



Policy Name	Tenancy Sustainment Policy		
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Review Date	November 2023		
Purpose	Review & Approve		
Next Review Date	November 2027		
Committee	Service Delivery		
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Internal Policy		To be published	x

Angus Housing Association Registered Charity Number SC020981

Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes	Number(s)
As required by Section 31 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, the Scottish Ministers, in the Scottish Social Housing Charter, set the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities. This policy reflects the Association's commitment to the Charter, specifically the following Outcomes	1.Equalities 2.Communication 3.Participation 4.Quality of Housing 5.Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements 6. Estate Management, Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbour Nuisance and Tenancy Disputes 7,8 & 9 Housing Options 11. Tenancy Sustainment
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Department	Housing Management
Approval Date by Committee	

Notes	
<p>We will comply with all relevant legislation and associated regulations, including:</p> <p>The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, 2001 & 2010 The Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 The Anti-Social (Scotland) Behaviors Act 2004 The Welfare Reform Act 2012</p> <p>This policy was first produced in June 2014 and has been reviewed on the following occasions -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2018 • November 2023 	

Angus Housing Association Ltd

Tenancy Sustainment Policy

1. Introduction

Angus Housing Association is fully committed to providing quality housing in a safe, secure environment where our tenants want to live now and in the future.

The Association recognises that there are many aspects to developing and maintaining sustainable homes and communities. Promoting tenancy sustainment, prevents homelessness, minimises the financial cost to the Association and the impact on families and communities.

2. Scope and Definition

Tenancy sustainment is the provision of a range of measures which provide tenants with the necessary support to give them the best chance of successfully managing their tenancy. Examples include housing related support, debt and welfare advice, joint working with specialist agencies and information and “signposting” to support and advice services.

This Policy applies to all the Association’s tenants and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Rent Management Policy
- Neighbours Dispute and Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Welfare & Financial Inclusion Strategy
- Adult Protection Policy
- Medical Adaptations Policy

3. Policy Aims

The aim of the Policy is to minimise the number of tenants who, for a variety of reasons, do not successfully manage their tenancy:

Prevention

By making sure issues which could affect tenancy sustainment such as:

- Rent Arrears
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Social Isolation
- Property Barriers

are identified and addressed prior to and throughout the tenancy.

Supporting

By making sure support is provided and reflects the varying needs of tenants through:

- Provision of Appropriate Support
- Partnership Working

The Association will identify and work with other agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach to providing help and support.

4. Regulatory Standards

With reference to the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the Scottish Housing Regulator has identified that landlords must make sure that advice and information is given to tenants and applicants about how to get support to enable them to remain in their home.

Key indicators used by the regulator to measure landlord performance on tenancy sustainment include:

- The percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than one year, by source of let.
- The turnover of lettable stock in the last year.
- The number of applicants on the waiting list for medical adaptations, the number carried out and the waiting time.
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- Court actions initiated; and orders for recovery of possession granted.
- The number of and reason for evictions in the last year.
- The number of properties abandoned in the last year.

5. Expected Outcomes

Key outcomes of the policy include:

- Minimising tenancy breakdowns.
- Preventing homelessness.
- Promoting stable and viable communities.
- Minimising voids levels, rent loss and associated costs.

6. Involving Stakeholders

We will consult tenants in line with our Tenant Participation Policy and Strategy.

7. Policy Framework

This Policy is consistent with the Association's Corporate Policies and other departmental strategies including:

- Internal Management Plan
- Allocations Policy
- Arrears Management Policy
- Estate Management & Neighbourhood Disputes & Anti-social Behaviour Policies
- Welfare & Financial Inclusion Strategy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Medical Adaptations & Alterations and Improvement Policies
- Tenant Participation Strategy

8. Key Principles

Early intervention is the key to making sure that our prospective tenants get the information, advice and support they need so that they can remain in their homes.

9. Allocations

Some support needs will be identified at the application stage.

We will continue to liaise with and accept referrals from Local Authority Departments to ensure that physical and other health needs are addressed prior to allocation.

Pre tenancy interviews/home visits will ensure:

- that prospective tenants are given face to face information about the kind of help and support available at home visits etc.
- the service standards they can expect from us.
- their responsibilities in terms of paying the rent and keeping to their tenancy conditions.
- Whether help or support will be need regarding medical adaptations
- Whether help or support will be required to access benefits or grants

All viewings will be accompanied and at this stage prospective tenants will be issued with a Viewing Sheet providing more information about the local area and being an Angus Housing Association tenant.

The sign up will be a key factor in setting up and maintaining an effective relationship with new tenants. Tenants will be provided, via the tenant's handbook, with information on what service standards they can expect, how to access these services and what to do if something goes wrong.

At this stage tenants will be offered immediate help with:

- Housing Benefit applications to prevent a delay in the payment of Housing Benefit and minimise the build up of rent arrears.
- Universal Credit and Direct Payments.
- Referrals and appointments with a range of services provided by other agencies via our partnership working arrangements.

It is important to build good relationships from the start and continue to offer support during the tenancy. Individual follow up (settling in) visit will be done by the Housing Office and Maintenance Officer within the first 6 weeks of the date of entry. This will ensure that any support mechanisms previously identified to meet specific needs have been put in place; and alert us to any unmet needs.

10. Failed Tenancies

Tenancies may be terminated for several reasons. Some are influenced by external factors such as lifestyle changes of the tenant. However, it is generally accepted that a 'failed tenancy' is a tenancy that ends by eviction, abandonment, or where the tenancy is terminated within 12 months from the date of entry.

Particular household types may be defined as 'at risk' and need help or support at times in order to sustain their tenancies. At risk households may include:

- households who have previously been homeless
- those with learning difficulties, mental health issues, or personality disorders
- older people with support needs
- those with alcohol and/ or drug use issues
- young parents
- people who have suffered previously from domestic abuse or other types of violence
- households suffering from racial and non-racial harassment
- ex- offenders
- those with disabilities who may or may not have support needs
- young people setting up home for the first time – particularly those leaving care
- families with support needs
- households with histories of financial exclusion or multiple debts

We recognise that for some tenants it is important to maintain regular, personal and sustained contact throughout the duration of their tenancy.

11. Support

Every tenant is responsible for managing their tenancy and keeping to their tenancy agreement. However, the Association recognises that continued and sustained support for potentially vulnerable individuals and families may be critical for the success of their tenancies.

An indication that support may be required could be highlighted by the tenant or a member of their family; neighbours; housing staff; other professionals or agencies.

It is well researched and reported that many social housing tenants are financially excluded. Fuel poverty, reliance on welfare benefits, low income and uptake of expensive forms often can affect households.

The Association has a key role to play in identifying tenants or households who may have specific needs to ensure that advice and support is delivered. By the Association's inhouse Energy Advisor (EA) and Financial Inclusion Officer who are part of the Association's Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) or by referral to a specialist support agency.

To mitigate the effects of financial inclusion the FIT will use the Association's Housing Software system to identify and provide information, advice and support directly to those affected.

Information on how to access advice and support about any aspect of the tenancy is available to all tenants via our Facebook page, website, newsletter articles and tenant's handbook. Information leaflets about help with financial matters are issued with debt recovery letters and a referral to our FIT is an automatic part of our debt recovery procedures.

12. Adaptations

The Association is committed to providing adaptations to properties where possible, to help promote independence, security and dignity and to enable tenants to remain in their home. We will continue to work in partnership with tenants and Local Authorities to identify and meet tenant's needs now and in the future.

13. Partnership Working

The Association will continue to work positively and in partnership with others to ensure that individually tailored support is provided, where required, to enable tenants to meet all of their tenancy obligations.

This will include tenants, local authorities, specialist support agencies and communities, to address homelessness, anti-social behaviour, poverty/debt issues, physical and mental health issues and welfare reform issues where these affect the sustainability of tenancies and communities.

We will agree and adopt protocols and information sharing mechanisms with these partners.

In addressing the needs of individuals we will be aware, and make those individuals aware, of the range of services available to provide support and advice.

Where specialist support is required that cannot be provided by the Association we will continue to ensure that tenants are signed posted to offered support by an appropriate alternative agency.

14. Equalities and Confidentiality

Equalities

The Policy complies with the Association's Equalities Policy to ensure equality of treatment for all tenants without discrimination or prejudice. At all times the Association will therefore consider all tenants, regardless of sex, faith or religion, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, mental or physical health, disability or marital status.

Confidentiality

The Association recognises that confidentiality is important to tenants and the Association will treat their tenancy information in the strictest confidence under the Data Protection Act 1998.

15. Monitor and Key Performance Indicators

Monitor

The Policy will be monitored by analysing and reviewing the following data on an quarterly and annual basis:

- Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year, by source of let
- Medical Adaptations
- Abandonments
- Arrears Actions

Key Performance Indicators

	<u>Target</u>
Current and former tenants gross rent arrears as a percentage of rent due in the reporting year ARC Indicator 27	>3.5%
Settling in visits within 6 weeks of date of entry	>90%
Percentage of medical adaptations budget committed	100%
Annual number of abandoned tenancies	<8
New tenancies sustained 12 months after date of entry	>95%
Number of tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent	<10%

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed 4 years from the date of implementation, which will be the date the policy is approved by the Committee of Management or earlier if deemed appropriate.