



Tenancy Policy

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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Context	3
3.	Aims and objectives	3
4.	Allocation of homes	4
5.	What tenancies SARH offer	4
6.	Policy ownership and review	5
7.	Communication	5
8.	Associated documents/Legislation	5

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Stafford and Rural Homes (SARH) is committed to working with customers to develop and maintain sustainable communities and uses a variety of tenancy products to support this aim and meet our vision “Creating great places to live, work and grow.”
- 1.2 This policy sets out SARH approach to issuing tenancies for all rented homes
- 1.2 SARH has separate policies which set out how it manages succession, assignment, mutual exchanges and tenancy fraud.

2. Context

- 2.1 The Homes and Community Agency (HCA) Tenancy Standard requires Registered Providers to publish a Tenancy Policy.
- 2.2 The HCA Tenancy Standard states Registered Providers shall;
“Offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of the individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock.”
- 2.3 The Localism Act 2011 removed the legislative requirement for Registered Providers to offer lifetime tenancies but provides them with a range of new flexibilities including;
- *The type of tenancy that is granted*
 - *The circumstances in which a tenancy can be granted*
 - *The length of term for fixed term tenancies*
 - *The circumstances in granting a new tenancy following the ending of an existing one*
 - *Making better use of existing accommodation*
 - *Building new homes and letting existing homes under the new “affordable rent” tenure.*

3. Aims and objectives

- 3.1 The Tenancy Policy is an overarching policy, influencing associated policies within SARH. The aims of the policy are as follows;
- *To support and compliment Stafford Borough Councils Tenancy Strategy*
 - *To set the criteria for the use of different types of tenure.*
 - *To set out the circumstances when a tenancy will be brought to an end by SARH*
 - *To support customers in sustaining their tenancy*
 - *To support customers whose housing needs change during the fixed term tenancy to find suitable alternative accommodation*

4. Allocation of homes

- 4.1** Homes are allocated in accordance with the Choice Based Lettings Policy (CBL). The CBL has a banding system which recognises the housing need of customer.
- 4.2** The CBL is an internet based solution where vacant homes are advertised and customers can express interest on homes in which they are interested.
- 4.3** Vulnerable customers and customers who do not have access to the internet are offered support by SARH in registering on the CBL and making expressions of interest on homes which meet their need.
- 4.4** The CBL will produce a shortlist which will place the customer with the highest priority banding at the top, where there are more than one customer in the same band the customer who was placed in the band first will be given priority.
- 4.5** Checks will be made to ensure that customers and their household members have the right to rent prior to allocation.

5. What tenancies SARH offer

- 5.1** SARH use a range of tenure types to help support the business and customers whilst meeting the regulatory and legislative requirements.

5.2 Assured tenancy with additional rights

SARH is a “stock transfer” landlord and offer any customer who was a tenant at the point of the stock transfer i.e. 6 February 2006, an assured tenancy with additional rights which were included in their Secure Tenancy with Stafford Borough Council. These rights remain with the customer should they transfer to another SARH home.

5.3 Assured tenancy

Customers who transfer from another registered provider AND were social housing tenants prior to the introduction of section 154 of the Localism Act 2011 i.e. 1 April 2012 will be offered an assured tenancy unless the property is to be let on Affordable Rent Terms.

5.4 Fixed term tenancy

New customers to SARH including those who have been tenants with a previous social landlord but the tenancy started after the introduction of section 154 of the Localism Act 2011 i.e. 1 April 2012 will be offered a six year fixed term assured shorthold tenancy agreement.

For properties to be let on Affordable Rent, customers who transfer from another registered provider AND were social housing tenants prior to the

introduction of section 154 of the Localism Act 2011 i.e. 1 April 2012 will be offered a six year fixed term assured shorthold tenancy agreement.

This tenancy will be reviewed during the first year and sixth year of the tenancy as the agreement provides provision for SARH to end the tenancy at these points.

The Flexible Tenure Policy sets out the support SARH offers to new customers, circumstances under which the tenancy will be ended, and how customers can appeal to the ending of a fixed term tenancy.

In exceptional circumstances the length of the fixed term tenancy can be reduced but will not be shorter than 2 years. Permission to offer a shorter fixed term tenancy will be authorised by Head of Housing Management.

6. Policy Ownership, Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 The tenancy policy is owned by Head of Housing Management.
- 6.2 The policy will be reviewed biennially or at any time regulation or legislation changes.

7. Communication

- 7.1 SARH will ensure this policy is communicated amongst its staff, customers, partner organisations and contractors working with SARH. Any feedback will be reviewed and amended accordingly and where necessary.
- 7.2 A copy of this policy and associated procedural forms will be stored and available on the SARH website, SARH Head Office.

8. Associated Documents/Legislation

- Housing Act 1985 & 1988
- Localism Act 2011
- Homes and Communities Agency Tenancy Standard
- Stafford Borough Council Tenancy Strategy 2013
- SARH – Flexible Tenure Policy
- SARH – Choice Based Lettings Policy