025.

1.7.3 A deeper dive into the failed access data will be progressed to determine a risk-based approach to tenancy enforcement; this data will be overlaid with:

- Failed compliance visits – Health and Safety surveys (HHSRS), Electrical and Gas checks
- Tenancies with capped gas
- Rent account and arrears data
- Properties with non-reporting of repairs
- Local knowledge of 'difficult to reach' tenancies

The outcome of this assessment will provide insight into the reasons for failed access, support onward consideration of suitable communication methods, and how best to overcome barriers and encourage access to allow housing services that are responsive to tenants' needs, to be delivered.

1.7.4 It is worth noting that when considered against successful access for compliance action 100% of our homes have been visited by either us or one of our contractors in the last twelve months providing a level of assurance that tenants are safe and well.

1.7.5 All council colleagues and our contractors are aware of our safeguarding procedures and will, where required, contact the Tenancy & Estate Team where a concern is noted. Here is a recent case study to highlight this:

*“An operative had carried out some work on a property and reported back to Tenancy & Estates that he had noticed a bedroom door with locks on the outside and could hear a child inside. Upon receiving the report, a colleague visited to attend to better understand the situation. The colleague visited the property under the guise of checking the operative’s work so as not to exacerbate the potential safeguarding risk. The tenant did not allow access to the property, so it was decided that a Safeguarding referral to the Police should be made. Police attended the same day with Social Care who confirmed that the child had disabilities, and that the locks were in place to keep the child safe and were approved by Social Care. This has since been followed up with Social Care to confirm.”*

1.7.6 GTKY visits are consistently identifying issues that would not otherwise come to the Council’s attention, including:

- Unreported repairs and safety concerns
- Need for adaptations and Occupational Therapy referrals due to changing needs
- Financial vulnerability and debt advice needs
- Social isolation and unmet support requirements

This enables early intervention, reduces the risk of tenancy breakdown, proactive identification of safeguarding concerns and informing future service demand.

1.7.7 For a set time, additional data was gathered to understand the tenant voice regarding the GTKY process, with tenants being asked:

- On a scale of 1 – 5 how important do you think the GTKY process is? (1 being not important at all / 5 being very important)
- On a scale of 1 – 5 how easy did you find the GTKY process? (1 being difficult / 5 being easy)
- Please provide any other feedback you have about the GTKY process. Think about start - finish, having the tenancy officer coming to your home, the questions asked and how you feel about the process

The snapshot findings are set out below highlighting the success and importance of the GTKY visits carried out:

Tenants Consulted	Scale of 1 – 5 of Importance (Average)
270	4.6
	Scaled of 1 – 5 of Ease of Process (Average)
	4.7

Some tenants provided additional positive feedback on the process – captured in the table below:

“Good to know who to contact with any problems”
“I feel it is a good idea to do these”
“Very pleasant experience”
“I was worried, but Tenancy Officer put me at ease, and it was very worthwhile”
“Helpful and good because you can speak in person and hopefully get things done”
“I am pleased that you will raise the repairs for me”
“It was a very easy process”
“No issues with the process, understands why it is necessary”
“He stated he was comfortable answering the questions, and understood the reason for the visit, and that these visits will become regular”
“I enjoyed the visit and the process was easy”
“10 out of 10. It’s nice to see people face to face”
“Tenant found this useful as she would never have known her carbon monoxide detector was faulty”
“Really enjoyed chatting to my Tenancy Officer”

1.7.8 The GTKY form has evolved over time, with question sets reflecting the increased complexity within households, in particular relating to understanding barriers faced by tenants who consider themselves to be disabled and/vulnerable.

Analysis of 262 GTKY visits carried out since the introduction of these new questions in November 2025 identified the following:

	Yes	No
The tenant or joint tenant consider themselves to have a disability	150	112
The tenant or joint tenant consider themselves to have a vulnerability	43	219
The tenant or joint tenant consider themselves to have a barrier in accessing Council services	25	237

A deeper dive into the barriers, whilst relatively low in number indicated a need to look where improvements can be made to remove or mitigate. Suggested recommendations include:

1. Improve phone service capacity – reduce call waiting times, particularly for repairs.
2. Enhance digital platforms – improve accessibility, clarity, and stability post system upgrades.
3. Promote multi-channel communication – ensure tenants can choose email, phone, or in person contact based on need.

4. Consider periodic local drop-in sessions to reintroduce personal connection.
5. Provide clear communication pathways – ensure tenants know who to contact for what.
6. Develop targeted support for neurodiverse, anxious, or digitally excluded tenants

## **2.0 Proposal/Options Considered**

- 2.1 Due to its benefits, the tenancy and estates team will continue the delivery of the GTKY programme as it is a core source of regulatory assurance, tenancy intelligence and early intervention.
- 2.2 The programme has demonstrated clear value beyond statutory compliance. GTKY visits consistently identify:
  - Unreported repairs and safety concerns
  - Disability, vulnerability and access issues not previously known
  - Financial hardship and need for advice or support
  - Risks to tenancy sustainment and potential tenancy fraud
- 2.3 The programme directly supports compliance with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and the Tenancy Standard by evidencing that the Council:
  - Has robust mechanisms to know its tenants, including understanding household composition, protected characteristics, vulnerabilities and access barriers
  - Takes proactive steps to maintain safe and decent homes, including identifying repair, health and safety and adaptation needs
  - Engages tenants in a planned, proportionate and consistent way
  - Uses tenant insight to inform service improvement, accessibility and communication approaches
- 2.4 GTKY visits generate a clear and auditable evidence base, demonstrating how tenant engagement leads directly to referrals, actions and service responses. This strengthens organisational grip, supports inspection readiness and reduces regulatory risk through early identification of issues.
- 2.5 To complement this ongoing work, as part of Housing Services Business Plan for 2026-27, the Housing Health and Well Being Directorate are designing a Tenant Census to be undertaken in the Summer; this will be a time targeted, short, sharp, check -in' approach in order to refresh all our tenant data in a condensed timeline giving the Council additional assurance that we know our tenants, and that the services we are delivering are taking account of their needs. This will be communicated widely and labelled "Getting to Know You Better".

- 2.6 Whilst it is hard to place a financial value on the GTKY visits, below are two case studies to bring to life the work of the tenancy officers during this activity.

*“I did a GTKY in a rural village last month, while I was there it became apparent that the tenant was living in a 3 bedroom, adapted property with their son and daughter. They told me that they felt very isolated, they couldn’t drive and they worked in a nearby town, their son went to school in Southwell, and their daughter is moving in with their boyfriend. The tenant told me that they had a stroke in 2019 which was why they initially needed the adaptations, but they have since recovered to the point that they no longer need the adaptations. The tenant moved in with their partner who drove, so they weren’t as isolated, they have since separated and the partner then moved out. While at the address I supported the tenant to complete a housing application and submitted it for them, they were entitled to the Home Release Incentive Scheme and Band 1 for downsizing and for giving up an adapted property. To cut a long story short, today I have signed them up for a 2-bedroom flat and they are ecstatic.”*

*“I have recently carried out a GTKY visit with a tenant who is a full-time wheelchair user. On the visit we discussed any issues they were having, the tenant brought up an issue with the communal area and an area of thorns that fall within this. The tenant advised these grow in front of her garden gate and block her access. She stated she has tried raising this with the grounds maintenance team, but they had advised they were not able to do this as it wasn’t on the schedule and therefore, our tenant was left to cut this back herself. Following the visit, I raised this with the street scene manager and have had this added onto the ground’s maintenance schedule going forward, the tenant will no longer have to struggle to cut this back and access to her bungalow will be left clear. On the same visit we discussed any further support needs they may have, our tenant disclosed that she is often having to choose between heating and other household items, and she was not aware if she was claiming everything that she is entitled to and discussed wishing to look at her household bills. The tenant agreed for a CAB referral which has progressed and going forward they will be financially stable.”*

### **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

<b>Implications Considered</b>			
<b>Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable</b>			
Financial	Yes	Equality & Diversity	Yes
Human Resources	N/A	Human Rights	N/A
Legal	Yes	Data Protection	N/A
Digital & Cyber Security	Yes	Safeguarding	Yes
Sustainability	N/A	Crime & Disorder	N/A
LGR	N/A	Tenant Consultation	N/A

#### Financial Implications - FIN26-27/8182

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. GTKY visits are delivered as part of the tenancy officer role and within existing approved resources.

#### Equality and Diversity

- 3.2 Getting To Know You visits actively facilitate the recognition of disability, vulnerability and obstacles to accessing Council services, thereby allowing for more equitable delivery and ensuring support is appropriately tailored to the needs of individual households. By identifying issues that may not have previously been reported or known, the programme helps to address disparities and promote inclusion for tenants who might otherwise be overlooked. This approach supports the Council's commitment to equality and diversity, ensuring fair treatment and access for all tenants regardless of their circumstances, and contributes to the reduction of barriers faced by neurodiverse, anxious, or digitally excluded individuals.

#### Legal Implications - LEG2627/7633

- 3.3 Tenants are required to allow access to the property pursuant to clause 10a of the terms and conditions of their tenancy agreement. Failure to allow access can result in further enforcement action being taken including possession proceedings and/or an application for injunction for breach of tenancy. Access to the property should never be forced unless in accordance with Council policy and/or in accordance with the tenancy agreement and/or with a court order.

Visits to tenants enables the Council to make direct contact with the tenant and can provide valuable evidence in the event the tenancy is not being maintained, allows for checks to be made to ensure compliance with the Council's own statutory obligations including Awaab's Law, can identify safeguarding concerns, ensure data is accurate and up to date in accordance with our obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and/or GDPR and review any additional needs they may have which they require support with.

### Safeguarding

- 3.4 Any proactive and preventative measures that help to identify issues early are always welcomed. GTKY visits support early identification of safeguarding concerns and enable timely referrals where required. Having early insight and understanding of tenants needs helps to ensure early intervention and appropriate referrals before crisis and assists the wider health and social care system.

### Digital and Cyber Security

- 3.5 The planned integration of GTKY functionality into the Housing Management System will improve data quality, automation and management oversight.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None