Salvation Army Homes
Safe homes. Transforming lives.

Tenancy Sustainment Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 It is Salvation Army Homes mission to provide safe homes and transform lives by providing solutions to homelessness and enabling our customers to fulfil their potential.

1.2 We believe that effective management of our tenancies, enabling early identification of any issues and supporting our residents to access any support they might need is key to creating a culture of tenancy sustainment and the success of developing and maintaining strong and safe communities.

1.3 Salvation Army Homes recognises that many residents living in our general need properties have a wide range of different housing and support needs which may impact on their ability to sustain their tenancy. Failed tenancies mean that residents may end up homeless and have difficulties in securing alternative accommodation.

1.4 This policy sets out Salvation Army Homes's proactive approach to sustaining tenancies and preventing homelessness.

1.5 This policy aims to ensure that Salvation Army Homes provides a housing management service that works to:

- Identify and establish early interventions where required to support the sustainment of tenancies;.
- Engage with residents, ensuring they have the advice, assistance and the tenancy support they require, enabling them to meet their tenancy obligations and maintain their tenancies effectively
- Reduce tenancy failure and encourage retention wherever possible and appropriate
- Prevent homelessness through proactive housing management, advice, partnership working and the identification of tenancies that may be at risk

- Provide value for money by reducing the number of tenancies ended because of a negative housing experience. Thereby, minimising voids and arrears and reducing the number of evictions and abandonments.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all employees and residents.

2.2 In General Needs and Older Persons accommodation, successful tenancies are those where the resident has a high level of customer satisfaction, the rent account is in balance and the resident holds their tenancy for at least 24 months.

2.3 In Supported accommodation success looks different for each individual resident and is measured by the outcomes achieved by our residents whilst engaging with our support services. We do this though our person centred, trauma informed approach to measuring the impact of our services through individual journey and risk management plans.

3. Principles

3.1 Salvation Army Homes believes that everyone has the right to a secure home. We recognise the value of successful tenancies on the wellbeing of residents.

3.2 We recognise that we also benefit from a financial and reputational perspective since sustainable tenancies will lead to sustainable communities and improved resident satisfaction.

3.3 Where appropriate, we will work with and support residents to ensure that they can access relevant services to them help build capacity and therefore sustain their tenancies.

3.4 We will develop a range of measures to assist in identifying residents who are most at risk of abandoning their tenancies or developing tenancy related issues.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Definitions

4.1.1 Tenancy sustainment is a term used to describe the prevention of a tenancy from breaking down or failing. Action can involve provision of advice, support or signposting to agencies that can assist.

4.1.2 Salvation Army Homes defines a failed tenancy as one where:

- The resident left within the first 24 months due to a negative housing experience (general needs and older persons housing only)
- The resident was evicted
- The resident abandoned the property
- The resident failed to move in
- The resident was unable to sustain their tenancy and to live independently.

4.1.3 The most common factors that lead to a tenancy failing are:

- Substance misuse
- Inability to live independently
- Victim of ASB, domestic abuse or hate crime
- Lack of support, for instance, after leaving care
- Living in poverty
- Lack of established local networks
- Multiple debts
- Isolation and loneliness.

4.1.4 Some factors are related to issues within the household and others are external factors. Households may be affected by more than one of these issues and the list is not exhaustive.

4.2 Identifying tenancies at risk

4.2.1 All new tenancies should begin in a positive manner with residents receiving the appropriate level of support. This is not necessarily sufficient to make a tenancy successful and tenancy sustainment will be promoted by the working practices adopted by Salvation Army Homes to prevent tenancies from failing.

4.2.2 Salvation Army Homes will take a proactive approach to identifying when new residents could be at risk and there are a range of opportunities where employees might identify residents who may have potential support issues including:

- The accompanied viewing
- The sign up
- The new tenancy visit
- Scheme inspections.

4.2.3 We also appreciate that sometimes residents who were previously coping well in their tenancies, experience life changes that lead to difficulties with the tenancy.

4.2.4 Neighbourhood Managers, Support Managers and Service Managers will be pro-active in identifying vulnerable residents at risk of losing their home and taking appropriate action so that this is avoided. Issues can be identified by the housing team through a variety of indicators such as:

- Unusual change to resident's behaviour
- Neighbour expressing concerns
- Concerns raised by other third parties
- Feedback from our contractors
- Rent arrears and non-engagement
- Anti-social behaviour
- Persistent 'no access' for gas service
- Poor upkeep of the home and decoration.

4.2.5 Salvation Army Homes housing management policies, procedures and working practices will be focused on identifying, at an early stage, tenancies that are at risk and take action aimed at sustaining residents in their tenancies.

4.3 Interventions & Solutions

4.3.1 We are a national Housing Association. We are part of the Salvation Army family, and we are committed to helping people stay safe and transform their lives.

4.3.2 To minimise tenancy failures, we will seek to develop pre tenancy, during tenancy and post tenancy measures to assist us in identifying residents at most risk of abandoning their tenancies or developing problem tenancies.

4.3.3 We will seek to:

- Participate in Mutual Exchanges and Local Lettings Initiatives, where appropriate, to maximise choice of housing options
- At the commencement of a tenancy, give as much information as reasonably possible on tenancy sustainment and address any areas of concern the new resident may have
- Engage with external agencies re support needs/packages
- Refer new residents with limited or no resources to furniture initiative projects who may be able to provide a basic furniture pack, if available in the area
- Try to provide a starter pack of basic essentials for new residents with limited or no resources

- Ensure that the applicant is aware of all their responsibilities as a resident and the contact details for their operational staff contact
- Identify any possible changes in support needs required to sustain a tenancy – such as addressing referrals for adaptations
- Make referrals to the partner money advice agencies to access advice on welfare entitlement, income maximisation and household budgeting, and initiate early intervention in the case of financial crisis or poverty
- Work in partnership with specialist support agencies who work with vulnerable client groups and the statutory authorities

4.3.4 In our supported accommodation we measure outcomes using the following measures that enable person centred goals to be coproduced with each resident based on their individual needs and aspirations. More information about this can be found in our approach to service delivery methodology and include:

- Managing accommodation
- Physical and emotional health
- Meaningful use of time
- Social networks and digitalisation
- Future, looking forward

4.3.5 We can also signpost residents with:

- Understanding and applying for Benefits
- Advice about increasing fuel costs
- Budgeting
- Accessing foodbanks
- Understanding tenancy agreements
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Obtain funding for everyday essentials such as furniture
- Understand official letters
- Support overcoming language barriers

4.4 Income maximisation and money advice will be provided via a signposting service to assist residents in claiming any welfare benefits they may be eligible for, including Housing Benefit and Universal Credit, in order to help sustain their tenancy and prevent residents falling into arrears. We will only commence possession proceedings when all other actions to tackle the debt have been exhausted in line with the pre court action protocol.

4.5 Performance Monitoring

4.5.1 To monitor the effectiveness of this policy, key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used to measure tenancy sustainment.

4.5.2 Our performance will be reported to Executive Management Team and Board as part of our Social Metrics Dashboard and Assurance Report.

4.5.3 The success of our tenancy sustainment work will also be measured against and impacted by the following operational indicators:

4.5.4 The annual number of abandoned tenancies and evictions and reasons for this

4.6 Complaints and Customer Feedback

4.6.1 Salvation Army Homes values feedback on its services and will listen to residents' views to enable continuous improvements to services, in line with our Complaints and Compliments Policy and Customer Involvement and Insight Policy.

4.6.2 Salvation Army Homes will actively seek feedback by:

- Inviting all new residents at the Settling-in Home Visit to complete a satisfaction questionnaire on the void service received and the condition of their new home when they moved in.
- Monitoring compliments, complaints and appeal outcomes relating to tenancy sustainment to identify and respond to emerging trends.

5. Data Protection and Equality Impact

In developing this policy, we have carried out assessments to ensure that we have considered:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Privacy and Data Protection

To request a copy of these full assessments, please contact the Business Assurance Team at business.assurance@Salvationarmyhomes.org.uk.

6. Further information

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact your line manager or the Business Assurance Team at business.assurance@Salvationarmyhomes.org.uk, who will direct your query to the relevant Policy owner.

7. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

The following legislation, regulatory standards and documents can be relied to inform this policy.

Legal Framework	Regulatory Standard	Other documents
	Neighbourhood and Community Standard	ASB and Hate Incident Policy
		Support Policy
		Allocations Policy
		Tenancy Sustainment Procedure

Document History Log

Lead Reviewer	Date			Version	Approval	
	Created:	Revised:	Expiry		By	Date
HOH (GN&S)	June 2021		June 2024	1.0	SMT	June 2021
HoH&CS		June 2024	June 2027	1.1	SMT	26/06/24

Equality Impact Assessment Summary			
Protected characteristic	**Impact** (Positive, negative, neutral)	**Protected characteristic**	**Impact** (Positive, negative, neutral)
Age	Neutral	Disability	Neutral
Sex	Neutral	Race	Neutral
Religion of belief	Neutral	Sexual orientation	Neutral
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Pregnancy / maternity	Neutral
Marriage / civil partnership	Neutral	Socio Economic Status	Positive