



TENANT SUPPORT FUND POLICY

Freebridge
COMMUNITY HOUSING



Tenancy Support Fund Policy			
Last Reviewed	April 2026	Next Review	April 2027
Responsible Officer	Chief Operations Officer		

Policy Statement

We recognise that sometimes customers can find themselves in financial hardship, where paying for essential outgoings becomes very difficult. This can lead to issues sustaining a tenancy including rent arrears, reliance on creditors or the loss of essentials such as heating or food.

In recognition of this we have a support fund to help in these situations.

The aim of this policy is to provide a clear and consistent framework within which applications to the Tenancy Support fund can be assessed and accessed.

Scope

This policy extends to all current tenants and will be considered on a case-by case basis. It is not applicable to shared owners, leaseholders or garage tenants.

Policy Detail

Eligibility and Assessment

The Tenancy Support Fund is discretionary, and each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis against the criteria set out below. The Fund is defined as: *targeted support/relief to tenants requiring help to sustain their tenancies when they face hardship*. It is not intended as a means of long-term support.

The following criteria are not exhaustive but provide a framework for the application of the fund:

- Those who are financially impacted because of poor mental health /crisis or other medical issue.
- Those in fuel poverty
- Those who require emergency support for food or essential household items
- Those who have experienced a change in circumstances for example a loss of employment, changes in the household composition and income etc
- Support to move (downsize, pay arrears on mutual exchange to allow move to go ahead or to lower rent)

- Support to attend interviews/pursue employment (childcare, taxis etc.)
- To fund white goods/furniture where a third-party charity or agency is unable to help
- Any other factors that might cause hardship or financial difficulty

When considering any application, the following will be considered as part of the assessment:

- Is the support required of a temporary nature? We define temporary as up to a 6 month period
- Have all relevant avenues for alternative support been exhausted?
- Is the applicant in receipt of all the benefits they are entitled to?
- Can the household sustain their tenancy? Or is support required to do so
- If support is required, is the applicant willing to engage with this?
- Could the applicant reasonably be expected to reduce their non-essential household expenditure? We will complete an income and expenditure assessment to help with this.
- Would it be beneficial for the applicant to consider moving to more suitable accommodation? Would support to do this be appropriate?
- Has there been a previous award within the last 12 months? This is not to say that a further award will be granted however the circumstances and requirement will be considered.

Vulnerable Customers

We understand that some customers with additional support needs may struggle to engage in this assessment process in the same way as others, they may also find it difficult to engage in ongoing support to sustain their tenancy, or be experiencing long term or chronic issues which are unlikely to be alleviated in the short to medium term even with assistance.

In these circumstances such issues will not be an automatic barrier to support from the Fund. Colleagues have discretion to consider these factors in conjunction with the usual assessment questions, when arriving at a decision.

Application Management

We want to make it as easy as possible for those in need to receive support. As such, we will accept applications in the following ways:

- Via the telephone or other communication channels (email, social media, website chat or in person)
- Internal referrals from other teams
- applications/referrals from third parties

We want to make sure that as many people as possible can benefit from this policy, so we may use information that we store about the property someone lives in, or their household information to proactively offer this support fund. Personal data will not be shared with any third parties for this purpose without the express consent of the customer concerned.

Colleagues in primary customer service roles will also be responsible for proactively promoting and offering assistance via the Fund where appropriate.

We will discuss the financial position of each applicant to confirm eligibility, with a full financial assessment completed for the second or more vouchers issued.

A cap of **£750** will be applied to a household within a rolling 12-month period.

Exceptions to the amount and frequency of support will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will require approval by the Head of Housing or Head of Customer.

Reasons for Declining Support

We aim to provide support to as many customers requiring assistance as possible, starting from a position of acceptance. We do however reserve the right to decline any application where a tenant, or their household, is in breach of their tenancy agreement, especially in cases of persistent and/or serious anti-social or criminal behaviour.

When deciding, all known information regarding the household and their circumstances will be considered, to help wherever possible. Support will never be declined due to rent arrears.

Monitoring & Review

All requests for assistance, and awards from, the Tenancy Support fund, will be logged along with the decision rationale.

A quarterly report will be submitted to Leadership team showing amounts and decisions made for that quarter.

This policy will be subject to an annual review in accordance with the organisation's annual budget.

Leadership team is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy.

Day to day responsibility for the administration and issuing of the fund lays with the Heads of Housing and Customer, with the Chief Operations Officer ultimately accountable for its administration.