

NORTH VIEW Housing Association

North View is a registered Scottish charity – charity registration number SC032963

POLICY

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

Passed:-

Review Date:-

**All North View policies and publications can be made available on CD/data-to-voice, in Braille, large print and community languages.
For further details please contact us on 0141 634 0555 or email us on enquiries@nvha.org.uk**

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Section 1: Policy Objectives

- 1.1 North View Housing Association Limited is a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and a registered Scottish Charity (SC032963). The Association owns and manages houses in the Windlaw neighbourhood of Castlemilk.
- 1.2 This Policy describes how the Association will help tenants sustain their tenancies and avoid eviction or homelessness.
- 1.3 The Association's aim is to:
 - Reduce eviction rates and homelessness;
 - Reduce financial losses caused by rent arrears and void turnover costs;
 - Strengthen the community by creating a stable, engaged neighbourhood.
- 1.4 In support of this aim, the key objectives of the Tenancy Sustainment Policy are as follows:

1. Preventing Evictions & Homelessness

- Provide early intervention and proactive support to help tenants avoid rent arrears and eviction.
- Work with external agencies to offer alternative solutions before considering eviction.

2. Supporting Financial Stability

- Help tenants to access a range of welfare benefits, including Housing Benefit and Universal Credit through the in-house Welfare Rights Service.
- Sign post tenants to agencies who can help with budgeting, debt management, and energy efficiency to reduce living costs.

3. Promoting Tenant Well-being & Independence

- Sign post to support services in the local area including the range of services provided by Glasgow City Council and Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP), and those linked to partner agencies such as The Pantry and The Jeely Piece Club for children.
- Provide additional support for vulnerable tenants, including older people, those with disabilities, or young people leaving care.

4. Encouraging Positive Tenant Engagement

- Promote tenant participation in community activities and support networks.
- Ensure tenants understand their rights and responsibilities under their tenancy agreement.

5. Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour & Neighbour Conflicts

- Action anti-social behaviour complaints in line with North View's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (see Section 4.3)
- Offer mediation services to resolve ongoing disputes between tenants.
- Work in partnership with Glasgow City Council services and the Police to support tenants or take action in partnership with services where required.

6. Supporting Employment & Education Opportunities

- Help tenants access job training, apprenticeships, and educational resources.

7. Ensuring Safe & Suitable Housing

- Provide guidance on the repairs and maintenance service provided by the Association and outline tenants' responsibilities for maintaining the condition of property and upkeep of common areas.
- Carry out adaptations for disabled tenants to ensure housing meets their needs.

1.5 This Policy applies to all the Association's tenants and should be read in conjunction with the following key organisational policies (see Section 4):

- Allocations Policy
- Rent Arrears Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Medical Adaptations Policy

1.6 The Tenancy Sustainment Policy has been approved by the Association's Management Committee and describes how we will achieve the objectives described above.

Section 2: The Local Context

2.1 The Association manages around 700 tenancies in the Windlaw area of Castlemilk. Applicants receive information about the Association and profile of our houses as part of their Housing Options and Solutions Interview when applying for a house.

Section 3: Legal Requirements

3.1 The Association is subject to a number of legislative requirements regarding tenancy sustainment as follows:

3.1.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced reforms to on tenancy management, sustainability, and tenant rights. Relevant provisions include:

- Section 34 requires landlords to have appropriate procedures for managing rent arrears, ensuring that tenants are given the opportunity to resolve issues before eviction proceedings are started.

3.1.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

This Act laid the foundation for tenancy management and eviction prevention, and it includes the following key provisions:

- Section 14A places an obligation on landlords, including housing associations, to provide tenants with support in maintaining their tenancies.

- Housing associations must ensure that vulnerable tenants (such as those with disabilities, mental health issues, or those experiencing financial hardship) are given appropriate support to maintain their tenancy.
- It requires housing associations to develop and implement policies on anti-social behaviour, eviction prevention, and dispute resolution.

3.1.3 The Scottish Social Housing Charter (revised 2022)

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes North View must meet when providing services to tenants. Several outcomes relate to tenancy sustainment:

- **Outcome 1:** We are required to ensure that tenants' homes are well-maintained, safe, and secure.
- **Outcome 2:** We must ensure that tenants have access to information and advice about their tenancy, including on how to maintain it and avoid rent arrears.
- **Outcome 3:** Tenants should receive support if they experience financial difficulties, ensuring they have access to welfare advice and benefits guidance.
- **Outcome 4:** Housing Management staff must provide support to tenants to help reduce anti-social behaviour and maintain positive relationships with neighbours.
- **Outcome 5:** We must offer early intervention in situations where tenants are at risk of eviction or homelessness.

3.1.4 The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty of care on housing associations to ensure that there is no discrimination against tenants based on their protected characteristics such as race, disability, gender, and age.

For this reason, we must:

- Ensure equal access to tenancy sustainment services for all tenants.
- Offer reasonable adjustments to support tenants with disabilities or other specific needs.
- Provide support which meets the individual needs of vulnerable groups, including elderly tenants or those facing mental health challenges.

3.1.5 The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018

This Act provides the framework for devolved welfare powers in Scotland. Housing associations must:

- Assist tenants with access to Scottish welfare benefits such as Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP), which can support tenancy sustainment.

- Help tenants apply for or navigate changes in Universal Credit or other welfare benefits, which can impact their ability to sustain their tenancy.

Section 4: Failed Tenancies & Key Organisational Policies

4.1 Failed Tenancies

- 4.1.1 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.
- 4.1.2 Particular household types may be defined as 'at risk' and need help or support at times to sustain their tenancies (from DWP, Guidance: Alternative Payment Arrangements, 2025).
- 4.1.3 At risk households may include:
- tenants referred as section 5 homeless referrals
 - tenants with learning difficulties including problems with literacy or numeracy
 - tenants with support needs due to mental health or neurological issues
 - older people with support needs
 - tenants with additions such as alcohol and/ or drug use, or gambling
 - single parents
 - severe or multiple debt problems
 - tenants suffering from domestic abuse or other types of violence
 - tenants who are victims of racial and non-racial harassment
 - ex-offenders
 - tenants with disabilities
 - young tenants (16 or 17 year old) and/or care leavers
 - refugee or asylum seeker
 - history of rent arrears
 - prison leaver
 - language skills (such as English not first language)
 - ex-service personnel
- 4.1.4 The Association recognises that continued and sustained support for potentially vulnerable individuals and families may be critical for the success of their tenancies.
- 4.1.5 The Association has a key role to play in identifying tenants or households who may have specific needs to ensure that service delivery meets individual needs and appropriate advice and support is delivered.
- 4.1.6 The following key organisational policies aim to identify support needs and help tenants sustain their tenancy.

4.2 Allocations Policy

Pre-tenancy, prospective tenants are given information to plan for future tenancy responsibilities, including tenancy rights and responsibilities including payment of rent as follows:

4.2.1 Housing Options

The Association is part of the Glasgow Housing Options approach. This means that people interested in housing with North View complete a Housing Options and Solutions Interview (HOSI), which results in a personalised Action Plan. If this has already been carried out by another RSL that participates in Housing Options, the applicant would provide a copy of their Action Plan for discussion with North View.

The Action Plan is designed to improve the relationship between staff and new tenants by fostering a discussion on the rights and responsibilities of sustaining a tenancy. The Housing Officer will also provide details of the help and support available to the tenant from the Association and in the local area.

It also provides the opportunity for the tenant to provide information on any support needs they have and existing support arrangements.

The Association also carries out home visits (within a reasonable proximity to the area) on request to complete the HOSI with infirm, housebound or disabled applicants. Support can be provided for people with other additional support needs.

4.2.2 Pre-allocation home visit/telephone or office interview

As part of the pre-allocation home visit or pre-allocation interview carried out in the office, by phone or online, the new tenant will be advised of the actual rent charge due on the 1st of the month, one month in advance. All prospective tenants will be offered an appointment with the Welfare Rights Officer and/or other agency as appropriate.

4.2.3 Tenancy reference

The tenancy reference from the applicant's previous landlord will be requested to highlight any potential issues that may prevent the applicant sustaining a tenancy, including a history of former tenancy arrears, anti-social behaviour (ASB), or any social/health vulnerabilities.

4.2.4 Offer letter

The tenancy offer letter provides details of the rent for the property and the requirement for one month's rent in advance, due before the 1st of each month, payable at sign up if applicable.

4.2.5 Sign up/new tenant introductory interview

In addition to discussing the tenants' rights and responsibilities, information is recorded (with permission from the tenant) at the tenancy sign up on any vulnerabilities or support needs the tenant may have. This will include recording

contact details of support workers or family members/friends who can be contacted if required.

4.2.6 Settling in visit

The tenant will receive a settling in visit within 4-6 weeks of the start of the tenancy and again within a 6 month period, giving them the opportunity to discuss any issues they have with their tenancy and any support requirements they may have.

4.3 Rent Arrears

4.3.1 In line with the Association's Rent Arrears Policy, staff will place an emphasis on pro-active, preventative measures when managing rent arrears, including working in partnership with support agencies to help sustain tenancies.

4.3.2 In managing rent arrears, Housing Management staff will:

- prioritise personal contact/early intervention;
- ensure tenants are aware of the range of support and services available in house and in the local area;
- develop a holistic approach to rent management by working in partnership with a range of services to minimise poverty and maximise incomes;
- take a firm but fair and non-threatening approach to recovery;
- ensure regular, comprehensive and continuous monitoring and recording of rent accounts;
- offer support to assist in claims for welfare benefits, particularly Housing Benefit and Universal Credit applications, including help with online applications;
- consider all possible courses of action, including referral to the in-house Welfare Rights Officer and the available support services prior to legal action; and
- consider eviction a last resort.

4.4 Anti-Social Behaviour

4.4.1 All new tenants are advised of their responsibility to respect other residents and not behave in an anti-social manner or pursue a course of anti-social conduct in accordance with their Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement ('SST') at the tenancy sign up interview.

4.4.2 In line with the Association's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy, staff will:

- adopt a customer-centred approach and ensure that adequate support is provided to victims, witnesses and their households;
- ensure all information relating to complaints is kept confidential;
- collaborate and co-operate with other agencies/organisations where necessary;
- take enforcement action against perpetrators up to and including legal action;
- assist perpetrators to change their behaviour and ensure that they also have access to the relevant support agencies; and
- ensure eviction is considered a last resort.

4.5 Medical Adaptations Policy

- 4.5.1 The Association's Medical Adaptations Policy outlines the provisions for adapting an existing property to meet the needs of tenants with medical conditions or disabilities to allow tenants to live as independently and comfortably as possible in their homes.

Section 5: Monitoring & Review

5.1 Management Committee

- 5.1.1 The Housing Manager will submit quarterly reports to the Management Committee on the following tenancy sustainment indicators in the current financial year:
- Number of tenancy terminations and reasons for this;
 - The number of Notice of Proceedings served;
 - Number of evictions;
 - The number of abandoned properties;
 - The number of anti-social complaints received.

5.2 Scottish Housing Regulator

- 5.2.1 Key indicators reported annually in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and used by the Scottish Housing Regulator to measure landlord performance on tenancy sustainment include:
- The percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than one year, by source of let;
 - 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;
 - 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.

5.3 Review

- 5.3.1 The Tenancy Sustainment Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if required.

Section 6: Complaints

- 6.1 If an applicant wishes to complain about the Tenancy Sustainment Policy or any related organisational policy as outlined, he/she can use the Association's Complaints Procedure.
- 6.2 Information about how to make a complaint is available online at <https://www.nvha.org.uk/performance/complaints-serious-concerns/> or from the Association's office.

- 6.3 Our decision on a Stage 2 complaint represents the end of the Association's internal complaints procedure. If an applicant remains dissatisfied, he/she can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman if they wish to have their complaint considered by an independent body. Details are available from our office or by contacting the Ombudsman direct at:

4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS, or Freepost SPSO

Telephone: 0131 225 5300, or Freephone 0800 377 7330

Fax: 0800 377 7331

<i>End</i>

Policy established - 27/03/2025