

REPORT TITLE: NEW VULNERABLE TENANT POLICY

Meeting	Cabinet
Date	11th March 2025
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Cllr Moses Crook Highways and Housing
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	Yes Yes
Purpose of Report To present Cabinet with the Homes and Neighbourhoods Vulnerable Tenant policy.	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review and endorse the new Vulnerable Tenant policy Reasons for Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce the new Vulnerable Tenant policy within Homes & Neighbourhoods. 	
Resource Implications <p>This policy is a general statement of our commitment to try and ensure that vulnerable tenants with support needs are not disadvantaged when accessing housing-related support. Implementing this policy will improve communication with our tenants, with clear and empathetic communication becoming crucial, providing more personalised housing services. Ensuring compliance with legal standards and ethical practices but requires a thoughtful, coordinated and adaptive approach to be taken by each respective service area.</p> <p>The policy facilitates signposting and referring to specialist services and partnerships and working with partners when vulnerabilities that require support are identified.</p>	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	David Shepherd Executive Director for Place 18th December 2024
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?	Kevin Mulvaney 15 th February 2025
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Samantha Lawton – 25 th February 2025

Electoral wards affected: All
Ward councillors consulted: No
Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Having a 'Vulnerable Tenant Policy' in social housing is crucial for several reasons:
- 1.2. **Protection and Support:** Vulnerable tenants, such as those with disabilities, mental health issues, or those experiencing financial hardship, may require additional support to maintain their tenancies and live safely. A dedicated policy ensures specific needs are recognised and considered appropriately.
- 1.3. **Legal Compliance:** Social landlords must comply with various legal frameworks, including the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Care Act 2014. In addition to the new Consumer Standards that place a duty on social landlords to treat tenant and prospective tenants with fairness and respect with landlords being expected to have robust information about their tenants. A vulnerable tenant policy assists in ensuring Kirklees Homes & Neighbourhoods as a landlord are meeting these legal obligations.
- 1.4. **Improved Service Delivery:** By identifying and responding to the needs of vulnerable tenants, social landlords can improve their service delivery. This includes better communication, adapted and tailored housing support services and more effective handling of complaints and issues.
- 1.5. **Community Safety:** Vulnerable tenants are often at higher risk of issues such as domestic abuse, crime, and exploitation. A robust policy assists in coordinating with other agencies to provide safer living environments.
- 1.6. **Sustainability of Tenancies:** Supporting vulnerable tenants effectively can lead to more sustainable tenancies, reducing the likelihood of evictions and homelessness. This benefits both the tenants and the wider community by promoting stability and reducing social and economic costs associated with housing instability.
- 1.7. Overall, a vulnerable tenant policy is essential for ensuring that social housing is inclusive, supportive, and responsive to the needs of all tenants, particularly those who are most at risk. This policy aims to support staff in making informed decisions when supporting vulnerable tenants and household members. Setting out Kirklees Council's Homes & Neighbourhoods commitment to being a responsible social landlord to assisting vulnerable tenants in accessing housing-related services and in sustaining their tenancies and homes.
- 1.8. The Vulnerable Tenant policy compliments Homes and Neighbourhoods' Domestic Abuse and Anti-Social Behaviour policies. By working together, these policies help to identify and address issues early, preventing escalation and ensuring tenants' well-being and by these policies being implemented together, they provide a robust and interconnected support system that enhances tenant safety, well-being, and community cohesion. Each policy addresses specific aspects of tenant needs, and their combined efforts lead to a more comprehensive and effective approach to housing management.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 The new 'vulnerable tenant policy' for approval is attached at Appendix 1, and covers the following sections:

- Purpose of the policy
- Legal context
- Definitions
- Objectives and scope
- What is vulnerability
- Identifying vulnerability
- Service delivery
- Data privacy
- Roles and responsibility
- Review and monitoring

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

This report relates to the introduction of a Vulnerable Tenant Policy and does not impact any staffing posts.

This policy is a general statement of our commitment to try and ensure that vulnerable tenants with support needs are not disadvantaged when accessing housing-related support. Implementing this policy will improve communication with our tenants, with clear and empathetic communication becoming crucial, providing more personalised housing services. Ensuring compliance with legal standards and ethical practices but requires a thoughtful, coordinated and adaptive approach to be taken by each respective service area.

3.2 Working with Partners

Collaboration with Local Services: The policy facilitates signposting and referring to specialist services and partnerships and working with partners when vulnerabilities that require support are identified.

1.3 Place Based Working

A Vulnerable Tenant Policy supports placed based working as it creates a framework for collaboration with local agencies.

1.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Not Applicable.

1.5 Improving outcomes for children

A Vulnerable Tenant Policy can significantly improve outcomes for children in several ways; from providing access to support services where appropriate, improved health and well-being and increasing the sustainment of their tenancy providing stable housing.

1.6 Financial Implications for the people living or working in Kirklees

There is no financial implication with introducing this new Vulnerable Tenant Policy.

1.7 Other (e.g., Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)/Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

An Integrated Impact Assessment was completed on the 4th November 2024 case reference: IIA-656985036

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The draft policy was presented and discussed at the tenant Led Panel (TLP) on the 30th October 2024 and was supported by them. It was also discussed and endorsed at the Homes & Neighbourhoods Improvement Board (HNIB) 9th December 2024, commented as being a good and well-balanced policy.

5. Engagement

- 5.1 To inform this new policy it has been shared for feedback and input from colleagues within Housing Management & Partnerships (HMP), Property Services and Assets. In addition, it has been shared with legal for feedback, a H&N policy officer alongside a conversation having took place with the Information Governance team regarding GDPR. Presented and discussed at an informal meeting with the Place Scrutiny Panel 24th February 2025 who welcomed the policy, and comments made by the scrutiny committee were considered and included in the policy.

6. Options

6.1 Options considered

Not applicable

6.2 Reasons for recommended option

Not applicable

7. Next steps and timelines

- 7.1 Once approved it will be ready for publishing and rolling out across H&N in conjunction with the revised domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour policies. This will require a comms plan that will include visiting teams to ensure understanding of the rationale behind the policy, highlighting legal context and ethical obligations, understanding of role officers place and accountability in implementing the policy.

A feedback loop will be opened to follow up on any potential training gaps that may be identified within teams in relation to implementing this Vulnerable Tenant policy.

8. Contact officer

Claire Felvus – Housing Services Strategic Manager
Tel: 01484 221000 ext 75798
Email: claire.felvus@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Spotlight on: Attitudes, respect and rights – relationship of equals (housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

[Spotlight report on attitudes, respect and rights](#)

Vulnerability within social housing (localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk)

[Vulnerability within social housing](#)

10. Appendices

HN Vulnerable Tenant Policy Final

11. Service Director responsible

Janet Sharpe- Interim Service Director for Homes and Neighbourhoods.

Tel: 01484 221000 ext 78709

Email: janet.sharpe@kirklees.gov.uk