



Subject / Title: Voids, Allocations and Lettings - Housing Policy

Business Function: Sanctuary Housing Services

Author: Continuous Improvement

Authorised by: Executive Committee

Sanctuary Group:
Sanctuary Group is a trading name of Sanctuary Housing Association,
an exempt charity, and all of its subsidiaries.

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Sanctuary recognises its responsibilities and housing duties as a provider of social housing and is committed to providing good quality and affordable homes. How we manage voids and lettings is fundamental to the service we provide.
- 1.2 We work in partnership with various organisations at both strategic and operational levels to ensure we manage homelessness, overcrowding, under occupation, promote social inclusion and build sustainable and balanced communities of mixed tenure and mixed income.
- 1.3 The policy applies to general needs housing, sheltered housing and home ownership in relation to all the areas of the policy and covers all customers.
- 1.4 The vision of Sanctuary Housing is **“to be a market leader in terms of quality, innovation and performance”**.
- 1.5 This policy supports the above vision, by setting out the commitments by which we manage and operate our services from when we are aware of a void property to that property being successfully let.
- 1.6 Below are the policy commitments in relation to estate management, ensuring customers:
 - to ensure that those who have the greatest need for housing are given the opportunity to secure it;
 - to provide information to applicants to assist them to make informed choices;
 - to provide a service which is fair equitable, transparent and easy to understand;
 - to provide good quality accommodation;
 - to promote balanced and sustainable communities;
 - to ensure we adhere to all relevant legal and good practice guidelines;
 - to meet the objectives of local lettings strategies; and
 - where applicants are not eligible to apply for our housing, signpost them to other providers of housing and / or support.

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 Group Director – Housing
 - 2.1.1 The Group Director – Housing has responsibility to ensure this policy is followed within Sanctuary Housing and managed appropriately.
- 2.2 Operations Director – Sanctuary Housing Services
 - 2.2.1 The Operations Director – Sanctuary Housing Services has responsibility to ensure to ensure that Sanctuary Housing is compliant with Legislative/Regulatory requirements and good practice.

2.3 Heads of Housing, Operations Managers, Line Managers – Sanctuary Housing.

2.3.1 Managers have day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this policy in practice. They are responsible for:

- ensuring this policy is communicated with all staff;
- ensuring suitable and sufficient training and instruction is provided;
- ensuring this policy is followed by all staff; and
- ensuring the necessary equipment and resources are available to make sure compliance can be achieved.

2.4 Employees – Housing operations

2.4.1 In order to assist Sanctuary Housing in carrying out its obligations, employees must:

- be aware of, understand and comply with this policy and any related operational guidance;
- participate in any training which Sanctuary makes available; and
- communicate any issues with implementing this policy to their line manager and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

3. References and sources

3.1 The following legislation is relevant to the content of this procedure and may be referred to for further information and context:

- Immigration Act 2014
- Homelessness Act 2002 (England)
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- The Housing Act 1985
- The Housing Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act
- Mental Health Act
- Housing and Planning Act 2016

4. Impact on Diversity

4.1 Sanctuary will seek to ensure that this policy is applied in a manner that is fair to all sections of the community regardless of age, disability, gender, marital status, nationality and any other characteristic.

4.2 Sanctuary evidences its obligation to equality and diversity by having “Due Regard” when shaping policy and delivering services.

4.3 All customers are asked to provide diversity details which are used to monitor the services provided

5. Residents consultation

5.1 Resident feedback regarding the provision of an effective voids, allocations and lettings service has been accounted for in the development of this policy through many channels, including:

- STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) results
- ‘Settling In’ survey carried out with all new tenants at the beginning of their tenancy
- complaints around the voids, allocations and lettings service for customers who are both tenants and looking to become tenants; and
- feedback on our estates and properties obtained from our allocations processes

6. Monitoring and compliance

6.1 Period of Review

6.1.1 Until a new policy is formally adopted this document will remain in force and operational.

6.1.2 This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the policy review programme agreed by Executive Committee.

6.1.3 If there are significant changes to legislation or regulation or there are found to be deficiencies or failures in this policy, as a result of complaints or findings from any independent organisations, the Group Director – Housing will initiate an immediate review.

6.2 Where appropriate, key stakeholders, residents and interested parties will be consulted in any review of this policy.

7. Approval

7.1 This policy is approved by Sanctuary Group’s Executive Committee.

8. Operational arrangements

8.1 This section details any operational procedures, guidance or manuals associated with this procedure.

8.1.1 Policies and procedures

- Aids and Adaptations (England) Group Policy
- Antisocial Behaviour – Housing and Support Policy
- Cash Handling Group Policy
- Customer Contact
- Data Protection Group Policy
- Domestic Abuse - Group

- Equality and Diversity – Group Statement
- Income Management Policy
- Safeguarding Adults – Group
- Safeguarding Children – Group
- Tenancy - SHSL Policy

8.1.2 Other resources

- KnowledgePoint
- Retirement Living Manual
- Solis