


Tenancy Sustainment

If you have difficulty with sight or hearing, or if you require a translated copy of this document, we would be pleased to provide this information in a form that suits your needs.

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Our Vision, Mission Statement and Values

Glen Oaks' vision statement '**Where Communities Thrive**' and our mission statement '**Our aim is to provide good quality affordable housing and an excellent service. We will encourage resident participation and work with other agencies to regenerate our community**' provide the foundation for Glen Oaks Housing Association's commitment to its residents and the communities they live in.

This commitment is also demonstrated in the Association's values which were agreed following discussions with the Board and staff. Glen Oaks' values are fundamental to how we carry out our day-to-day activities.

Our values are:

respectful

we trust and respect our customers and each other

dedicated

we will give 100% commitment to our work

transparent

we will be open and honest about what we do

aspirational

we will strive to achieve the best we can for our communities

Equality & Diversity Statement

The Association is intent on ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; sex; marriage & civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy & maternity.

This document complies with the Association's Equality & Diversity Policy.

The Association will regularly review this document for equal opportunities implications and take the necessary action to address any inequalities that result from the implementation of the policy.

Notifiable Events

Notifiable events will be reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator in line with the Notifiable events policy

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Glen Oaks Housing Association is a registered social landlord. We are committed to creating and maintaining stable and balanced communities where people wish to live and remain. We will promote Tenancy Sustainment using best practice and by establishing strong links with partner agencies and organisations to ensure that the appropriate advice and support is given to our tenants.
- 1.2 The main objectives of the Tenancy Sustainment policy are to minimise tenancy breakdown, to prevent homelessness, and to promote stable and sustainable communities through:
- 1.2.1 **Prevention** - ensuring that at pre-allocation and commencement stage of any tenancy, steps are taken to identify any issues that may affect tenancy sustainment.
- 1.2.2 **Tenancy Support** - ensuring that all tenants are supported throughout their tenancy, individual support needs are identified and where appropriate, referrals are made on behalf of the tenant to partner agencies that can assist with that support.
- 1.2.3 **Partnership Working** - to demonstrate effective partnership working and to establish good working relationships with agencies that can contribute and assist our tenants in sustaining their tenancy.

2.0 Compliance with Regulatory Standards and Legislation

- 2.1 Through the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the Scottish Housing Regulator has identified a number of key indicators which will measure landlord performance in relation to tenancy sustainment. They are:

Outcomes 7, 8 and 9: Housing Options

Social Landlords work together to ensure that:

- *People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them.*
- *Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.*

Social Landlords ensure that:

- *People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.*

Outcome 10: Access to Social Housing

Social Landlords ensure that:

- *People looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and on their prospects of being housed.*

Outcome 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.*

Standard 13: Value for Money

Social Landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that:

- *Tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.*

2.2 The provisions and implementation of the Tenancy Sustainment Policy aims to comply with the following legislation:

- *Housing (Scotland) Act 2001*
- *Housing (Scotland) Act 2010*
- *Housing (Scotland) Act 2014*
- *Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*
- *The Equality Act 2010*
- *Human Rights Act 1998*
- *General Data Protection Rules 2018*

3.0 Key Principles

3.1 Allocating Tenancies

3.1.1 The Association's Allocations Policy will compliment areas of the Tenancy Sustainment policy and is set up to ensure that preference is given to those in the greatest housing need, making best use of our available housing stock, maximising choice and helping sustain communities. In addition, we will

seek to promote Housing Options for applicants through working collaboratively with local authorities, other social landlords, and partner agencies. The 3 main groups on our housing list are based primarily on housing need, with the key aims setting out to achieve balanced communities by allocations of property being spread across applicants with different circumstances.

3.1.2 The main groups are:

- General - applicants who require mainstream housing.
- Transfer - tenants of the Association who need to move due to a change in circumstances since their tenancy started.
- Homeless Referrals - households referred via the match process with Glasgow City Council's Homeless Community Casework Team.

3.2 Lettings Plan

3.2.1 The Housing Services Sub-Committee will set out a Lettings Plan to assist in the creation of sustainable communities. The Lettings Plan will indicate the likely level of lets to allow quotas to be met.

3.2.2 Selections throughout the year will be by rotation to ensure that the target percentages are broadly achieved on an ongoing basis. However, quotas achieved may vary depending upon a variety of circumstances such as turnover or managers discretion to exceed quota in appropriate circumstances.

3.2.3 The Lettings Plan will be reviewed annually.

3.3 Referrals

3.3.1 Every tenant is responsible for managing their tenancy and complying with their tenancy conditions. However, we have a role to play in identifying tenants or households with particular needs, or who may otherwise be vulnerable, and referring them to the relevant external agency for appropriate advice and assistance.

3.3.2 Such referrals will be made where, in the professional opinion of the Association's staff, a tenant or household has particular needs or may otherwise be considered vulnerable and where this may potentially affect their ability to sustain their tenancy.

- 3.3.3 The Association has a robust Safeguarding Policy and Procedure in place to protect any vulnerable adult or child, ensuring that all concerns for the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult are reported to the appropriate authorities

4.0 Failed Tenancies

4.1 Failed Tenancy

- 4.1.1 We consider that a failed tenancy is one that ends in eviction, abandonment or where early tenancy termination occurs (i.e. a tenancy that lasts less than 12 months).

A tenancy that falls into this category can incur substantial additional costs for the Association including rent loss (through void period and possible former tenant arrears); cost of re-let repairs (including possible rechargeable repairs); staff resources associated with the lettings procedure and; (in some cases) legal costs.

- 4.1.2 The Association would not normally consider any debt owed by a current tenant of the Association or a current owner-occupier or lessee within Association housing arrears to be non-recoverable and will take all reasonable steps to recover such debt in accordance with its Rent Arrears Policy.
- 4.1.3 We will ensure that eviction is a last resort in arrears recovery when all other means of assistance have been exhausted. The Association's current arrears strategy is based on early intervention and debt prevention. Tenants are also given comprehensive advice on the consequences of non-payment of rent. Full details are contained in the Association's Rent Arrears policy.

4.2 Minimising Tenancy Failure

- 4.2.1 In an effort to minimise tenancy failure, we will seek to develop pre-tenancy, during tenancy, and post-tenancy procedures to assist us in identifying tenants at most risk of abandoning their tenancies or developing problem tenancies.

4.3 Identifying Vulnerable Tenancies

Glen Oaks Housing Association has a role to play in identifying tenants or households with support needs or, who may be vulnerable and make a referral to any relevant agencies for appropriate support and assistance. Our staff carry out home visits to our tenants and are trained to notice signs that suggest a tenant may be struggling to maintain their tenancy. Our staff and contractors can raise any concerns with our Housing Management Team so that appropriate tenancy support can be put in place and/or referrals can be made. The following list shows who we would consider to be potentially vulnerable however the list is not exhaustive:

- Households who have previously been homeless;
- Those with existing support needs
- Young people setting up home for the first time or care leavers
- Those with disabilities
- Older people who may have support needs
- Those with addiction issues
- Those who have suffered previously from domestic abuse or other types of violence
- Those suffering from either racial or non-racial harassment
- Ex-offenders Households

4.4 Supporting projects

4.4.1 **goConnect Project**

Our goConnect Project helps support tenants to sustain their tenancies, enhance community resilience, builds aspirations and empower residents.

The main objectives of the project are:

Sustainability - helping tenants to manage their homes and providing the support they need to remain in their current accommodation.

Engage & work with Vulnerable tenants to offer support and organise referrals.

Identify opportunities for activities -classes, clubs & events and funding for future projects.

Digital Inclusion and IT - IT tuition including how to create email accounts, search for jobs, prepare/update CVs, advocacy work in assisting tenants to complete digital applications/forms, online shopping, and the administration of our digital lending library.

Partnership working – Quarterly meetings held with various local agencies.

4.4.2 Welfare Rights Team

- **Welfare Rights and Financial Capability** - advice on welfare benefits, budgeting and debt
- **Energy Advice**, and how to make home energy savings.

4.4.3 WorkingRite

WorkingRite provides opportunities for young people aged 16-24. It offers a varied employment activity programme equipping young people with the attitude, skills & experience to help get a job or apprenticeship in something they want to do. The project also provides a paid work placement allowing on the job training.

5.0 Partnership Working

5.1 The Association recognises the importance of good partnership working and that by liaising with relevant external agencies on behalf of the tenant, and sharing appropriate information with them, the Association can help tenants access support in times of difficulty and ultimately assist them to sustain their tenancy.

5.2 **goConnect partnership group** – The group comprises of representatives from local schools and colleges, family support and community groups, voluntary organisations and Glasgow City Council Community Planning Partnership. At the group's quarterly meetings, the various partners emerging issues within their area of operation, identifying opportunities to collaborate on projects and funding opportunities.

6.0 Training

6.1 Housing Services staff will be provided with in-house and external training to assist them to carry out their responsibilities as described in this policy. Association staff will familiarise themselves with the services of support agencies operating in South-West Glasgow and agree referral arrangements, or where necessary, protocols for liaising and working with those agencies/organisations. This may also include training for Association staff

to familiarise themselves with the services and support these agencies can/will provide to tenants of the Association.

- 6.2 Staff will be encouraged to play an active and positive role in establishing and developing relationships with the many support organisations and agencies that can help tenants, the community, and the Association.

7.0 Wider Role Funding

- 7.1 The Association will continue to apply for additional funding in order to continue with, and improve on, the services made available to our tenants and service users. In turn, this should help improve tenancy sustainment and contribute to creating a stronger sustainable community for residents.

8.0 Performance Monitoring

- 8.1 Monitoring and performance reports will be issued to funding bodies as and when required.
- 8.2 Association staff members will maintain records to allow the Association to monitor performance in Tenancy Sustainment work and initiatives.
- 8.3 Performance reports will be produced for the Housing Services Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis.

9.0 Responsibility

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of Housing Management Staff to implement this policy and for the key aspects of the day-to-day service delivery.
- 9.2 The Housing Services Director has responsibility to ensure effective performance monitoring of staff and any subsequent review of the policy.
- 9.3 The Association's Board will be concerned with the overall policy to be adopted in relation to Tenancy Sustainment.
- 9.4 Quarterly statistical and performance reports will be presented to the Housing Services, Technical and Health & Safety Sub-Committee.

10.0 Review of the Policy

- 10.1 The Association will review this policy every 3 years.

10.2 More regular reviews will be considered where, for example, there is a need to respond to legislative or good practice guidance.

10.3 If amendments to this policy are proposed which are likely to significantly affect our tenants, consultation will be carried out with tenants and any Registered Tenant Organisation in accordance with Section 54 (2a) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

11.0 Links with Other Policies

- Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Rent Arrears Policy
- Writing off Debts and Credits Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

12.0 Complaints

12.1 We accept that despite our best efforts, problems arise from time to time.

If you are dissatisfied about how this Policy, or the related procedure has been handled, or any other issue in respect of its implementation, then you may make a complaint which will be handled in accordance with our complaints handling procedure.

A copy of our complaints handling procedure can be obtained from the Association's website or requested from the Association's office.

If you require a copy of this Policy or our complaints procedure in another language or in another form (such as Braille or audio tape), this can also be available on request.