

<b>Title:</b>	Tenancy Sustainment Policy
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Women's Pioneer Housing is committed to supporting residents to sustain their tenancies and live safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible.
- 1.2 We recognise that tenants may experience periods of difficulty due to financial hardship, health issues, domestic abuse, bereavement, or other life events, which may place their tenancy at risk.
- 1.3 This Policy sets out our approach in identifying tenancy sustainment needs early and working in partnership with residents and external agencies to provide appropriate, timely and proportionate support.

## 2. Regulation, Legislation and Standards

- 2.1 This policy is informed by and complies with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including:
  - Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
  - Neighbourhood and Community Standard
  - Tenancy Standard

These standards require registered providers to treat residents fairly and with respect, understand and respond to diverse needs, and work in partnership with other agencies to support tenant wellbeing and neighbourhood sustainability.

2.2 WPH will ensure residents with additional support needs are identified where possible, and referred to relevant support services where appropriate, in line with regulatory expectations.

2.3 The Equality Act 2010 allows organisations to take lawful positive action to support people who share a protected characteristic where they experience disadvantage, have particular needs, or are underrepresented. Any positive action taken must be proportionate, appropriate, and designed to address identified inequalities, and must not amount to unlawful discrimination.

### **3. Scope**

3.1 This policy applies to all WPH tenants across general needs, sheltered and older women's housing.

### **4. Identifying Tenancy Sustainment Needs**

4.1 A resident requiring tenancy sustainment support is any individual who needs additional assistance to meet their tenancy obligations or to maintain their home successfully.

4.2 WPH recognises that support needs may be temporary, intermittent or long-term and may change over time.

4.3 Support needs may be identified through multiple contact points, including but not limited to:

- Tenancy sign-up and pre-tenancy assessments
- Induction and welcome visits
- Starter tenancy or early tenancy reviews
- Rent account monitoring and arrears discussions
- Repairs, maintenance and gas safety visits
- Estate and communal area inspections
- Complaints or service requests
- Contact from neighbours, family members or partner agencies

4.4 All staff and contractors are responsible for being alert to potential support needs and reporting concerns through appropriate internal channels.

4.5 In most cases, identified support needs can be addressed by the Housing Officer, including through direct referral to appropriate support partners. Where a case requires specialist input, the Housing Manager, Tenancy Sustainment Co-ordinator or Financial Inclusion Officer will provide targeted advice and intervention.

## **5. Our Approach to Tenancy Sustainment**

- 5.1 WPH will take a resident-centred, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach, working with residents to agree appropriate support rather than imposing solutions.
- 5.2 Support will be offered on a voluntary basis wherever possible, except where safeguarding or statutory duties require escalation.
- 5.3 Consent will be sought from residents before making referrals, unless there is a safeguarding concern where information sharing is lawful and necessary.
- 5.4 We will maintain effective partnerships with statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations and keep an up-to-date directory of support services.
- 5.5 Where cases are complex or high risk, WPH will coordinate multi-agency working to support tenancy sustainment where appropriate.

## **6. Common Areas of Support**

- 6.1 WPH will support residents to sustain their tenancies by coordinating access to relevant third party support services where required.
- 6.2 WPH may support residents by facilitating access to specialist services in the following areas.

### **Fuel poverty**

- Referrals to energy support and grant schemes
- Assistance with hardship fund and energy debt applications
- Emergency e-vouchers for pre-payment meters in line with the Welfare Fund Policy

### **Furniture poverty**

- Referrals to charities and grant providers for furniture and white goods
- Welfare Fund support in exceptional circumstances

### **Food poverty**

- Food bank vouchers and signposting
- Supermarket vouchers where appropriate, in line with the Welfare Fund Policy

### **Financial Inclusion**

- In-house benefit advice and Universal Credit support
- Referrals for independent debt advice
- Support with affordable repayment plans in line with the Rent Arrears Policy
- Commitment to the *Homes for Cathy* pledge to prevent homelessness

## **Employment Support**

- Referrals to employment, training and volunteering support agencies

## **Mental Health**

- Mental health awareness training for frontline staff
- Referrals to NHS services, charities and community mental health support

## **Physical Health**

- Support with aids and adaptations
- Referrals to health and social care services
- Provision of additional fire safety equipment where required

## **Domestic Abuse**

- Support in line with the Domestic Abuse Policy
- Referrals to specialist services
- Risk-based safeguarding responses

## **7.0 Communications and Accessibility**

### **Communications**

- 7.1 WPH will record and respond to residents' communication preferences, including language, literacy, disability and accessibility needs.
- 7.2 We will adapt our communication methods wherever reasonably practicable to ensure residents can engage effectively with our services.

## **8.0 Governance**

- 8.1 The Housing Manager/Tenancy Sustainment & Safeguarding Co-ordinator is responsible for day-to-day implementation of this policy, alongside all frontline managers.

## **9. Legislation and relevant WPH Policies and Procedures**

### **9.1 Key legislation and regulation relevant to this policy include:**

- The Housing Act 1985/2004
- Localism Act 2011
- Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Mental Health Act 1983
- GDPR 2018

9.2 In addition, there are other WPH policies and obligations that influence this policy, they include:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Welfare Fund Policy
- Rent Arrears Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Evictions Policy
- Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy

## **10 . Equality and Diversity**

10.1 This policy will always operate in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

10.2 WPH is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, preventing discrimination and ensuring support is accessible, fair and proportionate.