

Clearance Area Lettings Policy

1.0 SCOPE

Purpose

- 1.1. As part of whg's aim to deliver high quality homes and services to our customers, there may on occasion be a need to clear and demolish existing properties. This Policy details the principles to be adopted by whg when allocating homes to customers who have a housing clearance priority. It supplements both the Allocations Policy and the Tenancy Strategy.

Legal and regulatory framework

- 1.2. Where tenants refuse reasonable offers of alternative accommodation and the timetable for clearance becomes critical, whg will pursue possession through court action as set out in the tenancy agreement, under Grounds 6 and 9 of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1988.
- 1.3. The Tenancy Standard states that registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The decision to demolish and award clearance priority

- 2.1. The decision to demolish properties in whg ownership is taken by whg Board. These decisions may be taken as part of a long-term plan of redevelopment and clearance. Following the decision to demolish, a timetable will be drawn up outlining the demolition programme. This will take account of the time limits set out in any demolition notices that may have been or will need to be served.
- 2.2. Clearance priority for re-housing will be awarded to a tenant at the point that whg determines that the tenant is required to move.
- 2.3. Once clearance priority has been awarded, each tenant within the demolition programme area will be interviewed. This interview will explain to tenants their

entitlement to Home Loss and Disturbance Allowance payments, and to provide them with information about how the process of re-housing will operate. Tenants will also be advised that they may seek independent advice from agencies such as the Citizens Advice (CAB).

Matching people to properties

- 2.4. At the time of the tenant interview whg will assess each household's housing need and note any preferences the tenant may have about the location of their new home. This information will be used to attempt to directly match the customer to suitable alternative accommodation. Suitable alternative accommodation does not include a commitment to providing like-for-like re-housing, each case should be treated on its individual merit and taking account of the requirements as set out in paragraph 2.7.
- 2.5. A named colleague will be assigned to each Tenant/s to provide a focal point for all enquiries.

Access to Choose & Move

- 2.6. Tenants with clearance priority will be awarded a gold band in the choose & move scheme. Whilst whg will consider directly matching affected tenants to suitable accommodation, clearance applicants will also be eligible to bid for properties advertised to gold banded applicants on the choose and move scheme. Any bids made will be considered in line with the Allocations Policy.

Provision of suitable alternative accommodation

- 2.7. whg will aim to provide all tenants who have been awarded clearance priority with suitable alternative accommodation. Suitable alternative accommodation means that the accommodation offered will meet the tenants existing housing needs and those of their direct dependants, in line with whg's Allocations Policy. We will ensure that the offer of accommodation is reasonably suitable to the need of the tenant as set out in part III of the Housing Act 1988, Sch.2, part 3:

This will take into account;

- a) Proximity to workplace
 - b) Affordability
 - c) Suitability to the needs of the tenant and family
- 2.8. Where tenants refuse reasonable offers of alternative accommodation and the timetable for clearance becomes critical, whg will pursue possession through court action as set out in the tenancy agreement, under Grounds 6 and 9 of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1988.

Support for vulnerable customers

- 2.9. All tenants given a clearance priority will be allocated a named colleague whom they will be able to contact for advice and information. Some customers will need additional support both in terms of finding a new home and in making arrangements for their move to their new property. Colleague support will be made available in these cases.
- 2.10. Where necessary and/or on request of the customer, whg will assist with the arrangements for the house move to take place. Where these arrangements incur a cost to whg, the value of such assistance is to be deducted from the Disturbance Allowance Payment in line with the current Home Loss and Disturbance Allowance Payments Policy.

Tenancy Offered

- 2.11. Customers subject to re-housing through clearance will not lose any security of tenure where they are directly matched. They will be granted the same tenancy as their existing home. Customers who bid via choose & move will be subject to the Allocations Policy.
- 2.12. Where the property was identified as being in a potential demolition area prior to letting, the tenancy may have been granted for a period of less than five years in line with the tenancy strategy. In these circumstances a new five year fixed term tenancy will be granted.

3.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 3.1. The Director of Housing will report to the Corporate Director of Operations when home loss or disturbance payments are required as set out in the Home Loss and Disturbance Allowance Policy.
- 3.2. It is expected that the majority of clearance cases will be re-housed in accordance with this policy, without recourse to possession through the courts. Any case where possession is obtained will be reviewed to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken.

4.0 MONITOR AND REVIEW

- 4.1. This Policy will be monitored by the Director of Housing and reviewed every three years by the Policy Group.

5.0 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 5.1. Documents, policies and procedures associated with this policy are:

- Allocations Policy
- Home Loss and Disturbance Allowance Policy
- Tenancy Policy
- Tenancy Strategy

Document author	Robert Hughes, Housing Services Manager
Document owner	Gary Brookes, Director of Housing
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