Cheshire West & Chester Council

Council Housing

Tenancy Sustainment Policy

Issue date: July 2024
Review date: July 2027

Cheshire West
and Chester

1. Management Information

Approval Date:	July 2024
Next Review Date:	July 2027
Policy Owner:	Janet Lawton, Head of Housing Delivery
Responsible Service Area:	Council Housing Management Service
Responsible Director:	Director of Economy and Housing

2. Introduction

The policy defines how the Council will provide practical and reasonable support to tenants in order to live independently and sustain their tenancies, The focus places tenants at the heart of housing services, ensuring their needs are understood and acted upon.

We consider that a tenancy has not been sustained if it ends within 12 months However, we are particularly concerned to prevent tenancies ending by:

- Eviction – at any time
- Abandonment – at any time
- Early termination (a tenancy which lasts under 12 months)

We recognise that there may be other less obvious reasons why people give up their tenancies such as domestic abuse and other forms of harassment – see our Domestic Abuse Policy. We also recognise that people may terminate their tenancy early for positive reasons such as purchasing a home, finding a new job or moving in with their partner

3. Aim of Policy

This policy aims to ensure that sufficient and reasonable support is available to tenants to ensure that they can maintain their independence and sustain their tenancies. Supporting tenants underpins the Council's core business priorities of rent collection, tenancy management and property maintenance.

4. Strategic context

This policy helps the Council to meet the following national and local strategic aims.

Social Housing Regulations Act 2023 – Consumer Standards

- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- Tenancy Standard

CWAC Borough Plan 2024 – 2028 - sets out how the Council will work with all its residents to build a stronger future where the Council and residents all play their part in creating thriving, caring and sustainable communities.

The Borough Plan has six missions as follows:

- Starting well - The best start for the borough`s children and young people, with improved opportunity, a healthier start, greater resilience in families and the best possible support and care when it is needed.
- Tackling hardship and poverty - More people feel more financially secure as the causes and impact of hardship and poverty are addressed by working alongside residents.
- Resilient people living their best lives - Local people are enabled to flourish, be healthy, happy and independent for longer in supportive communities.
- Opportunity in a fair local economy - Local people and businesses contribute to and benefit from a strong and fair local economy.
- Neighbourhood pride - Residents live in well maintained, connected and safe places with good and affordable homes.
- Greener communities - Individuals, public services and businesses take action to move to tackle the climate emergency, achieve net zero, protect the natural environment and adapt to the impact of climate change.

[Together with Tenants Charter | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)
[Tenant Engagement Strategy 2025-30](#)

5. Definition and legislation

Tenancy Sustainment is a generic term for the prevention of tenancy breakdown or a 'failed tenancy'. Failed tenancies are a waste of resources because each additional property becoming empty incurs significant costs. It can also have negative effects for the tenant who may become homeless or find it difficult to secure another tenancy because of issues relating to their former, failed tenancy.

6. How the Policy will be delivered

There is no one type of tenant that would require the service, but groups for consideration would include:

- Tenants with no tenancy history or poor credit history such as previous debt remedies (Bankruptcy or Delt Relief Orders)
- Any tenant under 25
- Care leavers
- Tenants with a recent history of homelessness
- Tenants who may require support to continue living in their home independently
- Elderly tenants
- Those migrating to Universal Credit for the first time from a legacy benefit

Tenants exhibiting a need under one or more of the outcome domains.
The Council offer a range of support services for all residents:

- Housing benefit and discretionary payments – helping towards rent and offering short term assistance with shortfalls between rent and benefits.

- Council tax reduction and discretionary hardship payments – help towards council tax.
- The HELP Scheme and Household Support Funding – supporting vulnerable residents in emergency or crisis with food, fuel and essential items such as white goods and furniture.
- Employment and Education – Work Zones helping to provide advice on redundancy, employment and education.
- Free School Meals – Help is available for those who meet the criteria.
- Cost of Living – Further support is available for residents worried about the cost of living.

Partnership Working

In addition to the support services provided by the Council, we also work in partnership with other organisations and may refer and signpost accordingly as part of the support offered.

As part of the support provided, we may require a multi-agency working approach to ensure that all needs of the tenant are met.

Delivery

- Carry out pre-tenancy assessments for new tenants, referring those at risk of not managing or sustaining their tenancy to appropriate support services.
- Have a starter tenancy procedure in place that identifies needs and offers support to new tenants throughout the 12-month probationary period.
- Frontline staff to refer tenants into support such as money advice, wellbeing, digital support or training and employment support, where tenants are struggling to pay their rent, financially/digitally excluded or having tenancy issues, they will be provided with a person-centred approach.
- Proactively identify concerns about the welfare of individual tenants, ensuring all employees and contractors know how to recognise and report a concern for a tenant's welfare.
- The wellbeing service will carry out a wellbeing assessment to ascertain needs across four outcome domains, which are: Managing my home, health and wellbeing, financial wellbeing and tenancy crisis.
- Support will be provided according to need.
- Support needs of tenants will be met directly, or by signposting or referral to suitable agencies and external service or working through multiple agency approaches.
- Consider all options and look to avoid unnecessary evictions.

7. Equity and reasonable adjustment statement

We value diversity and work to create an inclusive environment for customers and staff, where everyone has access to the same opportunities. We welcome our responsibility to comply with equalities legislation and regulatory requirements that relate to equity, diversity and inclusion and aim to do more. Through our activities we

aim to remove systemic barriers to equal opportunities and eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation within our organisation.

We are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. As such, we will endeavour to understand and make any reasonable adjustments required for customers in line with our Reasonable Adjustment Statement and the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment provided will be recorded and kept under active review.

8. Related Documents

- Consumer Standards Code of Guidance

9. Equality Analysis

Results of EA / Actions taken forward to mitigate any potential negative impacts	Inform that this policy can be provided in alternative formats. Inform about the ongoing equality and diversity training for staff in the delivery of this policy.

See appendix 1 for full Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment.

10. Consultation and Business Intelligence

The policy was created in consultation with the Council`s tenants leaseholders and staff.

11. Monitoring and review

The Council Housing Management Board has responsibility for the monitoring and review of this policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years starting from the date it is approached and adopted.

12. Approval and Review History

The approval route for all policies and procedures is via the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning who has delegated powers for policy approval from the Council`s Executive Cabinet.

Date	Version	Approved by
30/04/2018	V1	ForHousing SMT
08/09/2018	V1	Cabinet Member Homes and Planning
17/02/2022	V2	Cabinet Member Homes and Planning
02/07/2024	V3.1	Cabinet member Homes and Planning
20/09/2025	V3.2	Cabinet member Homes and Planning

13. Document Revision History

Date amended	Version	Key Changes
08/09/2021	V1	Original version
15/03/2021	V2	Removed reference to CIS strategy and replaced with reference to Wellbeing Strategy which runs from April 2020-April 2025. Updated monitoring arrangements section. Updated outcome framework actions and removed reference to tenancy sustainment KPI as this is no longer collected as a performance indicator. Updated CW&C responsible Director name and title.
04/04/2024	V3	Removal of ForHousing Wellbeing Strategy and details and replacement with ForHousing Strategy 2023-2028 with associated details.
28/06/2024	V3.1	Revised version following tenant feedback: • Policy change from Tenancy Support to Tenancy Sustainment • Include CW&C four-year borough plan • Policy to reflect Consumer Standards • Information about support provided to tenants • Information about partnership working • Made clear that this policy document can be provided in alternative formats. • Informed about the ongoing equality and diversity training being provided to staff in the delivery of this policy.
19/09/2025	V3.2	Revised version to take into account the insourcing of the housing management service from ForHousing.

Appendix 1 – Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment

Area of activity or change	Tenancy Sustainability Policy
IMDF Approval	Allan Batty, Senior Housing Policy Officer

STAGE ONE - SCOPING	Outlines the decision that is being made any why
STAGE TWO - RESEARCH	Outlines the collaboration and research that will inform this decision
STAGE THREE - FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS	Considers how learnings from research and engagement are being embedded, the potential impact of the decision on different people and how these can best be managed.

STAGE ONE – SCOPING	
Consider points such as: • Where has the proposed activity or change come from and why is it needed? • Why is it important to the Council? • How will this affect the tenant / customer journey or colleague experience?	**What activity or change is being proposed and why?** • Review new policy to ensure it meets the requirements of staff, the Council and its tenants and leaseholders • Policy to be updated to ensure that it reflects the Consumer Standards and underpins the Council's core business priorities of rent collection, tenancy management and property maintenance • Policy to be informative about the approach taken by the Council to support its tenants to sustain their tenancy • Policy to be clear and in plain English **What benefits are you trying to achieve?** • Consultation with tenants using various methods to ensure a diverse range of tenants have an opportunity to feedback. • Undertake an equality impact assessment to identify any positive and/or negative impacts on characteristics.
STAGE TWO – RESEARCH	
Consider points such as: • What groups or individuals will you approach to discuss this? • How will you ensure that these people are diverse and representative? (See Equity and Diversity table in stage three)	**Who will help develop your thinking so that different experiences and perspectives are included?** • Consultation with the Council`s tenants so they are informed about the minor changes to the policy which is recorded in the final document. For example: policy to be more informative about the tenancy sustainment support provided and refer to the requirements set out in the Consumer Standards. **What research will you do to inform your understanding?** • Make relevant minor changes to the policy to include information about tenancy sustainment support provided by the Council to its tenants. • Ensure references where appropriate to Consumer Standard requirements etc.

• Is there any data you can look at to support you?	• Inform within the document that this can be provided in alternative formats. • Inform about the ongoing equality and diversity training being provided to staff in the delivery of this policy.

STAGE THREE – FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS	
Consider points such as: • What have people told you are some of the key issues? • What good practice is happening in other organisations? • What changes are you planning to make because of the things you've found out?	**What have you learnt from your research and engagement?** • Consultation with tenants and leaseholders informed on minor changes to the policy which is recorded in the final document. **How will you embed what you've learnt into your activity or change?** • Make relevant minor changes to the policy • Inform within the document that this can be provided in alternative formats. • Inform about the ongoing equality and diversity training being provided to staff in the delivery of this policy.

Equity and Diversity - Not everyone has the same access to opportunities or services, and the things that make us different – such as the characteristics listed below – can affect our experiences and outcomes. Therefore, it is important to consider how different people could be impacted by any activity or change we want to bring about.	
How could the proposed activity or change affect people with these characteristics (positively or negatively)?	
Age (Younger or older people)	Both
Caring responsibilities (Parents and those looking after an older or disabled person)	Both
Digital inclusion (People without access to digital platforms or devices)	
Educational attainment (People who have experienced barriers to formal education)	Both
Ethnicity, race and nationality (Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers)	Both
Financial inclusion (People experiencing financial barriers or challenges)	Both
Marriage / civil partnership (Legal union between different-sex or same-sex couples)	
Mental health (People with a mental disability or ill-health)	Both
Neurodiversity (Such as people with ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia)	Both
Physical health (People with a physical disability or ill-health)	
Pregnancy and maternity (Someone who is pregnant or has recently given birth)	
Religion, faith or belief (All religions and faiths, including people with no religion)	
Sex (Men and women)	
Gender identity (Including trans and non-binary people)	

Sexual orientation (Such as Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people)	
Any other characteristic	

Managing positive and negative effects

Consider points such as:	If potential negative effects have been identified, how will any harm be reduced or avoided?					
• Do you need to escalate any issues or seek legal advice? • Can you see any opportunities to promote or celebrate positive outcomes? • How will you build monitoring into the implementation of your activity or change and who will you report to?	**Identified Characteristics**	**Reduce or avoid potential negative effects**				
		Where tenants are struggling to pay their rent, financially/digitally excluded or having tenancy issues, they will be provided with a person centred approach;	Proactively identify concerns about the welfare of individual tenants, ensuring all employees and contractors know how to recognise and report a concern for a tenant's welfare;	Support will be provided according to need;	Carry out pre-tenancy assessments for new tenants, referring those at risk of not managing or sustaining their tenancy to appropriate support services;	Have a starter tenancy procedure in place that identifies needs and offers support to new tenants throughout the 12 month probationary period;
	Age	✔ ⬚	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Caring responsibilities	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Educational attainment	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Ethnicity, race and nationality	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Financial inclusion	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Mental health	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
	Neurodiversity	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

| | Physical health | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |

If potential positive effects have been identified, how can we ensure these are realised?
All characteristics identified above –
- Proactively identify concerns about the welfare of individual tenants, ensuring all staff and contractors know how to recognise and report a concern for a tenant's welfare
- Support needs of tenants will be met directly, or by signposting or referral to suitable agencies and external service or working through multiple agency approaches;
- Frontline staff to refer tenants into support such as money advice, wellbeing, digital support or training and employment support

How and when will the impacts of your activity or change be monitored moving forward?
- The policy will be available to tenants on the website and all employees through the intranet.
- The Council adopt an outcome focused approach to measuring impacts.