SUPPORTING & SUSTAINING TENANCIES

FEBRUARY 2025

LANARKSHIRE
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

LANARKSHIRE
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD
191 Brandon Street
Motherwell ML1 1RS
Tel: (01698) 269119
Fax: (01698) 275202

SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING TENANCIES POLICY

(*Note Lanarkshire Housing Association, hereinafter referred to as LHA)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In formulating this Policy, LHA adopts the key aims and outcomes as defined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (Charter) specifically:

The Scottish Social Housing Charter - Charter Number 11:
Tenancy Sustainment

Social landlords ensure that:

'Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.'

The charter outcome covers how landlords can help tenants who may need support to maintain their tenancy. This includes tenants who may be at risk of falling into arrears with their rent, and tenants who may need their home adapted to cope with age, disability or caring responsibilities.

1.2 All tenants sign a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST) which highlights what tenants can expect from LHA as a landlord, in addition to detailing tenant's responsibilities. We expect tenants to conduct their tenancies in accordance with their SST; however, we recognise that some tenants will need help and support to do this.

1.3 We will assist tenants to stay in their existing home while it remains appropriate to their needs by providing assistance with benefit applications, disabled adaptations and ensuring tenants have access to information they need on how to obtain any required support. Where tenants are receiving support, we will liaise with support agencies to assist tenants in sustaining their tenancy.

1.4 We aim to prevent homelessness by assisting vulnerable tenants to make a success of their tenancy. We aim to identify potential assistance required and signpost tenants to local support services available to help them cope with the demands of a tenancy.

1.5 LHA provides housing in both North and South Lanarkshire: with our housing applicants and tenants coming from a diverse range of backgrounds. We aim to provide a high standard of service for all customers, with our Customer Service Charter detailing the level of service customers can expect from us.

1.6 We acknowledge that this policy cannot be prescriptive, owing to the varied needs and circumstances of tenants; however, we aim to ensure that we respond appropriately to customers' needs.

2.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

2.1 Our Equality and Diversity policy aims to positively promote equal opportunities for all our customers and ensuring equality of opportunity underpins all our policies, procedures and processes. We embrace diversity and aim to eliminate any direct or indirect discrimination that we encounter.

2.2 We aim to ensure our tenants and customers have equal access to our services. We will treat every tenant and customer with respect, ensuring that their individual needs are recognised and they are treated fairly.

2.3 We aim to ensure every customer receives accessible and inclusive service which positively assists people from all sections of the community to help them sustain their tenancies and live independently free from unlawful discrimination or harassment

2.4 Supporting our equality commitment, we have adopted the 'Happy to Translate' service, which bridges communication gaps for service users whose first language is not English.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 We aim to ensure tenants get the information and support needed to sustain their tenancy and remain in their home. Staff signpost tenants to support available from partner agencies including CAB, money/welfare advice and advocacy services.

3.2 Taking account of the Government's welfare reforms, we recognise an increased risk of tenants falling into arrears and will deal with this in a sensitive and supportive manner. We promote positive communication with tenants and proactively manage migration to universal credit, ensuring tenants are aware of their responsibilities.

3.3 We recognise that good housing offers a stable foundation to build a home and provide a sense of belonging. This in turn provides a springboard to develop other positive aspects of life, including economic wellbeing, health, education and environmental sustainability. Accordingly, we aim to provide good quality housing and associated services which focus on tenants needs and assist vulnerable people live independently.

3.4 LHA will work in partnership with local authorities to achieve the aims of their Local Housing Strategies, addressing identified key housing priorities. We will assist where feasible to offer a range of

accommodation to meet applicant's needs, in addition to allowing care in the home.

3.5 We will assist with the provision of disabled adaptations, within the parameters of available grant and priority identified by an Occupational Therapist assessment. Additionally, we aim to maximise the use of adapted stock through our allocation process.

3.6 We will work with local authorities and NHS to assist with planned institutional or hospital discharge programme to assist individuals in secure suitable accommodation within the community.

4.0 ADVICE AND INFORMATION ON SUPPORT

4.1 We recognise all tenants are individual and their care and support requirements are wide ranging and changing. Staff will develop positive liaison with tenants and partner agencies to ensure tenants are aware how to access the relevant services.

4.2 Scottish Government guidance on 'The House Key' services aims to provide good quality information about housing support services throughout Scotland. These are mainly provided by local authorities and voluntary sector organisations, to help a wide range of people live independently in the community.

Tenants who may benefit from support include:

- older people
- homeless people
- people with physical or learning disabilities
- people with mental health problems
- people with drug or alcohol problems
- people with HIV or AIDS
- care leavers
- women escaping domestic violence

4.3 Additional local services available include home safety and security advice available from Police Scotland and fire safety advice from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue.

4.4 LHA participate in the Advice for Tenants and Residents (AFTAR) project, which provides a range of invaluable assistance including benefit/debt advice, energy efficiency, fuel poverty and digital inclusion. The successful partnership project, provided by the Citizens Advice

Bureau, is available to tenants through home visits or office interviews with advisors and can be arranged by LHA staff.

4.5 Housing options advice is provided to all applicants. We have a limited number of amenity and wheelchair housing available and we will endeavour to match these properties to applicants whose health needs will be best met by this type of housing.

4.6 Advice is also available for tenants facing financial difficulties, through the local authority money and welfare advice service.

4.7 Our rent arrears actions are proactive and responsive, with recovery of possession of properties remaining a last resort. Compliant with the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003, Section 11 notifications are issued timeously to the local authority, to advise of impending homelessness.

4.8 Tenants who require adaptations to their home to address changing needs, owing to age or disability, will receive information and advice on the assessment process. Additionally, advice on assistive technology will be provided to assist tenants with identified needs.

4.9 We are committed to homeless prevention, utilising a multi-agency proactive approach to ensure tenants facing homelessness receive advice on their housing options and tenancy support. Our allocation policy, nomination agreements and Section 5 referral protocol with local authorities, address housing needs including homelessness. Additionally, we provide assistance to home owners at risk of homelessness, through our participation in Scottish Government's Home Owners Support Fund for Mortgage to Rent applications.

4.10 The Scottish Welfare Fund is delivered by local authorities, with the fund providing two types of grants namely:

- Crisis Grants for basic short-term living expenses in the event of a disaster or emergency situation

- Community Care Grants (CCG) to enable people who need support to live independently in the community

LHA will assist both new and existing tenants with the application process.

5.0 ASSESSING VULNERABILITY

5.1 Tenants may be vulnerable for a number of different reasons, and/or for different periods. Examples of situations which may result in a person becoming vulnerable are:-

- history of homelessness

- drug or alcohol addictions
- gambling problems
- health problems
- history of rent arrears
- literacy problems or learning difficulties
- mental health problems
- age or disabilities
- language difficulties where first language is not English
- major life changes including bereavement or relationship breakdown
- child or adult protection issues

5.2 Frontline staff may identify potential vulnerability through:

- reports of harassment or abuse towards the household
- reports of ASB by the household
- rent arrears and other debt problems
- poorly maintained home with poor hygiene standards
- hospitalisation or incarceration

6.0 WELFARE REFORM

6.1 LHA recognises that the impact of the welfare reform will provide a range of challenges. We aim to support tenants through the migration process, through positive communication, providing a range of good quality information to support tenants through the process.

7.0 SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

7.1 We will monitor tenancy sustainment using statistical data captured for the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC): including:

- Percentage of new tenancies sustained for more than a year
- Turnover of lettable stock in the last year

- Number of applicants on waiting list for medical adaptations, the number carried out and average waiting time
- Number of Notices of proceedings issued, court actions initiated and orders for recovery of possession granted
- Number of and reason for evictions
- Number of properties abandoned

8.0 REVIEW

8.1 We will undertake a three yearly review of this policy, assessing the validity and effectiveness of the policy against changes in legislation and development of good practice.

Lanarkshire Housing Association
Equality Impact Assessment Tool

Name of the **policy / proposal** to be assessed	**Supporting and Sustaining Tenancies Policy**	Is this a **new policy / proposal or a revision**?	Review
Person(s) responsible for the assessment	Liz White		

1. Briefly describe the **aims, objectives, and purpose** of the policy / proposal	This policy will ensure that • tenants get the information and support needed to sustain their tenancy and remain in their home. • we take account of the Government's welfare reforms; and recognises an increased risk of tenants falling into arrears and will deal with this in a sensitive and supportive manner • we recognise that good housing offers a stable foundation to build a home and provide a sense of belonging. • We contribute to the provision of balanced and sustainable communities • Is transparent and accountable • Complies with our legislative requirements and good practice.

2. Who is intended to benefit from the policy / proposal? *(e.g., applicants, tenants, staff, contractors)*	This policy covers the rights of LHA tenants, housing applicants and recipients of a service from LHA
3. What **outcomes** are **wanted** from this policy / proposal ? *(e.g. the benefits to customers)*	• There is appropriate accessible support and advice available to our tenants the enable them to sustain their tenancies and minimise the risk of failed tenancies. • We make best use of our housing stock • Our communities are balanced and sustainable • We meet our legal and regulatory requirements

4. Which **protected characteristics** could be **affected** by the proposal? (*tick all that apply*)

☒ Age X ☒ Disability X Marriage & Civil Partnership X ☒ Pregnancy/Maternity X Race X

Religion or Belief X Sex X Gender Reassignment X Sexual Orientation X

5. If the policy / proposal is not relevant to any of the **protected characteristics** listed in part 4, state why and end the process here.

n/a

	Positive impact(s)	**Negative impact(s)**
6. Describe the **likely positive or negative impact(s)** the policy / proposal could have on the groups identified in part 4.	Increase tenancy sustainment with accessible support and advice available to all.	

7. What **actions** are **required** to address the impacts arising from this assessment? *(This might include collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative impacts).*	• Supporting procedures require. • Training on new policy and procedures. • Improved Monitoring.

Signed: [redacted] Housing Services Director 4/2/2025

Date the Equality Impact Assessment was completed:

Please attach the completed document as an appendix to your policy / proposal report