

STARTER TENANCY POLICY

Statement of Purpose

This policy will help support successful tenancies and assist Sentinel's approach to the Respect agenda and sustainable communities, in respect of:

- community safety,
- crime-reduction,
- the protection of individuals from the effects of anti-social behaviour
- good neighbour relations and tolerance of lifestyle differences

The policy will apply to all new tenancies from 1st April 2006. Existing assured tenants moving within our stock or transferring from other registered social landlords are exempted.

Our Approach

- 1.1 Starter tenancies are offered by Sentinel for a probationary period of 12 months. The tenancy will be in the form of an assured short-hold tenancy. To convert to an assured tenancy, tenants must satisfactorily complete the probationary period, without tenancy breach. Tenants who fail to remedy any breaches or fail to commit to a support package to overcome will be subject to tenancy enforcement action.

Commitment to Support

- 2.1 We will seek to offer residents a range of support to assist them sustain a successful tenancy.
- 2.2 We will conduct a pre-tenancy assessment and needs evaluation to develop the package.
- 2.3 We will work with other organisations to signpost and / or deliver direct support to the tenant. Including, but not limited to, Floating support services, Housing Benefit Department, Probation Service, Social Services and Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 2.4 Our Neighbourhood Services team will conduct a follow-up visit to all new residents within 2-4 weeks of the start of tenancy to ensure that there is clarity on all tenancy matters and support services available.
- 2.5 If at any time during the tenancy, concerns or breaches of the tenancy are apparent we will seek to understand the reason for the concern/breach and to evaluate how best that this may be addressed. Tenants will be required to fully commit to any subsequent support plan.

Tenant Responsibility

- 3.1 During the starter tenancy period, all tenants will be expected to abide fully with their tenancy agreement.
- 3.2 Tenants will be encouraged to engage with, and access the agreed support packages that have been identified to assist in the sustainability of their tenancy.

Ending a tenancy

- 4.1 We will, in conjunction with the tenant, seek to identify and provide an adequate support package.
- 4.2 Where, despite ongoing support being provided, clear breaches in the tenancy remain, enforcement action will be taken.
- 4.3 As a last resort, we will evict tenants that have clearly breached their tenancy, and we will exclude them from accessing further Sentinel accommodation vacancies.

Right to appeal a decision on enforcement action

- 5.1 The Appeals Panel, consisting of two Sentinel Board members and one senior member of staff will be convened within 20 working days, upon request from the tenant.

Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 We will seek to ensure that all tenancy support, during the probationary period, is delivered in accordance with our Equality & Diversity policy.

Monitoring and Review

Biannually, we will review the performance of this policy.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services will review the operation of the policy, with adequate consultation of staff and tenants, and report the outcomes of the review to the Policy Subcommittee.

Performance will be monitored internally on a monthly basis by recording the number of successful starter tenancies, number of failures and a breakdown of the tenants failing.

Approval Stages

Named Departmental Sign off: Cindy Creasy

Date: 14th August 2006

Named Director Sign off: Val Bagnal

Date: 15th August 2006

Consultation Date: 29th August 2006

Committee Approval Date: 26th October 2006