

Manningham Housing Association
DRAFT
Supporting (General Needs) Tenants Policy

Background

Manningham Housing Association (MHA) is a registered social housing provider. The Association provides general needs, sheltered and supported housing for rent and shared ownership. MHA provides housing for people in need in a way that leads to sustainable and balanced communities where people want to live, work and play.

Our mission is to empower communities to be successful and vibrant. We focus on quality, making a difference and fairness in the way we provide housing services in the communities we serve.

This policy sets out how we will identify and support our vulnerable tenants. We have taken account of the following legislation and publications:

- Housing Corporation Regulatory Code and Guidance 3.5, 3.5.4 and 3.5f
- Section 213 of the Housing Act 1996
- Department for Communities and Local Government: Creating Sustainable Communities: Supporting Independence (2005)

We are aware that the new regulator of tenant services is the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). The TSA will in due time publish their own standards to replace Housing Corporation standards.

Defining Tenants Who Require Support

We know that tenancy-related support is beneficial for everyone and our services are delivered in a way that is sympathetic and sensitive to the individual circumstances of our tenants. However, there are tenants who require a greater level of support in order to sustain their tenancy, even though their support needs may not yet qualify for housing-related support under the government's Supporting People policy.

Such tenants are likely to be:

- Older residents
- People who have recently experienced some trauma, for instance, bereavement, divorce, loss of employment, domestic violence, experience of sexual exploitation, including rape and street working; fleeing persecution, famine, pestilence, war, etc;
- People with English language support needs – for instance older generation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents; refugees from non-English speaking countries; immigrants from Eastern Europe
- People with life limiting illnesses and disabilities

In view of this, we will:

- Continuously seek to identify tenants who require support and create a list to assist staff to shape service delivery around their needs and circumstances;
- Include in its STATUS survey question(s) intended to elicit information about tenants who require support;
- Treat tenants who require support sympathetically and sensitively, ensuring that housing services are delivered in a way which reflects their needs and circumstances;

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- Take account of the specific needs of tenants who require support in considering the range and quality of service it provides;
- Take tenants' individual circumstances into consideration in planning and monitoring services;
- Seek to provide appropriate housing services to tenants who require support and liaise with other agencies about their particular care and support needs.

Specific Services that may Need to be Delivered Sensitive

Whilst attention will be paid to all areas of service to ensure that the circumstances of vulnerable tenants are taken into account, more directly the Association will be sensitive to the needs of vulnerable tenants when dealing with issues relating to the following services:

- Lettings & Void Management
- Major Works, Day-to-day Repairs and Improvements
- Rent Arrears prevention and pursuance
- Dealing with anti-social behaviour and other nuisances
- Consultation of residents and resident involvement
- Information provided to residents by the Association

Where applicable, we will participate in information exchange, working parties, case conferences in order to play our part in any plan of support or in facilitating the provision of additional care and support needs by other agencies.

We will work in collaboration with other agencies, such as Social and Health Care, to find the most appropriate solutions for individual residents taking account of the need for a package of care and support services, where appropriate. This may include referrals to agencies providing floating support resources to individual tenants who require additional tenancy related support.

Wherever possible and subject to adequate funding, we will work in close co-operation with the Occupational Therapy Department of Bradford Council to enable MHA's homes to be adapted for the needs of the physically disabled and chronically sick on a priority basis. This work can encompass a wide range of adaptations from simply installing handrails to providing ground floor extensions.

As part of our major improvement programme, we will earmark carry out environmental improvements such as improved security and lighting. This will be of particular benefit to tenants who require support in certain locations.

Tenants who are victims of antisocial behaviour will receive victim-centred support and appropriate safety measures in their home if it is their wish to remain in the property. We will take firm action against any perpetrators of antisocial behaviour.

We will ensure that, through our Lettings Policy and Procedures, vulnerable applicants can access the most appropriate home. We will take reasonable steps to make sure allocations are avoided where social conditions may put such tenants at risk.

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We will co-operate wherever possible with local organisations who provide short-term housing for vulnerable people and who require access to suitable move-on homes, in order to re-settle their clients in such homes, and continue providing their services to them within long-term/permanent tenancies.

Monitoring and Review

We will monitor and review this policy in conjunction with residents to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the Association's stated aims and objectives.

The Director of Housing has overall responsibility for the on-going monitoring of the policy through the work of frontline staff, particularly those engaged in resident involvement directly. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Director of Housing.