

Tenancy Support Policy

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Policy is to establish a working criteria to meet the needs of tenants of the Association where support is required if the tenancy is to be successfully managed by the tenant.

POLICY STATEMENT

South Northants Homes will employ a Tenancy Support Officer (TSO).

This Policy determines the framework within which the Association will identify vulnerable tenants with lower level support needs. It will determine which type of support needs can be accommodated and the way in which assistance can be administered and co-ordinated.

The intention of this Policy is to ensure that tenants with support needs who may not qualify for assistance from external agencies such as Social Services are offered the opportunity of assistance in the successful management of their tenancies. This does not mean that tenants already in receipt of external agency assistance will be excluded from tenancy support, but that tenants who have in effect 'slipped through the net' can also access a level of support that may have previously been unavailable.

The housing management service and the support currently provided by Housing Officers is extensive but cannot always provide consistency where regular follow up action is required, i.e. regular visits to vulnerable tenants. Officers often have to work on a reactive basis and are not, therefore, in a position to provide constant one-to-one meetings with tenants and also co-ordinate the multi-agency approach that is often required. It is recognised that both Scheme and Community Wardens already provide a comprehensive support service to tenants in Older Persons' housing and that this will continue. The aim of this policy is to build extra support without replacing existing provision.

Social Services and many other agencies have tight criteria to qualify for support which sometimes means "borderline cases" (where the customer is clearly vulnerable) do not qualify for assistance. It is at this point that a gap in service provision exists and the role of Tenancy Support is intended to help bridge that gap.

The role of the TSO will not merely assume the status and dynamics of a counselling role, but will provide practical assistance to vulnerable tenants who may be experiencing difficulties in the management of their tenancies.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

The policy aims to meet the following objectives:

- To identify tenants who require, or who may in the future require, support in the management of their tenancy.
- To encourage and promote partnerships with both external and internal agencies in assessing and meeting the support needs of tenants.
- To reduce breaches of tenancy conditions and subsequent court actions.
- To provide practical assistance and financial advice to vulnerable tenants.
- To reduce rent arrears, prevent tenancy failure and prevent homelessness.

HOUSING CORPORATION REGULATORY CODE AND GUIDANCE

The Housing Corporation Regulatory Code and Guidance sets out the fundamental obligations of housing associations in meeting the Housing Corporation's regulatory requirements.

2. Properly Governed

2.7 Housing Associations must demonstrate, when carrying out all their functions, their commitment to equal opportunity. They must work towards the elimination of discrimination and demonstrate an equitable approach to the rights and responsibilities of all individuals. They must promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

3. Properly Managed

3.5 Housing Associations must provide good quality housing services for residents and prospective residents.

3.5.3 With agreements that clearly set out residents' and landlords' rights and obligations.

3.6 Housing Associations must work with Local Authorities to enable the latter to fulfil their duties:

3.6.2 To the vulnerable and those covered by the Government's Supporting People policy.

KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY (KLOE)

KLOE 6 – Tenancy and Estate Management

KLOE 30 – Access & Customer Care

KLOE 31 – Diversity

KLOE 32 – Value for Money

OTHER RELATED POLICIES

Equality & Diversity Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Allocations Policy & Scheme

Aids and Adaptations Policy

Anti-social Behaviour Policy

Harassment Policy

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Customer Committee will receive a report as appropriate, which sets out information in respect of the Association's performance in delivering its tenancy support service.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Customer Committee and, should it be necessary, the Board will receive a report containing overall performance information, accompanied by any proposed changes to the policy and the service.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The responsibility for implementation lies with the Housing Services Manager and the Head of Housing Services

Person responsible for review: Assistant Director – Housing Services

Date of review: August 2009

Next Review: August 2010