

Tenancy Sustainment Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of Objectives

The Tenancy Sustainment Policy aims to ensure that the Association provides an effective housing operations service that complies with its landlord obligations in respect of tenancy sustainment.

Our objectives include minimising tenancy breakdown, preventing homelessness and promoting stable and sustainable communities through:

- Prevention - ensuring that prior to and throughout any tenancy, steps are taken to identify issues which could affect tenancy sustainment.
- Tenancy Support - liaising with and signposting to appropriate agencies to ensure that individually tailored support is provided where required throughout a tenancy, catering for the changing needs of household members; and
- Partnership Working - establishing partnership arrangements with agencies, especially local authorities, who can help sustain tenancies where appropriate.

1.2 Compliance with Regulatory Standards

In terms of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the Scottish Housing Regulator has identified a number of key indicators relevant to tenancy sustainment by which it will measure landlord performance, including the following:

- Housing options - people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them. Applicants can review their housing options, and people at risk of losing their homes can access advice on preventing homelessness.
- Access to social housing - people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and can access the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.
- Tenancy sustainment - tenants can access the information on how to obtain support to remain in their home including services provided directly by the landlord or other organisations.
- Value for money – Our customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

1.3 Expected Outcomes

Key outcomes of operating an effective Tenancy Sustainment Policy include:

- minimising tenancy breakdowns, such as abandoned tenancies and evictions.
- preventing homelessness.
- promoting stable and sustainable communities; and
- minimising void levels, void rent loss and associated void costs.

1.4 Informing and Involving Stakeholders

We will promote this policy through our website for both our customers and applicants. We are able to provide applicants with copies of this policy and any other associated documents on request, including in other formats and languages.

1.5 Corporate Fit

1.5.1 Legislation and best practice

We will comply with all relevant legislation and associated regulations, including:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, 2001, 2010 and 2014 and all subsequent amendments.
- The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.
- The Welfare Reform Act 2012; and
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter
- The Equalities Act 2010

Common law, statute and the contractual obligations within our tenancy agreement set out our responsibilities as landlord and those of our tenants.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Policy is consistent with our:

- Corporate Plan.
- Business Plan.
- Housing Allocation Policy.
- Arrears Policy.
- Estate Management Policy Guide/ Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- Income Maximisation Policy.
- Risk Management Strategy; and
- Standing Orders and Delegated Authority Policy.

1.5.2 Equality Diversity and Inclusion

At Clyde Valley we value people and their diversity and strive to be inclusive. We respect others, regardless of personal differences and we listen to people to understand their needs and tailor our service accordingly. We will strive to promote equal access to our service for all members of the community and provide fair and equal treatment, promoting human rights in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Policy.

1.5.3 Confidentiality

CVHA recognises that confidentiality is important to tenants and will treat their tenancy information in the strictest confidence in line with all applicable data protection legislation.

1.5.4 Business Plan and risk management

Our Business Plan depends significantly upon generating revenue from the properties that we rent. We therefore seek to mitigate against business risk through managing our housing operations, tenancy sustainment and related services in an efficient, effective and economic manner so that we minimise our void levels, void rent loss and associated void costs.

1.5.5 The Board

The Customer Services Director has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Tenancy Sustainment Policy and the Customer Services Manager is responsible for key aspects of the day-to-day service delivery with delegation of specific tasks to appropriate staff.

Our Tenancy Sustainment rates are monitored as a KPI and reported to both Board and ARC annually. Tenancy sustainment also links into other Customer Service KPIs such as arrears, turnover, antisocial behaviour which are all reported to our Board on a quarterly basis.

2. Key Principles -Tenancy Sustainment Policy

2.1 Allocating tenancies

We let houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need, makes best use of available stock, maximises choice and helps sustain communities. We seek to promote housing options for applicants through working collaboratively with local authorities and other social landlords, through participation in Common Housing Registers and nomination agreements.

The Tenancy Sustainment Policy seeks to promote sustainability of tenancies and, as such assist with the sustainability of communities. However, the provision of a tenancy is not in itself sufficient to make a tenancy successful and there are other factors to consider so that once a tenancy starts it does not fail.

Through our approach to Housing Options in line with our Allocations Policy, we will deliver clear and consistent person centred advice which will meet our main objectives for the sustainment of our tenancies and communities.

The key goals within our Housing Options advice are:

- Sustaining housing status and preventing housing crisis
- Empowering Customers to make Informed Choices
- Identifying all options across all tenures
- Meeting all housing and underlying needs through strong partnerships
- Assisting customers to meet their housing aspirations.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Every tenant is responsible for managing their tenancy and complying with their tenancy conditions. However, we have a role to play in identifying tenants or households with particular needs or who may otherwise be vulnerable.

- We will support our customers through ongoing person centred tenancy advice and information,
- joint working with third parties such as Social Work and Support Agencies to help individuals thrive in their tenancies.
- welfare benefit and financial advice through our Income Maximisation Officers,
- where more specialist support is required, we will refer customers to a

relevant external agency for appropriate advice and assistance.

2.3 Tenancies that are not sustained

We consider that a tenancy to have ended for a negative reason is one that ends by eviction, abandonment or where a tenancy lasts less than 12 months. A tenancy which falls into this category can incur substantial additional costs for the Association including rent loss (through void period and possible former tenant arrears), cost of relet repairs (including possible rechargeable repairs), staff resources associated with the allocation procedure and in some cases legal costs.

In an effort to minimise tenancies not being sustained, we will seek to develop measures to assist us in identifying those at most risk of their tenancy ending for a negative reason.

We will seek to:

- participate in Common Housing Registers, Mutual Exchange and Local Lettings Initiatives, where appropriate, to maximise choice of housing options.
- satisfy applicants' choice of where they want to live - where this is reasonably possible.
- at the start of a tenancy, give as much information as reasonably possible on tenancy sustainment and address any areas of concern the new tenant may have.
- engage with external agencies re support needs/packages.
- refer new tenants with limited or no resources to furniture initiative projects who may be able to provide a basic furniture pack.
- provide a starter pack of basic essentials for new tenants with limited or no resources.
- ensure that the applicant is aware of their responsibilities as a tenant and the contact details for their Housing Officer.
- carry out a settling in visit within 8 weeks of the date of entry to review any tenancy issues or support needs.
- identify any possible changes in support needs required to sustain a tenancy - such as addressing referrals for medical adaptations.
- make referrals to our income maximisation service to access advice on welfare entitlement and household budgeting and initiate early intervention in the case of financial crisis or poverty.
- maintain regular, personal and sustained contact with 'at risk' householders; and
- work in partnership with specialist support agencies who work with vulnerable client groups and the statutory authorities.

Policy Change History

Version No:	Substantive Change	Author of Change	Approval	Date	Website
1.0	New front cover & version history applied	Anne Cavinue		01/06/23	Y
2.0	Updates to content and formatting. No substantive changes on policy position	Caroline Hotchkiss		15/08/24	Y
3.0	Minor amendments to the Policy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating statements on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, GDPR and informing customers. • Updating the language around tenancy sustainment to take a more supportive approach. 	Caroline Hotchkiss	Board	26/08/24	Y