

Housing Support Policy

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 additional support in addition to their housing requirements.
- 1.2 Some Housing Associations (e.g. Hillcrest, Bield, Blackwood) have concentrated on providing accommodation together with specialized support for a particular client group or groups.
- 1.3 Whilst the Association has a large number of Retirement Housing properties and employs its own Retirement Housing Coordinators, 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 The Association 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 external agencies, such as: Dundee City Council's Health and Social Care Partnership, Occupational Health, Homeless Services, Dundee City Council's Connect Team, Positive Steps Partnership, Home Scotland, Action for Children, Women's Aid, Addiction Teams and Shelter, amongst others.
- 1.5 The Association 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 Adaptation funding from the Scottish Government although direct funding will not be ruled out in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.6 The Association 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 the Association to issue Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST) or Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (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. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is 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 Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST). In some cases, it may be appropriate to offer Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSST), for example 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. In addition it is not unusual to offer SSTs to tenants and to offer a lease for office accommodation to the Support Provider.

- 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 Fee) where possible – in conjunction with the Social Work Department whenever embarking on comprehensive modernisation or rehabilitation works.

3. Identifying Need

- 3.1 The Association is a member of the Dundee Common Housing Register and we have adopted the Common Allocation Policy which ensures that all our housing allocations are made 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 the greatest 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 anti-social 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. The Association 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 Coordinators and other operational staff may identify tenants who may be being at risk and who may require additional support. In those situations the Retirement Housing Coordinator / Tenancy Sustainment Officer / Housing Officer / Income 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. 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 tenant.

5. Tackling Fuel Poverty

5.1 The Association has a Tenancy Sustainment Officer who will provide energy advice and assistance to our tenants. They can provide advice on how to reduce bills, energy efficiency measures and other advice and referral work.

6. Anti-Social Behaviour

6.1 The Association will help tenants to 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 the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

7. Risk Management Statement

7.1 The risks associated with housing support are comprehensively incorporated within Association's Risk Management Framework.

8. Equality and Diversity Statement

8.1 The protected characteristics enshrined in the Equality Act 2010 are respected when ensuring compliance with the Association's obligations in respect of housing support.

9. Policy Monitoring and Review

9.1 The Housing Manager will monitor the implementation and operational effectiveness of the Housing Support Policy.

9.2 The Housing Support Policy will be reviewed every four years or as and when deemed necessary.

Appendix to Housing Support Policy

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 been homeless
9. Are a new Universal Credit claimant with limited or no IT skills
10. Have poor social skills or history of anti-social behaviour
11. Are isolated due to their ethnic origin
12. Have experienced psychological trauma (including that caused by domestic abuse)
13. Are leaving institutions such as the Throughcare Aftercare Service
14. Have been identified as a hoarder