HOMELESS SERVICES POLICY

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Amendments to this Document are Detailed Below.

Business Information provided by Gloucester City Homes

HOMELESS SERVICES POLICY

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
01	06/05/24	Full review	30/05/2024	Lee Ali	SLT
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HOMELESS SERVICES POLICY

OVERALL AIM/INTRODUCTION

Our Homeless Temporary Accommodation provides quality, furnished accommodation to homeless households referred by the Local Authorities (Gloucester City Council and Stroud District Council) as an alternative to bed and breakfast accommodation. This accommodation consists of furnished self contained flats and rooms which are located in Gloucester. We also have a shared house consisting of 5 inidvidual rooms in Stroud town (Citadel House).

We provide furnished dispersed temporary accommodation throughout Gloucester which consists of a variety of flats or houses to accommodate homeless households on an interim basis and all referrals are made by the Local Authority (Gloucester City Council).

We also provide accommodation as part of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) across three sites which consist of a mixture of one bed self contained and two bed shared accommodation for customers with complex support needs. This accomodation is deemed as temporary with an average occupancy period of up to 18-24 months depending on circumstances and needs. A condition of the customers living in the NSAP sites is that they engage with support from the commisioned support provider (currently P3) determined by the local authority. NSAP Customers will remain in the accommodation until they have been assessed with the support provider to establish a suitable move on pathway into to alternative permanant accommodation.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy sets out our commitment to work with colleagues, customers and Local Authorities partners across Gloucestershire to provide quality interim homeless accommodation and Intensive Housing Management.

All colleagues are expected to comply with this policy, adhere to the documented procedures and working practices to fulfil their duties and responsibilities.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

We will ensure that all households that have been provided with our accommodation will have a clean, safe and secure place to live with access to intensive housing management whilst living in our accommodation.

We will carry out a full risk assessments on all incoming customers to ensure their wellbeing and safety and determine appropriate levels of support, make suitable refferals, signpost to relevant services as required.

We will have an overall service risk assessment to ensure we maintain a safe environment for customers to live and colleagues to work, the risk assessments will be reviewed at least annually.

The Homeless Accomodation Officers are responsible for ensuring that they report any health and safety, or safeguarding concerns while visiting sites or individual properties.

A site by site Fire Risk Assessment is completed by our internal compliance team and reviewed every year as a minimum or more often if required.

Our caretakers carry out regular health and safety / compliance checks of the communal areas and accommodation to maintain a high standard of repairs, it is their responsibility to identify and report any risks/ hazards.

CCTV is situated throughout our accommodation, to support a safe and secure living environment.

We commission a conceirge service provider (Kingdom) who provide an out of hours service which is available Monday to Sunday between the hours of 6.00pm and 6.00am including bank holidays. The conceirge is based at our Serco House office and also provides an ad-hoc patrol of our other sites and will montior activity on site and via the CCTV to assist customers, or descalate conflict, and raise concerns to emergency services as required.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY EXPECTATIONS

- Housing Act 1985
- Homelessness Act 2002
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) May 2018: Data Protections Act 1998
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

SERVICE STANDARDS

Where appropriate we will carry out joint assessments with support workers to identify support needs and assess level of risk.

We will notify the relevant Local Authority or the NSAP panel when a houshold has been accepted or refused, providing the details of the decision and outcome.

We are committed to working in partnership with the relevant Local Authority to deliver quality homeless or temporary accomodation which supports the local strategic aims and objectives.

Disclosure of a serious conviction

If any serious convictions are disclosed, a request for further information will be made to the Local Authority if required. Once we have all the relevant information, we will carry out a risk assessment and determine if we accept the referral.

Current Rent or Licence Debt

We have a duty to maximise income by preventing rent and service charges arrears and by recovering any arrears fairly and effectively. This will be done by.

- Providing a variety of payment options.
- Providing support to customers who are having difficulty in making payments.
- Consistency of procedure implementation.
- A systematic but flexible approach.
- Approach that is tailored to individual circumstances.

Former customer debts

- If a customer has left our homeless accommodation with outstanding debts, we will take active steps to recover the outstanding debt through the relevant policy.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- We will not tolerate any customer, members of any household, or visitors within our homeless accommodation to cause or permit anti-social behaviour and hate crime, this includes Racial abuse or Harassment to any employee or contractor.
- We are committed to tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods and we will take every opportunity to work in partnership with other agencies to achieve this.
- This policy will also ensure that our response to anti-social behaviour is appropriate and proportionate. We will use the legal and contractual powers available to us to act where our tenants, Licensees or occupants of our homeless properties are either the victims or perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

CONSULTATION

This policy has been implemented following consultation with colleagues within GCH.

APPEALS

APPEALS FOR HOMELESS AND DISPERSED ACCOMMODATION

- Should the Housing Options Teams at the respective Local authority wish to appeal against the decision for refusal, they should do so in writing to the Homeless Team Leader, detailing clear reasons

why they believe the refusal is unacceptable. If agreement cannot be reached, the matter should be escalated to the Homeless Services Manager.

- **APPEALS FOR NSAP ACCOMMODATION**
  Appeals for the NSAP accommodation should be taken to the NSAP panel and all Local Authority District will have an opportunity to have an input to the appeal for GCH/P3 Charity to consider but the decision stands with us as the Landlord of the accommodation.

REVIEW

This policy will normally be reviewed triennially to ensure that it reminds fit for purpose, unless an earlier review is required due to regulatoy, statutory or other requirements.