

ABERTAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION: HOUSING SUPPORT POLICY

<b>Abertay Housing Association</b> Registered Charity SC 030152	<b>TITLE OF POLICY</b>	<b>NO.</b>
	<b>HOUSING SUPPORT</b>	<b>VERSION 3</b>
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<b>Date Reviewed</b>	

<b>Date Amended</b>	
<b>Note</b>	

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Scottish Government policy is to house persons with an identified need wherever it is possible to do so. Housing providers play a key role in the provision of housing for people who require some support in addition to their housing requirements.
- 1.2 Some Housing Associations (e.g. Hillcrest / Gowrie Care, Bield, Margaret Blackwood) have concentrated on providing accommodation together with specialised support for a particular client group or groups.
- 1.3 Whilst Abertay has a large number of Retirement Housing units and employs its own Retirement Housing Co-ordinators, it is recognised that some of our tenants (including retirement housing tenants) may require additional housing support and / or care to help maintain their tenancy.
- 1.4 Abertay does not have direct experience of providing this additional support / care. Therefore we will support individuals to maintain their tenancy by working in partnership with Dundee City Council, Social Work Dept, Social Care Response Team, Occupational Health, Homeless Services and a range of external agencies including but not limited to Dundee City Council's Connect Team, Positive Steps Partnership, Home Scotland,, Action for Children, Women's Aid, Addiction Teams, Shelter, Police Scotland, NHS Scotland and Care Managers.
- 1.5 Abertay will play its part in adapting existing tenants' accommodation in order to make it more suitable for the existing tenants' requirements. To date this has been through Stage 3 funding from the Scottish Government although direct funding ourselves will not be ruled out in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.6 Abertay has been involved in the building of new developments where the key requirements are for specially adapted houses with specialised housing support from other agencies (e.g. Carr Gomm, Action for Children in Arthurstone Terrace, Women's Aid Refuge and Turning Point in Dunholm Road). In these circumstances it is usual either for Abertay to issue Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST) or Short SSTs (SSST) to the tenants and / or to have management protocols / leases in place with Social Work and / or the housing support provider. We will continue to seek out these opportunities as they become available.

## **2 OBJECTIVES OF POLICY**

- 2.1 To ensure our service is tailored to the needs of the individual and that it promotes their independence.
- 2.2 To work with our partners to help people with additional needs (see Appendix) to be housed, or to remain, in the community.

- 2.3 Provide long term solutions promoting tenancy sustainment.
- 2.4 To support people to realise their full potential.
- 2.5 To issue wherever possible our standard Secure Tenancy (SST) (e.g. Turning Point). In some cases, it may be appropriate to offer short secure tenancies (SSSTs) (for example Action for Children leases or where a new tenant has had a recent history of serious antisocial behaviour). In other circumstances it may be appropriate to offer leases based on the SFHA model lease (e.g. Women's Aid Refuge). In addition it is not unusual to offer SSTs to tenants and to offer a lease for office accommodation to the support provider (e.g. Turning Point)
- 2.6 To work with local statutory and voluntary agencies in order to help to assess need and to meet that need where possible.
- 2.7 To consider adapting accommodation to meet particular needs (including Barrier Free) where possible - in conjunction with the Social Work Department whenever embarking on comprehensive modernisation or rehabilitation works.

### **3. IDENTIFYING NEED**

- 3.1 Abertay is a member of the Dundee Common Housing Register and we have adopted the Common Allocation Policy which ensures that all our allocations of housing are to those with an assessed need. This is in accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which requires that we give greatest priority to people with housing need. This includes homeless people, those with a medical reason for rehousing and people who are living in overcrowded or sub-standard housing conditions.
- 3.2 We are committed to working with our partners and ensure that the accommodation we provide meets the person's needs and that support where necessary is in place to help sustain the tenancy.
- 3.3 There may be occasions where we will rehouse a homeless priority applicant who may have previously been evicted for serious antisocial behaviour. In these instances we will offer the prospective tenant a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy along with the provision of housing support for an initial period.

### **4. Vulnerable Tenants with Community Care Needs**

- 4.1 Tenancies can quite often break down within a year due, for example, to financial problems, lack of support and / or mental health issues. Abertay will be proactive and carry out an initial financial health check with the new tenant to ensure that all appropriate benefits are applied for and their income is maximised.
- 4.2 If the new tenant is to claim Universal Credit then along with Welfare support, we will offer digital assistance to enable the tenant to manage their claim on-

line.

- 4.3 A new tenant visit will be carried out after a short period of time to check for any signs of previously unidentified vulnerability or hints that the tenancy might be at risk. We will either refer or signpost tenants to the appropriate support agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Money Advice, DCC's Connect Team, Brooksbank Centre, Shelter etc.
- 4.4 Our Retirement Housing Co-ordinators and other operational staff will often come across tenants who may be identified as being at risk and who may require additional support. In those situations the Retirement Housing Co-ordinator / Welfare Officer / Housing Officer / rent team can contact the Social Work Department in order for an assessment of the tenant's needs to be carried out.
- 4.5 Officers can also arrange for support to be provided by Positive Steps or Home Scotland. This may be at the request of the tenant or where the Officer feels that the condition of the home and / or vulnerability of the tenant would benefit from help to develop their skills in budgeting, housekeeping etc. The support will only be arranged with the agreement of the individual.

## **5. Tackling Fuel Poverty.**

Abertay has been able to fund an Energy Efficiency Advisor (to Summer 2019) who will provide energy advice and assistance to our tenants. They can provide advice on fuel tariffs, how to reduce bills, energy efficiency measures, advocacy work resolving individuals debts with energy suppliers, and other advice and referral work.

## **6. Antisocial Behaviour and Harassment**

Abertay will help tenants maintain the quiet enjoyment of their homes by responding to complaints made about their neighbours. Our objective is to attempt to resolve complaints consistently, sensitively and to the reasonable satisfaction of all. Further guidance can be found in our Neighbour Disputes and Antisocial Behaviour Policy.

If the anti-social behavior or harassment is severe and being carried out over a period of time and the actions taken against the perpetrator are likely not to be resolved over the short term, then the Housing Officer will consider whether it is more appropriate for the tenant to apply for a transfer. The Housing Officer can request that harassment points be awarded to their housing application.

## **CLIENT GROUPS WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM SUPPORT**

### **People who:**

1. Are vulnerable due to their age
2. Have a Learning Disability
3. Are affected by infirmity or ageing
4. Are vulnerable due to substance misuse
5. Have mental health problems, including dementia
6. Have Physical Disabilities
7. Have Acquired Brain Injury
8. Have Mental Health Problems
9. Have been homeless
10. Are a new Universal Credit claimant with limited or no IT skills
11. Have poor social skills or history of anti-social behaviour
12. Are isolated due to their ethnic origin
13. Have experienced psychological trauma (including that caused by domestic abuse)
14. Are leaving institutions such as the Throughcare Aftercare Service

Have been identified as a hoarder