

# HJALTLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

## New Tenant and Tenant Support Policy: Last reviewed November 2016

### NEW TENANT AND TENANT SUPPORT POLICY

#### Introduction

Managing tenancies is the core business of the Association as good tenancy management enables it to:

- Raise levels of tenant satisfaction
- reduce void rates and arrears levels
- reduce neighbour problems and anti-social behaviour
- sustain tenancies and communities
- contribute to best use of housing stock

Good relationships with tenants start with first impressions and continue with a clear understanding of the rights and responsibilities of both the tenant and Association. This relationship starts prior to someone becoming a tenant and will continue throughout their tenancy. The Association will ensure the following

#### Pre-Tenancy Stage

At an applicant's homevisit where it is verified that they are to be allocated a Hjalmland property a "Knowing the Needs of Our Tenants" assessment will be undertaken to produce a personal housing support plan. This will identify the households needs including

- Communication needs e.g. deaf, dyslexia, English as a second language
- Disability and support needs e.g. present care packages and whether a WYFY(With You For YOU)/ Girfec (Getting it right for every child) is in place or needs to be undertaken
- What support is required in managing their tenancy e.g. support required in settling into their new property, assistance with budgeting and ongoing support.
- This assessment will identify with the tenant what their needs are. If support needs are identified a personal housing support plan will be produced. This will identify what action will be taken or what advice is given. It will highlight what support the Association can provide directly and sign post the tenant to other sources of support or advice provided by other agencies.

This will enable a prospective tenant to highlight any support needs they may have and will assist the Association in supporting them to sustain their tenancy.

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The “Knowing the Needs of Our Tenant” assessment form and associated leaflet are contained in Appendix 1.

### **Tenancy Sign Up**

The following will be undertaken at the tenancy sign up appointment

1. Welcoming the tenant to the Association and encouraging them to make contact with the office should they have any issues or difficulties during their tenancy
2. Signing of the tenancy agreement, ensuring that the tenant is fully aware of the requirements this places on them.
3. Provision of a tenants handbook
4. Completion of direct debit or housing benefit/Universal Credit forms to ensure that rent payments are put in place at the start of the tenancy, and where tenancy commences part-way during a calendar month payment of that part month’s rent where appropriate
5. Provide the tenant with a range of discount vouchers from local businesses to assist with their move to their new home
6. The new tenant will be offered an appointment for the Technical staff to visit them in their new property to undertake a technical induction which will include information on how to use the heating system etc.
7. Review and implement any actions & advice identified in the “knowing the needs of our tenants” support plan. Where the individual’s have previously turned down this assessment, the offer to assess their needs should be made.
8. The Housing Officer will undertake a home visit 2 weeks after they have moved in.

Experience has shown that the sheer volume of information is often too overwhelming for new tenants to remember. The new tenant will therefore be offered a home visit from a member of housing staff to cover any queries they may have regarding their tenancy.

### **Home Visit**

The home visit serves two purposes:

- It gives the tenant the opportunity to cover issues which may have arisen since they moved into the property, or to clarify information given when they signed up.
- Enables the Association to continue to build a relationship with the tenant assisting the tenant to sustain their tenancies, as well as highlight any issues that need to be dealt with since the start of the

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tenancy such as rent arrears and maintaining the standard of the property.

### On-going support needs

During the course of a tenancy a tenants needs may increase or the type of input they require to sustain their tenancy may change. To cater for this the “knowing the needs of our tenants” assessment can be completed or reviewed at anytime. This can be triggered in the following ways

1. The tenant requests that we undertake an assessment to produce a personal housing support plan
2. Housing Officer approaches the tenant to offer an assessment. This can be triggered by such things as
  - Concerns about the tenants living conditions or lifestyle which is effecting the management of their tenancy
  - A tenant finding it difficult to understand or adhere to a tenancy condition
  - Significant change in a tenants circumstances e.g. deterioration in health such as dementia, disability
3. Where appropriate referrals will be made direct to Social work in relation to Girfec, WYFY, child protection and vulnerable adult situations.

The emphasis will be on how the Association can support the tenant to sustain their tenancy. Identifying clearly the services the Association can provide and sign posting the tenant to other agencies.

The “Knowing the Needs of Our Tenants” assessment is part of the generic housing support services provided by the Association. It is not a registered housing support service and therefore is not subject to the requirements of the Care Inspectorate. However, if tenants utilise the services of either the Association’s Outreach Worker or Sheltered Housing Support Worker, these are registered housing support services. The procedures for these specific services adhere to the requirements of the care inspectorate standards.

### Improving our services

The Association is keen to continually improve the services it provides. To ensure the approach taken towards new tenants is of a high standard the Association will

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1. Provide all new tenants with a New Tenant questionnaire which will seek their views on the condition of the property when they moved in as well as the service provided by staff.
2. Ensure that tenants are aware of the various ways they can comment and influence the type and quality of services the Association provide e.g. tenant consultation, tenant focus groups, completion of the tenant surveys and the complaints process

### **Review**

**Policy last reviewed May 2015**

**Decision Date: November 2016**

**Next review date: 2019**

This policy will be kept under review and will be reviewed every 3 years.