

INTRODUCTION

Section 179 of the Housing Act 2004 amended the Housing Act 1996 to give Registered Providers (RP) the flexibility to use Starter/Introductory tenancies.

The introduction of this type of tenancy allows the Associations to deliver preventative approaches and early intervention which in turn allows swift enforcement action to protect communities from anti-social behaviour and to uphold the conditions of the tenancy agreement.

POLICY STATEMENT

This document sets out the approach of Aragon Housing Association and South Northants Homes (2 subsidiaries of Grand Union Housing Group) regarding the use of Starter Tenancies for all new lettings. MacIntyre Housing Association, the 3rd subsidiary is not currently using Starter Tenancies.

A Starter Tenancy is an Assured Shorthold Tenancy and is in place for 1 year before the tenancy converts to an Assured Tenancy. During this period the tenant will be visited at least 3 times to consider support needs, ensure that the tenancy agreement is adhered to and the tenancy is successfully maintained.

OBJECTIVES

- To reduce anti-social behaviour
- To deliver preventative approaches and early interventions
- To uphold the conditions of the tenancy agreement

RELEVANT KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY (KLOE)

KLOE 4 – Income Management
KLOE 5 – Resident Involvement
KLOE 6 – Tenancy and Estate Management
KLOE 7 – Allocations & Lettings
KLOE11 – Supported Housing
KLOE 12 – Home Ownership
KLOE 14 – Right to Buy, Right to Acquire
KLOE 30 – Access & Customer Care
KLOE 31 – Diversity
KLOE 32 – Value for Money

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

Equality and Diversity Strategy (GUGH)
Customer Feedback Policy (GUGH)
Anti-social Behaviour Policy (AHA/SNH)
Allocations Policy (AHA/SNH)

Rent Arrears Policy(AHA/SNH)
Money Advice Policy(AHA/SNH)
Tenancy Changes Policy(AHA/SNH)
Tenancy Support Policy(SNH)

SCOPE OF POLICY

If the tenancy conditions are broken then a Notice can be served giving 2 months to give up the tenancy. Upon expiry of this notice a court application is made which is accelerated allowing possession to be awarded without a hearing. Rent arrears cases will not generally follow this format unless there is clear non-payment, but it will be used in the main for ASB cases and other serious breaches of tenancy such as tenancy fraud

This will allow the Association to take swifter action to evict the tenant in appropriate cases.

The type of action that could instigate possession is:

- Violence, abuse, harassment
 - Illegal use of drugs
 - Noise nuisance
 - Vehicle nuisance
 - Dumping of rubbish, unkempt gardens
 - Damaging the property
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- During the first year of a starter tenancy, the tenant has fewer rights than an Assured tenant which are detailed in the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement.

During the first year the tenant/tenancy can:

- Have repairs carried out as any other tenant
- Have rent increases
- Complain/Appeal through the normal process
- Expect to be visited at least 3 times by their housing officer

This would not affect transfer applicants within either Aragon or South Northants Homes as lower level security of tenure cannot be offered to current Assured tenants.

Starter Tenancies will not be offered to other Bedfordshire RP/LA tenants who already have an Assured or Secure Tenancy being allocated property through Bedfordshire Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Allocations Policy

MONITORING

Annual policy review by Board

Customer Consultation: July 2010

Equality Impact Assessment carried out: Initial screen

Person responsible for review: Housing Manager (AHA and SNH jointly)

Date of review: July 2010

Date of next review due: July 2011