



Loreburn Group

Tenancy Sustainment policy

Policy	Tenancy Sustainment Policy					
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Approved by	MC		LET		MT	X
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Policy champion	Head of Housing					

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1. Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1 This policy sets out the role in which the Association will take in effort to maximise tenancy sustainment and reduce homelessness.
- 1.2 Loreburn Housing Association is committed to providing an effective housing service to all tenants and recognises the role it plays in minimising tenancy breakdown, preventing homelessness and promoting stable and sustainable communities throughout Dumfries and Galloway.
- 1.3 The Tenancy Sustainment Policy sets out Loreburn Housing Association's approach to supporting tenants to successfully manage and sustain their tenancies, and to support tenants experiencing difficulties, assisting them to access a wide range of local and national services that can provide support and/or advice.
- 1.4 The Association is committed to making a positive impact on the lives of its tenants by addressing issues such as fuel poverty, financial exclusion and domestic abuse by building strong, stable communities and strengthening our relationships with community partners and third sector organisations across the region. The Tenancy Sustainment Policy therefore intends to draw on a range of expertise to compliment the Association's activities and to provide a proactive, focused, co-ordinated and joined up approach to tenancy sustainment.
- 1.5 We consider that a tenancy has not been sustained if it ends within 12 months of its commencement and we use the definition set out by the Scottish Housing Regulator in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year) to assess our effectiveness and performance in this area.



1.6 We are particularly concerned to prevent tenancies ending in:

Eviction – at any time

Abandonment – at any time

Early termination (a tenancy which last under 12 months)

We recognise that people may terminate their tenancy for more positive reasons such as purchasing a home, moving to take up a new job or moving in with a partner.

1.7 The Association understands the importance of good partnership working and that by liaising with relevant external agencies on behalf of the tenant, and sharing appropriate information with them, the Association can help tenants access support in times of difficulty and ultimately assist them to combat any issues affecting their ability to sustain their tenancy. To this end, Association staff will familiarise themselves with the services of support agencies operating throughout Dumfries and Galloway and agree referral arrangements, or where necessary, protocols for liaising and working with these agencies and organisations. This may also include training for Association staff in order to familiarise themselves with the service and support these agencies can/will provide to tenants of the Association.

2 Related Policies, Procedures & Documents

2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following LHA policies and procedures:

2.2 Related policies:

- Void Property Management Policy
- Choice Based Lettings Policy
- Income Maximisation Policy
- Tenancy Changes Policy
- Estate Management Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy



2.3 Related legislation:

- The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, 2001, 2010 & 2014
- The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003
- The Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Equalities Act 2010
- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter

2.4 Related documents:

- Tenancy Sustainment Procedure Guide
- Pre-allocation Form
- Void inspection Form
- Tenancy Sign Up Check List

2.5 Related procedures:

Choice Based Learning Procedural Guide
 Void Property Management Procedure
 Risk Flag Procedural Guide
 Domestic Abuse Safe at Home Procedure
 Income Max Procedural Guide

2.6 All Tenancy Sustainment activities and communications must be entered on Homemaster to ensure an accurate and thorough record of event.

3 Aims of this Policy

- 3.1 Fulfil all responsibilities outlines in the Scottish Social Housing Charter, particularly Outcome 11 -Tenancy Sustainment.
- 3.2 Minimise the number of tenancy failures and prevent homelessness.
- 3.3 Minimise costs to the Association through property turnover and void loss, and external agencies who provide homeless/temp/crisis support



- 3.4 Identify issues, vulnerabilities, or areas of concern for new and existing tenants and ensure that action is taken to ensure the appropriate support is obtained.
- 3.5 Ensure eviction is a last resort, with all available means having been exhausted
- 3.6 Develop strong and collaborative partnership working with D&G Housing Options and Homeless Service, Third Sector organisations, and community partners
- 3.7 Ensure staff and tenants are aware of available support options and how to access them.
- 3.8 Contribute to the Association's overall objective of creating GREAT places to live and thriving neighbourhoods.

4 Vulnerable groups

- 4.1 The below list highlights some of the potential indicators of vulnerability which can negatively impact upon the individual's ability to sustain a tenancy. These indicators do not confirm that a tenant requires support, they are a reference point for Loreburn Housing Association staff to work proactively and utilise professional judgement as to the requirement for tenancy sustainment support.

- Mental Health Needs
- Learning Difficulties
- Severe Physical Health Problems
- Disability
- Customer Tenant under 18
- Leaving care (under 25)
- First Year of Tenancy
- Affected by ASB
- Experience of Domestic Abuse
- Affected by Harassment or Hate Crime
- Low Income
- Alcohol or Substance Misuse
- History of Street Homelessness
- Refugee or Asylum Seeker
- Ex-offender (unspent offence)
- Ex-services or Veteran
- Young Lone Parent under 25



- Child aged 5 or under in household
- Pregnancy
- Person of Pensionable Age
- Recently Bereaved (12 months)
- Hoarding Disorder or History of Hoarding

5 Tenancy Sustainment in practice

- 5.1 Loreburn Housing Association consider that a failed tenancy is one that ends by eviction, abandonment or where a tenancy is ended early (i.e. a tenancy which lasts less than 12 months) or is ended for a negative reason.

Tenancy failures for negative reasons can incur substantial additional costs to Loreburn Housing Association in respect to rent loss, former tenant arrears, void/re-let costs, resources associated with the lettings process, and in some cases legal costs.

Furthermore, tenants who fail to sustain for negative reasons, can face challenges sourcing future housing should debt (arrears / rechargeable repairs / legal costs) exist.

In an effort to minimise tenancy failures, we will seek to develop pre-tenancy, during tenancy and post-tenancy measures to assist in identifying tenants at most risk of abandoning their tenancies, ending their tenancies prematurely, or developing tenancy related issues.

5.2 Pre-Tenancy Activities

- Tenancy references sought for previous 5 year housing history for all prospective tenants (or discussion with Housing Options & Homeless Services / Social Work Services).
- Housing application reviewed to identify any potential vulnerabilities or barriers to tenancy sustainment
- Pre-allocation form completed with every prospective tenant, confirming circumstances, support provision/requirement, household income and ability to budget.
- Viewing completed with every prospective tenant prior to sign up
- Tenant rights and responsibilities outlines at sign up
- Consent for referrals to be made to external agencies obtained at sign up



- Applications made for Welfare Benefits or crisis grant (SWF and food bank) at sign up if required

5.3 During Tenancy Activities

- A New Tenant Visit will be completed with every tenant 4-6 weeks from the tenancy start date (or earlier should a need be identified)
- Ensure each tenant is fully aware of the Loreburn staff member(s) available to them, including contact details, as well as that of relevant partner agencies
- We will work in partnership, build and nurture relationships with specialist support agencies who work with vulnerable client groups along with statutory authorities across the region to ensure Loreburn Housing Association tenants are able to access the right support at the right times
- Referrals made to appropriate services so that tenants can access advice and build support networks regarding a range of issues such as, Social Security entitlement, household budgeting, and initiate early intervention in the case of financial crisis or poverty. This will ensure tenants have their needs met in a holistic way personalised to their particular circumstances
- Requests made for direct payment of welfare benefit housing costs to Loreburn Housing Association with agreement from the tenant
- Remain solution-focused and appreciative of individualities
- Continue to engage with tenant and external agencies throughout any legal action

5.4 Post-Tenancy Activities

- Upon receipt of a notification of termination, Loreburn Housing Association staff will contact tenant to discuss the termination reason. In the event that this is a negative reason, staff will investigate if any measures or support can be implemented to resolve/alleviate.
- Monthly, Quarterly, and Annual reporting of evictions, abandonments, and levels of sustainment will be undertaken
- Utilise information gained from termination form, void inspection form, and tenant feedback to help shape future service
- Continue to review and source partnership working practices, support services and ensure staff are familiar with all referral processes.



6 Complaints

- 6.1 LHA is committed to valuing complaints and ensuring the organisation benefits from feedback provided.
- 6.2 LHA is fully compliant with the Model Complaints Handling Procedure set by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Any complainant that has exhausted internal procedures has the right to escalate their complaint to the SPSO.

7 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 7.1 LHA aims to ensure that equality, fairness, dignity and respect are central to how tenants are treated. LHA support diversity and uphold equal opportunities in all areas of work, as an employer and service provider.
- 7.2 LHA will not discriminate against tenants, staff, visitors or others based on their age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion or belief, marital status, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment (collectively referred to as 'protected characteristics' in the Equality Act 2010)

8 Policy Review

- 8.1 The Policy Champion is [Insert Policy Champion]
- 8.2 This policy will be reviewed every [insert number of years] years or sooner due to legislative or substantive changes occurring.

