

Tenancy Fraud Policy

Approved by:		<i>Customer & Community Network</i>	
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1 Introduction

1.1 Aim

The overall aims of this policy are to prevent, detect and take action against cases of suspected tenancy fraud within Aster's housing stock and to raise awareness of tenancy fraud, providing appropriate information on our approach to tackling tenancy fraud.

1.2 Scope

This policy relates to all homes managed by Aster and its implementation is the responsibility of all employees of Aster Group companies.

1.3 Corporate Plan

This policy will help us to achieve our ambitions to:

- Deliver value and offering choice
- Being financially strong and well governed

1.4 Regulation and Legislation Frameworks

Failure to make the best use of the social housing stock would be contrary to the Value for Money Standard in the Regulatory Framework.

2 Policy statement

2.1 In seeking to combat this illegal activity we will:

- Provide information to our customers and partners on our approach to tackling tenancy fraud, encouraging them to report tenancy fraud suspicions to us

- Train all employees whose role brings them into contact with the occupants of our homes to recognise signs of tenancy fraud and understand how to report their suspicions
- Work in partnership with other stakeholders and agencies to utilise the tools available to us to investigate suspicions of tenancy fraud
- Take appropriate and proportionate action , which may include eviction, against people that misuse their home and commit tenancy fraud
- Seek to recover unlawful profit where appropriate
- Work with our multi-agency partners to prevent tenancy fraud, recognising that prevention is better than cure
- Implement regular tenancy checks

2.2 Definition

In *Protecting the Public Purse 2012* the Audit Commission said that ‘housing tenancy fraud arises when people occupy social housing unlawfully.’

The following are examples of fraudulent activity:

- Subletting a property for profit to people not allowed to live there under the conditions of the tenancy
- Providing false information in a housing application to gain a tenancy
- Wrongful tenancy assignment and succession where the property is no longer occupied by the original tenant
- Failing to use a property as the principal home, abandoning the property or selling the key to a third party
- Providing false information when making an application under the Right to Buy or Acquire

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities

- The Head of Housing Wiltshire is responsible for monitoring the service and ensuring it complies with the requirements of this policy.
- The Head of Housing Wiltshire is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- All employees and front line staff who are involved in the delivery of housing management services are responsible for ensuring they comply with the requirements of this policy.

3 Policy Implications

3.1 Service/Performance Standards

All reports received of suspicions of tenancy fraud are recorded and investigated.

Reported suspicions and investigation outcomes are monitored across the Group to gauge the extent of tenancy fraud in our homes, to enable us to assess and review our approach.

3.2 Risk

Dealing effectively with tenancy fraud is good housing practice. The risks of not taking steps to combat tenancy fraud may be summarised as follows:

- We wouldn't be using our housing assets in the most effective way
- People in housing need may be denied housing
- We would be failing to provide good value for money
- There are reputational risks in not taking tenancy fraud seriously

4 Related policies and procedures

4.1 Associated policies and procedures

- Abandoned Property Procedure
- Tenancy Check Procedure
- Estate Management Policy
- Anti-Fraud Policy