

TENANCY CONTACT POLICY

24 November 2021

Prepared by:	Rebecca Cullen
Date effective from:	24/11/2021
Policy approved by:	John Bowker
Review Date:	24/11/2024

EIA Required?	<input type="checkbox"/>
EIA Completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revision number:	2
Lead officer:	Jane Allen

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Stockport Homes Group (SHG) carry out regular Tenancy Contacts to both new and existing tenants, with new tenants receiving a visit at the six week point in their new tenancy as well as at nine months (before becoming secure or assured) and those existing tenants who transfer.

1.2 Tenancy Contacts are undertaken by Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHOs) and Independent Living Officers (ILCs) and can be either a visit to the property or conducted over the telephone.

1.3 After tenancies have become secure or assured, Tenancy Contacts become periodic and are prioritised by targeting tenants who have meet various indicators which may mean they need some tenancy support.

1.4 This policy describes the process and criteria in which Tenancy Contacts are undertaken.

2 STRATEGIC LINKS

2.1 This policy links to the mission of SHG 'One team, transforming lives' and its aims - engage customers and communities and delivering thriving, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods. The policy also has links to the following:

- Customer Access Strategy
- Equality and diversity Strategy
- SHG and SMBC Tenancy agreements
- Eyes Wide Open Policy statement
- ASB policy
- Housing Fraud Policy
- Tenancy Changes Policy
- Hoarding Policy
- Individual Garden Maintenance Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy
- Stockport Council Allocations Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Abandonment policy
- Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013.

2.2 In common with all landlords, SHG has a general duty to ensure the safety of its properties and a range of responsibilities for the health and safety of staff, contractors, tenants and members of the public when in a SHG managed building or on its land. Such duties are covered by legislation including:

- Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 & 1984
- Defective Premises Act 1972

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Highways Act 1980
- Control of Substance Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 1988
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Clean Air Act 1993
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.

3 KEY FEATURES

PURPOSE OF TENANCY CONTACTS

3.1 Tenancy Contacts enable SHG to:

- Facilitate tenants settling into their new home successfully, helping to create sustainable tenancies (where the tenant is in their first year of their tenancy)
- Proactively identify and address any housing or support needs that vulnerable tenants may have
- Identify if a tenancy is being maintained in accordance with tenancy conditions, such as checking the property and garden condition, any unauthorised alterations and to identify unauthorised occupants, subletting and abandonment
- Ensure SHG is meeting relevant legislation such as Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 by identifying any homes that are unfit and raising any issues with the appropriate team.

3.2 Tenancy Contacts enable new tenants the opportunity to raise any outstanding or new issues connected to moving into the property, along with any other issues they are experiencing.

3.3 Both tenants and SHG have the opportunity to discuss any support and advice needs at regular intervals which may include referrals to other teams within SHG and/or external agencies.

3.4 Feedback obtained through Tenancy Contacts, in conjunction with other tenant feedback will be used to identify and understand issues/trends and satisfaction levels.

SCHEDULING TENANCY CONTACTS

3.5 Tenancy Contacts are scheduled, planned and undertaken using SHG's electronic system using the following criteria¹:

New Tenant Contacts (must be undertaken as a visit to the property):

- All tenants with a tenancy under six weeks
- All tenants with a tenancy that is introductory or assured shorthold approaching nine months.

Periodic Tenancy Contacts:

- All tenants with a tenancy that has reached its 12-month anniversary
- Tenants to be targeted for contact will be available for NHOs/ILCs, this will be updated on a regular basis with key indicators to be used to identify tenants who are deemed to be more likely to be in need of support.

3.6 In addition to the criteria above, NHOs/ILCs may undertake Tenancy Contacts to any tenant who they deem require a visit that falls outside of the pre-determined priority schedule. Such examples include (but not limited to) where there are general tenancy management issues identified or suspected, or if intelligence is gathered by other teams, e.g. Housing Fraud.

CARRYING OUT THE TENANCY CONTACT

3.1 The NHO/ILC will complete the electronic Tenancy Visit Survey with the tenant(s).

3.2 Where issues are identified, the NHO/ILC will take the appropriate action to assure these are addressed.

3.3 Any support needs identified must be discussed and the tenant's permission to refer for appropriate support should be sought.

NO ACCESS

3.4 Where there is no access/answer to the call, the NHO/ILC will attempt to make contact by telephone to re-arrange.

3.5 If there has been no contact from the tenant, a letter will be sent requesting contact within seven days in order to re-schedule.

¹ Visits are currently scheduled in this way, but may change to reflect changing priorities to make best use of resources and meet tenant's needs.

4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

4.1 This Policy is fully accessible to all, including those in minority groups and who have a protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

4.2 SHG is mindful of any vulnerabilities or communication issues that tenants face and will ensure that a range of communication and access methods are appropriately used to meet tenants needs in the implementation of this Policy.

4.3 By undertaking Tenancy Contacts by telephone, this offers flexibility for tenants who may work for example, but also in person visits will always be available if the tenant's requests.

4.4 Where applicable the appropriate action will be taken if necessary, to ensure that the policy is accessible, for example sign language interpreter, foreign language interpreter.

5 OWNERSHIP, MONITORING AND REVIEW

5.1 This Policy is owned by the Operations Directorate and will be monitored by the Operations Management Team.

5.2 The Policy will be reviewed in line with the Operations Management Policy and Procedure Review Schedule.