

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a blue denim shirt, is smiling and holding a white mug. A woman with short blonde hair, wearing an orange cardigan over a yellow top, is smiling and holding a cardboard box labeled "LIVING ROOM". The box contains a blue cushion. They are in a room with a white plastic sheet on the floor and a laptop visible in the foreground. The background shows a window with white panes and some furniture.

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT POLICY

Freebridge
COMMUNITY HOUSING



Tenancy Sustainment Policy			
Last Reviewed	June 2025	Next Review	June 2027
Responsible Officer	Director of Operations		

Policy Statement: This policy outlines our commitment to supporting tenants in sustaining their tenancies, promoting stable and sustainable communities. We recognise that successful tenancies benefit both tenants and the wider community by reducing homelessness, minimizing void periods, and fostering a sense of belonging.

We understand that tenancies can sometimes be difficult to maintain, and that some of our customers require additional support or to develop new skills to make a success of this. We are committed to doing all that we reasonably and practically can to ensure as many tenancies are sustained as possible, with all interventions intended to resolve problems rather than take away a customer's home.

When tenancies do become at risk, we will work with partners to ensure the provision of relevant additional support wherever possible. When enforcement action does become necessary, we will endeavour to take the least punitive action that we can to achieve a resolution, and to avoid unnecessary evictions.

Policy Detail:

Scope

This policy applies to all current tenants and shared owners of properties owned or managed by Freebridge.

Objectives

This Policy underpins the objectives of our Tenancy Sustainment Plan:

- Ensure that every new tenancy has the best possible start
- Minimise the number of tenancy failures
- Reduce property turn over and the associated costs to the organisation
- Support customers to live safe, fulfilled lives
- Empower customers to take responsibility for maintaining their tenancy
- Support sustainable communities

Support

We are committed to providing comprehensive support to tenants to help them sustain their tenancies, which begins from the moment a customer collects their keys to a Freebridge home.

We want to provide the right support, at the right time, for the right duration

Whilst based on the individual needs of each tenant and not time limited, we anticipate that most of the support we provide directly will be short term interventions, with sign posting to other partners, tools or information sources for longer term assistance.

Our support will be delivered over 5 critical stages:

Universal sustainment

- Provide equality of access to our accommodation to house as many people as possible via our allocations and lettings policy.
- Ensure every tenancy gets off to the best possible start, by working with customers to identify and address any unmet support needs.
- Ensure customers are aware of their rights and responsibilities as a tenant when taking on a tenancy with us.
- Develop relationships with partner agencies to provide a broad range of advice and guidance.
- Provide a fair and transparent framework so that customers understand their rights and obligations relating to their tenancy, via our housing related policies.

Targeted sustainment

- Train colleagues to identify the earliest signs of tenancy failure, often identified through a change in a customers' circumstances and provide the tools and frameworks for referral before a problem escalates.
- Actively promote our offer of support so that customers can self-refer before problems escalate.
- Work closely with partners to provide specific and tailored interventions in a multi-disciplined manner.

Prevention and relief

- Develop a strong safeguarding culture throughout the organisation
- Maintain a commitment to refer customers at risk to the local authority for specialist intervention
- Adopt a flexible approach to relocating customers currently living in accommodation or neighbourhoods that do not support them to sustain their tenancy.

Recovery

- Take a person-centred approach to debt recovery, addressing the specific circumstances relevant to each customer
- Support financial recovery through ongoing provision of money management and budgeting advice
- Provide ongoing access to housing related support even when an immediate crisis has been resolved

Move on

- Provide a mechanism for 'safe surrender' when all efforts in sustaining a tenancy have been exhausted
- Support partners to provide alternative housing options for those leaving our accommodation
- Adopt a flexible approach to former debt recovery
- Operate an inclusive allocations and lettings policy, which does not automatically bar those with previous tenancy failure from further accommodation

Crisis Support

We recognise that there will be times when a customer needs additional support from us to overcome a temporary and acute issue.

Our Tenancy Support Fund provides emergency financial assistance for customers facing crises, such as with food and energy vouchers, digital connectivity, transport costs etc.

We aim to make the fund as accessible as possible, with colleagues trained to identify possible signs of crisis and offer support proactively. Our [Tenancy Support Fund Policy](#) provides more detail.

We understand that Winter poses several specific challenges for our customers and are committed to providing intensive, targeted support during this time via an annual Winter Support Plan.

Partnership Working

We will work in partnership with a range of other agencies and organisations to provide comprehensive support to our tenants. This includes:

- Collaborating with local authorities, health services, and voluntary organizations.
- Participating in multi-agency meetings to coordinate support for tenants with complex needs.

This is particularly important prior to and at the onset of a tenancy, ensuring that each tenancy is set up for success. We will therefore actively engage with all partners

involved in the housing process, including local CBL schemes, and support services such as HMPPS/NPS, temporary accommodation providers and drug & alcohol charities, to ensure that every new tenant has the information, support and guidance required before moving into their new home.

Enforcement

We recognise that at times, and despite all efforts to sustain a tenancy, sometimes enforcement action will be necessary.

Our approach to specific issues such as rent collection and anti-social behaviour are set out in the relevant policies, however in general

We will:

- Aim to take the least punitive action appropriate for the situation.
- Provide support and ongoing communication concurrently with any enforcement action, with the aim to stop or address behaviour or a tenancy breach rather than it be necessary to continue with or carry out enforcement.
- Require Executive support for any proposed eviction action.
- Provide customers with a right of appeal against any mandatory possession action.
- Ensure that where an eviction warrant is to be executed, that colleagues are empowered to exercise discretion to decide not to enforce a warrant on the day the eviction is listed, where the circumstances have changed considerably.

Monitoring and Measuring Outcomes

We will report annually on our tenancy sustainment work and outcomes. Our Board also track a key performance indicator of tenancy sustainment.

Review: This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by changes in legislation or regulatory requirements.