

Southdown

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Tick one of the below for review/changes made:	Reviewer / Editor: Manager, Housing Services	
Full review and changes made ☒ (add changes summary to table below)	Changes Approved By:	
Full review, no changes made ☐		
Changes made but no full review ☐ (add changes summary to table below)	Reviewed and edited in-line with the Beacon? ☒ Yes ☐ No	

Tenancy Policy

Document Change Details

Date	Summary of Changes Made
10/11/2023	All P&Ps revert to version 01 as approval process & version control moved to SharePoint. Version number no longer shown on the document
October 2025	Changes made with Beacon in mind
January 2026	Role names updated
June 2026	Reviewed STAIRs

1.0 Purpose

To ensure occupancy agreements for supported housing are granted in accordance with relevant legislation and the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

To set out how we offer tenancies or occupancy agreements that reflect:

- the purpose of the accommodation
- individual needs
- community sustainability
- the effective use of housing stock

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all tenancies and occupancy agreements issued within supported housing and related services.

3.0 Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this policy:

Assured Tenancy (AT)

The main tenure used by social landlords. It is generally a lifetime tenancy and can only be ended by a court order where legal grounds apply under the Housing Act 1988.

Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST)

Provides tenants with security for a minimum fixed term (usually six months), after which the landlord may seek possession through legal processes, including “no-fault” notice where applicable.

Licence Agreement (LA)

Grants permission to occupy but does not give a legal interest in the property. It may be ended without proving legal grounds for possession.

Demoted Tenancy (DT)

A reduced-security tenancy granted by court order due to anti-social or unlawful behaviour. It replaces a more secure tenancy for a specified period.

Joint Tenancy

A tenancy held by two or more individuals jointly. All tenants are jointly and severally responsible for the tenancy obligations.

Affordable Rent Tenancy (AR)

A type of Assured Shorthold Tenancy where rent is set at up to 80% of local market rent (inclusive of service charges), typically granted for a fixed term.

Licence Agreement (LA) - This grants permission to occupy, giving the occupant no legal interest in the land and can be ended without having to prove grounds.

4.0 Responsibilities

Manager, Housing Services	• Ensuring housing colleagues understand and apply the policy correctly, providing guidance where required • Identifying and managing risks associated with tenancy management (e.g. tenancy fraud, breaches of tenancy conditions, safeguarding concerns) • Supporting implementation of policy updates, including communicating changes to the housing team • Ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, including tenancy law and consumer standards.
Housing Team	• Implementing the Tenancy Policy in day-to-day operations, ensuring all tenancy decisions are consistent with the policy and relevant legislation • Making informed tenancy management decisions, including allocations, tenancy types, succession, renewals, and enforcement in line with the policy • Maintaining accurate records to evidence that tenancy decisions and actions comply with the policy and audit requirements • Delivering a consistent and fair customer experience, ensuring tenants are treated in line with the policy and equality principles

5.0 How we decide what tenancy to offer

We will offer different types of tenancies depending on the aims and objectives of each service.

Assured Tenancies:

These will be issued where:

- an existing Assured Tenancy is being transferred, or
- a current tenant with an Assured Tenancy is moving internally

This ensures tenancy rights are not reduced.

Assured Shorthold Tenancies:

These are used for:

- new lettings
- supported housing and supported living services

ASTs may be fixed term or periodic.

We use ASTs because:

- services aim to support tenants towards independent living
- allocation processes clearly define service goals
- tenants receive tailored and regularly reviewed support
- accommodation and support suitability is regularly assessed
- there is a focus on planned move-on

Decisions to end ASTs will be linked to support reviews and ongoing need.

Where managing services on behalf of another Registered Social Landlord (RSL), we will:

- obtain appropriate authority
- maintain accurate records
- share relevant information as required

Any decisions to take legal action to end an AST will be linked to the reviews of each tenant's ongoing support needs (see [Tenancy Procedure 3.08b](#)).

Tenancies will include guidelines outlining the tenants' rights, including information on our complaints procedure.

Affordable Rent Tenancies

We may grant Affordable Rent tenancies in line with agreements under the RSH funding programme.

Additional income supports future housing development.

Licence Agreements

These may be used where:

- exclusive possession cannot be granted
- high-support services require unrestricted staff access
- temporary decant arrangements are needed

Demoted tenancies

Demoted tenancies may be sought where there is serious anti-social or unlawful behaviour.

This forms part of our wider approach to managing anti-social behaviour.

This will form part of an overall strategy to deal with a tenant's anti-social behaviour as per [Anti-Social and Illegal Behaviour Policy and Procedure 3.14](#)

Shared ownership leases

We issue leases based on the Homes England model. Rights and responsibilities differ from rented tenancies.

6.0 Information to tenants

Prospective tenants will receive:

- details of the tenancy agreement before sign-up
- information about service aims (where applicable)

Tenants will:

- sign a Pre-Tenancy Support Agreement (where applicable), or
- receive an accessible (easy read) tenancy guide

Tenants will be informed about:

- expectations to engage with support
- expected length of stay (where relevant)
- move-on pathways

A Tenants' Handbook will be provided to all tenants.

7.0 Tenancy sustainment

We are committed to supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies.

Tenants will have access to:

- a Housing Officer (HO)
- a Housing Assistant (HA)
- support services where applicable

We will:

- balance tenant rights and responsibilities
- provide support and advocacy where issues arise
- seek to resolve tenancy breaches where possible

We will assess vulnerabilities at key stages of any possession or eviction process to ensure fair and proportionate decisions

8.0 Preventing tenancy fraud

We take steps to prevent tenancy fraud, including:

- verifying identity at tenancy start
- investigating concerns raised
- carrying out tenancy visits where appropriate
- working with partner organisations

9.0 Decisions to end tenancies

When making decisions about ending a tenancy, we will:

- consider all relevant facts and individual circumstances
- act fairly and proportionately
- comply with legal requirements
- clearly explain our reasons
- allow tenants the opportunity to respond
- consider support needs and vulnerabilities

Tenants have the right to appeal decisions.

Appeals must:

- be made in writing
- be submitted within 14 days
- be addressed to the Manager, Housing Services (MHS) at Southdown, 2 Bell Lane, Lewes, BN7 1JU

10.0 Succession

Succession rights will be applied in line with legislation and tenancy agreements.

A successor must meet the eligibility criteria of the supported housing scheme.

Each case will be considered individually.

The MHS will consider:

- housing eligibility
- support needs
- alternative housing options

Discretionary succession may be considered where appropriate.

Claims must be submitted within one month of the tenant's death.

Only one succession is permitted by law.

11.0 Mutual Exchange

The RSH's *Revised Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012* sets the expectation that Registered Providers promote mutual exchange.

Our HOs can support clients to identify appropriate accommodation for mutual exchanges, including use on-line mutual exchange services (e.g. Homeswapper.co.uk) with us paying subscription fees.

Exchanges will only be approved where the incoming tenant:

- meets eligibility criteria
- meets support requirements

Refusals can be appealed within 14 days by writing to the MHS.

12.0 Related Legislation and Code of Practice

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Housing Act 1988
- Localism Act 2011
- Regulator of Social Housing requirements
- Local authority Tenancy Strategies

13.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the delivery of our services.

In implementing this policy, we will:

- ensure fair and equal access to housing and services
- not discriminate on the basis of protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation
- take account of individual needs and circumstances when making decisions about tenancies
- make reasonable adjustments where required to support tenants

We will consider the needs of vulnerable tenants and ensure our approach is fair, consistent and responsive.