

Probationary Tenancy Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy will help support successful tenancies and aid in the creation of sustainable communities and should be read in conjunction with Coastline's Tenancy Policy
- 1.2 Probationary Tenancies were introduced for all new tenancies from February 2006 in accordance with our Tenancy Policy. Exceptions include customers moving within our own stock who hold assured tenancies
- 1.3 The introduction of Probationary Tenancies is part of the Company's overall anti-social behaviour strategy, and is referred to in the Anti-Social Behaviour policy and procedure.
- 1.4 The Probationary Tenancy is a 12 month periodic Assured Shorthold Tenancy, issued to all new customers. For the Probationary Tenancy to end successfully and converted to a Lifetime or Fixed Term Tenancy, the first 12 months must be conducted in a satisfactory manner.
- 1.5 Probationary Tenancies are not offered to existing customers who transfer or to customers undertaking a mutual exchange.
- 1.6 In view of the additional powers to end a Probationary Tenancy, without the intervention or protection from the court system, it is essential that adequate protection for customers is built into our operating procedures for dealing with such tenancies.
- 1.7 Whilst we have the power to bring a probationary tenancy to an end and obtain possession via the court system, it is the clear intention that such powers will only be used as a last resort. To ensure that procedures have been adhered to an independent review will be undertaken by The Tenancy Manager. Every effort will be made to sustain tenancies and to use the very real threat of repossession to concentrate the minds of our most challenging customers in changing their behaviour and to comply with the terms of the tenancy agreement.
- 1.8 We will engage the resources of all interested parties to assist in sustaining tenancies, including, but not limited to:
- Police
 - Cornwall Council; and
- Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Probation and youth offending team services, and other agencies, such as mental health, drug rehabilitation services.
- 1.9 This document outlines the approach and steps that will be followed to ensure that customers have every opportunity to sustain their tenancy and to provide for the smooth transfer from probationary tenancy to an assured tenancy on the first anniversary, or as early as possible thereafter.

2.0 Customer responsibilities

- 2.1 During the Probationary period, all customers will be expected to abide by their tenancy agreement and the policies set out by Coastline.
- 2.2 Customers will be encouraged to participate and access the support mechanisms which have been identified, including any courses such as 'Keys to Coastline'.

- 2.3 Customers will be encouraged to participate in Coastline consultation activities.
- 2.4 There is a mechanism by which customers have the right of review against a decision to serve a Notice to terminate the tenancy.

3.0 Coastline's Responsibilities

- 3.1 The onus will be on Coastline to demonstrate that it has identified needs, made referrals for support and followed procedures.
- 3.2 Where clear breaches in the tenancy have been made, and there is no improvement of the tenancy, enforcement action will be taken.
- 3.3 Coastline will take legal action against customers who have clearly breached their tenancy and other appropriate options have been exhausted.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the migration of a Probationary Tenancy to an Assured Tenancy is achieved automatically on the first anniversary of the commencement of the tenancy, unless action has been commenced to either end the tenancy or extend the probationary period.

4.0 Commitment to sustain tenancies

- 4.1 Vulnerability assessments and support evaluations will take place as part of the tenancy sign up process. Vulnerability assessment may result in additional home visits during the initial tenancy term.
- 4.2 Customers will be offered information and referrals for support to match their needs where possible.
- 4.3 All new customers will receive a home visit during the first 9 months of the tenancy. Where it is considered that there is a need for a further visit, this will be arranged at this time.
- 4.4 If at any point during the probationary period of a tenancy there is any cause for concern as to how the tenancy is being conducted by the customer, housing staff will examine the situation to determine whether it is, or likely to be, appropriate to provide specific assistance, either directly or by referring to other agencies, to enable the customer sustain their tenancy. Any assistance that is considered to be appropriate by housing staff or other agencies will be provided.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 Performance will be monitored internally by recording the number of successful probationary tenancies, number of failures and analysis of the failed tenancies.
- 5.2 Customers will be asked for feedback at the point of the probationary review/ tenancy conversion to provide insight into the operation of the policy.

6.0 Equality Statement

- 6.1 Coastline will apply the same policies and procedures for customers who have a probationary tenancy as for all other customers with full assured tenancies to ensure that all customers are treated fairly and equally.

- 6.2 This Policy is used in conjunction with the Equality and Diversity Policy. The use of Disability Assessment (Justification Prior to Legal Action Equality Act 2010) forms will be completed for each individual as part of the Built in Safeguards of this Policy.