



# Housing Management Policy

## 1. Aim of policy

This policy outlines how we will manage housing in line with our statutory and regulatory responsibilities and our duties as a social landlord. It defines the scope, aims and controls in place for each area of housing management.

## 2. Scope of policy

This policy will ensure:

- that we manage tenancies effectively to create sustainable communities
- our services meet the needs of our customers
- our estates are well maintained and safe
- monitoring is undertaken and reported through Performance Indicators where required.

All front-line operational staff will be aware of this policy.

## 3. Policy statement

We aim to create vibrant, sustainable communities full of satisfied customers. In order to do this, we need to manage tenancies effectively. We consider housing management to include:

- Assignment
- Name changes
- Estate Management
- Tenancy changes: Joint to sole/sole to joint
- Mobility vehicles
- Pets
- Succession
- Tenancy Fraud
- Parking and abandoned vehicles
- Pest Control
- Hoarding
- Lodgers and sub-letting
- Routine tenancy visits

This policy and other linked procedures apply to all tenures, except where stated. Sometimes we may use our discretion and act outside of this policy. If we do this, it will be with senior manager approval.

## 4. Policy

The detail for each of the areas mentioned above are shown in appendix 1.

## 5. Statutory requirements

We must comply with the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1988

- Enrolment of Deeds (Change of Name) Regulations 1994
- Family Law Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Civil Partnerships Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Torts (interference with goods) Act 1977
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Mental Capacity Act
- Immigration Act 2014
- The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679

## 6. Related policies

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Rent Strategy
- Lettings Policy
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Income Management Policy (which includes recharges)
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Service Charge Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Disabled Facilities Grant/ Adaptation Policy
- Complaint. Compliments and Suggestions Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Financial Inclusion and Tenancy Sustainment Policy

## 7. Monitor and review process

The quality of housing management is monitored by our Neighbourhood Team Leaders and managers through monthly 121s and recorded and reviewed in the performance reports. Housing management issues are fed back to our Neighbourhood Manager by the Neighbourhood Team Leaders on a monthly basis, or as they arise (where appropriate). At intervals we arrange for an independent audit of our procedures and records to ensure that they reflect good practice and are being followed.

This policy will be approved by the Executive and will be reviewed every year.

Consultation requirements	Last Consultation Date	Date for next consultation
Customers	March 2025	Jun 25
Equality Impact Assessment	Last EIA date completed	
Yes	March 2025	

Author	Owner	Approval level	Date approved	Review date
Alex Nagle	Customer Services Director	Directors Group	March 25	June 25

## Appendix 1

Policy Subsections

### Subject- Name Changes

Scope;

This covers name changes due to change by deed poll, marriage, civil partnerships and divorce.

Aims;

We will:

- Support customers who want to change their name on their tenancy
- Not class a name change as a change in tenancy and will not alter the tenancy in any way.
- Make relevant checks to reduce tenancy fraud
- Maintain accurate records of applications and name changes
- Inform the courts of changes of names during court proceedings as necessary.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

Enrolment of Deeds

(Change of Name) Regulations 1994

Civil Partnerships Act 2004

Controls;

To prevent fraud, we'll check the relevant supporting documentation such as marriage certificate or Deed Poll document, in accordance with our Name Changes Procedure.

### Subject- Assignment

Scope;

This covers assignments of tenancy for our customers. This does not include assignments through Mutual Exchange, Tenancy Swap or when customers apply to add or remove a person from their tenancy. These assignments are detailed in the Lettings Policy and in the Tenancy Changes section of this Policy.

Aims;

We will:

- Support customers who want to assign their tenancies based on the rights set out in their tenancy agreements
- Make relevant checks to reduce tenancy fraud
- Make customers fully aware of the consequences of assignment so that they can

**DOCUMENT UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED OR DOWNLOADED**

Unpublished work copyright VIVID. All rights reserved

SHEQ-PolicyTemplate-V1-June2017

Page 3 of 11

make an informed decision

- Maintain accurate records of applications and assignments
- Refuse assignments in accordance with the tenancy agreement when there are Breaches.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

Housing Act 1985,

Housing Act 1988, Localism Act 2011

Controls;

We'll meet applicants to ensure that they understand the consequences of assignment.

We will check the identification of assigners and assignees to prevent tenancy fraud.

We will involve other relevant agencies where there are concerns over abuse or coercion of vulnerable customers, in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy.

### **Subject- Estate Management**

Scope;

This covers estate inspections, abandoned properties, abandoned vehicles, fire risk inspections, individual garden inspections and items left in communal areas

Customers have a responsibility to ensure communal spaces are kept clear, use the communal spaces with regard to others and report any issues.

Aims;

We will:

- Inspect all roads, estates and blocks at periodic intervals depending on the risk assessed to that area. Risks are assessed on levels of Anti-Social Behaviour, health and safety issues, fly tipping and graffiti.
- Identify and report any communal repairs to be undertaken, in particular those that pose a health and safety risk, such as damage to fire signage
- Identify and report issues that pose a serious fire risk; removing items which pose a risk to health and safety immediately, such as fuel canisters and items restricting access to fire routes
- Have a zero tolerance about customers leaving any items in communal areas including prams, bikes, door mats, plant pots, pictures, mobility vehicles (unless permission has been granted)
- Remove offensive graffiti as soon as practicable
- Monitor and identify abandoned properties, taking reports from neighbours where appropriate
- Identify poorly maintained gardens and work with customers to take appropriate action.
- . Ensure that communal bin areas are kept in a clean and tidy condition.
- Report any abandoned vehicle to the local authority if it is on public land or the highway
- Remove and dispose of any abandoned vehicle on our land, after carrying out ownership checks and serving a TORT notice
- Check that consent has been given to the tenant to keep commercial vehicles
- Encourage our customers to identify and report any of the issues listed above
- Undertake regular fire risk inspections and serve TORT notices on items left in

communal areas and remove and dispose of items at the end of the notice period

- Charge the resident responsible for the cost of removing and disposing of items left in communal areas. When we cannot identify who is responsible, we may include the costs in service charges.
- Ensure staff are aware of service charge costs, so we can make sure customers are charged correctly.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

Torts (interference with goods) Act 1977

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Controls;

We'll set an appropriate frequency for estate inspections, and keep records of the inspections carried out and the resultant actions.

We'll carry out estate inspections on communal areas in blocks to ensure that there are no items left in the area.

### **Subject- Tenancy Changes: Joint to sole/sole to joint**

Scope;

This is where a sole tenant assigns part of their tenancy to another person, making them joint tenants, or when a joint tenant assigns their part of the tenancy to the other tenant, making them a sole tenancy. (This does not include succession which is dealt within the section below)

Aims;

We will:

- Support customers who want to change their tenancy based on the rights set out in their tenancy agreements
- Make relevant checks to reduce tenancy fraud.
- Make customers fully aware of the consequences of changing their tenancy so that they can make an informed decision.
- Maintain accurate records of applications and tenancy changes
- Refuse tenancy changes when there are breaches of tenancy.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

Housing Act 1985,

Housing Act 1988,

Localism Act 2011.

Controls;

We'll meet applicants to ensure that they understand the consequences of changing their tenancy.

We will check the identification of assigners and assignees to prevent fraud.

We'll involve other relevant agencies where there are concerns over abuse or coercion of vulnerable customers.

## **Subject- Mobility vehicles**

Scope;

This covers mobility vehicles used and stored in our properties and communal areas.

Aims;

We will:

- Provide clear instructions on the safe usage, storage and legal requirements surrounding mobility scooter use
- Promote and support the potential need of frail or disabled customers to maintain an independent lifestyle through mobility vehicle ownership
- Advise and enforce the requirement for customers to store and charge their mobility vehicles in the designated store and charging areas. Customers will be able to charge and store their mobility scooters in their own properties, as domestic premises fall outside the legal requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, unless we believe there is an unacceptable risk.
- Grant permission for mobility vehicles to be stored or charged where reasonable
- Remove permission for mobility scooters from customers who charge and/or store their scooters in locations that pose an unacceptable health and safety risk
- Encourage residents to have liability insurance in place to cover damage to building, or injury to other people and provide information about low cost insurance schemes.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

Equality Act 2010

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Controls;

We'll carry out regular inspections of communal areas to make sure that mobility vehicles are not being stored or charged in non-designated areas and take any necessary action.

We'll work with the fire and rescue departments to carry out assessments, mitigating risk to our customers and assets.

## **Subject- Pets**

Scope;

This policy applies to our customers who live in intermediate market rented and market rent homes. We'll also clarify what our customers can do in our general needs and sheltered properties.

Aims;

- Customers living in Market Rent or Intermediate Market Rented properties are not allowed to keep pets in their homes.
- Customers in general needs and sheltered accommodation are allowed pets in their homes (regardless of the type of property they live in) and do not need to ask us for permission to keep animals.

Controls;

We'll complete routine tenancy visits to our customers to make sure they are not breaking the terms of their tenancy agreement.

All Intermediate Rent (IMR) and Market Rent (MR) properties will have a flag on the customer account to show they are not allowed pets in their homes.

We will revoke permission for a pet if the terms in the tenancy agreement have been broken. For example, if the pet is causing a nuisance to neighbours.

## **Subject- Succession**

Scope;

This covers succession which is when a tenant dies, and their tenancy is passed onto another person.

Aims;

We will:

- Allow one statutory succession per tenancy, when it is covered by legislation
- A statutory succession will take place when a joint tenant dies and the remaining tenant becomes a sole tenant
- Support customers who want to apply to succeed based on the rights set out in the deceased's tenancy agreement
- Allow only one person to succeed to a tenancy. If there is more than one person who would like to succeed, we will make a decision based on their housing need
- Offer the successor up to 2 alternative properties if the current property is not suitable. If these are refused, we will start legal proceedings to gain possession of the property
- Make relevant checks to reduce tenancy fraud
- If the succession is not allowed, possession proceedings will take place
- Consider discretionary succession applications where the applicant lived with the tenant in the property for 12 months immediately prior to the death, and;
  - Where the property has disabled adaptations that are required by the applicant, and there are no other suitable adapted properties available, or;
  - The applicant would be likely to be found unintentionally homeless and in priority need by the local authority, or;
  - The applicant had full caring responsibilities for the tenant, or;
  - The applicant has vulnerabilities which mean that they would be less able to secure alternative accommodation.

This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

Housing Act 1985,

Housing Act 1988,

Localism Act 2011,

Family Law Act 1996,

Civil Partnerships Act 2004.

Controls;

We'll meet applicants to ensure that they understand the consequences of succession and managing a tenancy.

We'll check the identification of successors to prevent fraud.

We'll involve other relevant agencies where there are concerns over vulnerable customers.

### **Subject- Tenancy Fraud**

Scope;

This covers fraud relating to tenancies and leases.

Aims;

We will:

- Reduce the risk of tenancy fraud by carrying out residency and identification checks on our customers
- Check all cases of sub-letting and abandonments that are reported to us or are highlighted through general activities and take appropriate action.
- Work with our local authority and other partners to identify tenancy fraud through partnership working
- Use our internal systems to help identify tenancy fraud such as rent accounting, insight and contact data
- Take tenancy and/or legal action when tenancy fraud has been identified
- Consider what additional information might be able to help to detect fraud and implement that as appropriate.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013.

Controls;

We'll carry out relevant checks at different stages of a tenancy, including at the start of a tenancy, changes to sole/joint, assignment, succession, right to buy.

We'll use the data we hold to highlight possible cases of fraud by looking at no contact etc.

We'll train our frontline staff so they are able to detect and manage potential cases of tenancy fraud.

We'll hold photos of all new customers on file as well as details of the identification provided, in accordance with the Immigration Act 2014 to obtain the tenancy.

### **Subject- Parking and abandoned vehicles**

Scope;

This covers the parking on all of our estates.

Aims;

We will:

- Advise customers what the parking arrangements are where they live
- Liaise with public and private organisations to enforce parking controls where applicable
- Expect customers to use parking spaces with due regard to others. We will not



police the parking on estates or get involved in parking disputes unless they lead to anti-social behaviour.

- Designate specific parking bays for registered disabled customers where possible
- Monitor abandoned, untaxed and unroadworthy vehicles and take steps to remove them especially if they pose a health and safety risk.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following legislation:

Driving Vehicle Licence Agency (DVLA) removal of abandoned vehicles.

Controls;

We'll carry out regular estate inspections to identify and resolve issues of abandoned vehicles.

We'll consider parking arrangements on all new estates to try to design out any potential issues where planning legislation allows.

### **Subject – Pests**

Scope;

This covers properties that we are responsible for maintaining which have been affected by pest infestations.

Aims;

We will:

- Only take responsibility for pest eradication where the infestation is due to an issue with the fabric of the building, which is our responsibility to maintain
- Offer advice for residents with infestations, such as signposting to the local authorities' Environmental Health departments.
- Take tenancy enforcement action where pest infestation has occurred as a result of customers' behaviour. For example, rats attracted to dumped rubbish in a resident's garden
- Recharge customers the cost of pest eradication. For example, fumigating for fleas after residents have moved out of a property.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following regulation and legislation:

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Controls;

We'll carry out regular estate inspections to identify and resolve issues of fly tipping and messy gardens which might attract pests.

We'll check the condition of properties during home visits and deal with any issues which may attract pests.

We'll involve other relevant agencies where there are concerns over vulnerable customers.

### **Subject- Hoarding**

Scope;

This covers hoarding issues that are identified within our properties regardless of tenure.

Aims;

- We recognise that Hoarding is a complex behavioural issue and that typically hoarders will be vulnerable and consider this to be a lifestyle choice
- We will support customers and staff to tackle this issue when it has been identified.
- We will engage external agencies and partners to help us to support the customer and make safeguarding referrals as needed and sign post as necessary.
- We recognise that dealing with cases of this nature can be complex and lengthy.

However, where support has not been successful and the condition of the property remains a health and safety risk we will consider enforcing the terms of the tenancy by way of an application for an injunction or possession proceedings. We will demonstrate that any action is necessary and proportionate.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following legislation: Mental Capacity Act 2005

Human rights act – article 8

Controls;

We will undertake risk assessments when Hoarding issues are identified and consider the appropriate support and action.

We'll involve other relevant agencies where there are concerns over vulnerable customers.

### **Subject- Lodgers and subletting**

Scope;

This covers permission that needs to be sought in order for a customer to have a lodger or to sublet part of their home

Aims;

- We recognise that there are situations when a customer may want to take in a lodger or sub-let part of their home. This can often help meet local housing needs or assist the customer with their housing costs.
- Before a lodger moves in the customer must seek our approval which we will not unreasonably with-hold and will be given in line with the conditions within the tenancy agreement.
- The customer is responsible to check if the lodger has a right to rent in accordance with Immigration Act 2014.
- We will share information about lodgers to other agencies if we suspect any fraudulent activity.
- We will investigate any suspicious cases where we think vulnerable customers may be persuaded to take in a lodger against their wishes.
- Customers are not permitted to sub-let their entire home. If they do, we will seek possession of the property in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreement.
- In some circumstances we will allow a caretaker to look after the home while the customer is temporarily absent. A request must be made before the customer

leaves the property.

- Customers will be made aware that they are responsible for the behaviour and actions of their lodgers.

Legislation;

This policy is linked to the following legislation: Immigration Act 2016.

Controls;

We will periodically check the household members to ensure we know who is living in the property and to prevent fraud.

### **Subject- Routine tenancy visits**

Scope;

This covers our approach to undertaking routine tenancy visits to mitigate the risk of tenancy failure and support tenancy sustainment.

Aims;

We will undertake a programme of scheduled visits to all tenancies which will be prioritised according to the criteria below:

- The identification of unmet housing and support needs (e.g., under-occupancy or severe over-crowding) and providing advice/ information
- The detection of abandonment and non-occupancy of a property deemed to be the tenant's principal home
- The prevention of unauthorised subletting or assignment
- Collection of customer insight data
- Identifying concerns around property condition (i.e., to abate potential health and safety risks and disrepair concerns).
- The detection of tenancy, benefit and Right To Buy (RTB) fraud
- Other tenancy and/ or property information that may be applicable.

Controls; We'll carry out relevant checks at different stages of a tenancy We'll set an appropriate frequency for routine tenancy visits and keep records of the visits carried out and the resultant actions.

We'll train our frontline staff, so they are able to conduct effective tenancy audit visits and address any identified issues.

We'll involve other relevant agencies where there are concerns over vulnerable customers.