



Housing Management Policy

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Bonnie Holmes Tenancy Services Manager	September 2026	V1	N/A	September 2029
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1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. This policy sets out how Hull Churches Housing Association Limited (The Association/HCHA) approaches housing management. It explains how HCHA will manage tenancies, sustain tenancies, support residents, manage neighbourhoods and communal areas, respond to tenancy breaches, work with partners and meet legal and regulatory expectations.
- 1.2. Hull Churches Housing Association Limited (the Association/HCHA) strives to be the best it can in providing landlord, housing management and support services. Central to this is the Association's role in providing safe, sustainable homes and supporting residents to live well in their communities.
- 1.3. The Association recognises that effective housing management is central to tenant satisfaction, good quality homes, safe communities, income collection, tenancy sustainment and regulatory compliance. HCHA's approach is based on being local, accessible, proportionate, fair and responsive to individual circumstances.
- 1.4. This policy should be read alongside HCHA's related policies and procedures, including those covering allocations, rent setting and service charges, repairs and maintenance, anti-social behaviour, complaints, safeguarding, equality and diversity, data protection, health and safety, tenancy management and unacceptable behaviour.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all housing management services provided by HCHA to tenants, residents, shared owners, applicants, licensees, service users and other customers, where relevant to the housing and landlord services provided by the Association.
- 2.2. It applies to general needs housing, housing for older people, supported housing, specialist accommodation, shared ownership homes and any other homes or services owned, managed or delivered by HCHA, subject to the terms of the relevant tenancy, licence, lease, agreement, referral pathway or service specification.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 3.1. HCHA will comply with all relevant legislation, regulation, statutory guidance, regulatory standards and contractual requirements, including the Housing Acts, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, the Equality Act 2010, data protection legislation, health and safety legislation, homelessness legislation, tenancy and leasehold law, safeguarding duties, the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer and economic standards and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

- 3.2. In operating this policy, the Association will have regard to the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including the Safety and Quality Standard, Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, Neighbourhood and Community Standard and Tenancy Standard. HCHA will also have regard to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code where housing management matters involve complaints or expressions of dissatisfaction.
- 3.3. The Association is committed to regularly reviewing this policy and keeping its contents in line with current legislation, regulation and good practice. Where legislation or regulation changes before this policy is updated, the law and regulatory requirements will take precedence.

4. Policy Aims and Objectives

4.1. This policy aims to ensure that HCHA:

- provides fair, accessible and effective housing management services;
- supports tenants to sustain their homes wherever reasonable and appropriate;
- manages tenancies, neighbourhoods and communal areas consistently and proportionately;
- allocates and lets homes fairly, transparently and in accordance with agreed policies and nomination arrangements;
- responds promptly to tenancy breaches, neighbourhood concerns, risk and vulnerability;
- works positively with tenants, local authorities, statutory agencies, support providers and community partners;
- uses tenant feedback, complaints, performance information and learning to improve services; and
- complies with relevant legislation, regulation, governance requirements and HCHA's values.

5. Access and Communication

- 5.1. The Association is committed to ensuring that housing management services are accessible to everyone. HCHA will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real, may make it difficult for people to use services, understand information, engage with staff or meet tenancy responsibilities.
- 5.2. HCHA will provide information in clear language and will make reasonable adjustments where required. This may include using different communication methods, allowing representatives or advocates to support residents, providing additional explanation, arranging appointments around individual needs or signposting to specialist advice and support.
- 5.3. Tenants, residents and applicants may contact HCHA by telephone, email, letter, in person, through staff working at schemes, through the website or by any other route made available by the Association. Staff will record contacts, actions and decisions accurately and proportionately.

6. Allocations and Lettings

- 6.1.** HCHA will allocate and let homes in accordance with its Allocations Policy, nominations agreements, local lettings plans, referral pathways and applicable legal and regulatory requirements. Homes will be let in a fair, transparent and accountable way that takes account of housing need, affordability, household circumstances, support needs, property suitability and the efficient use of housing stock.
- 6.2.** HCHA will work with Hull City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and other relevant partners to support local housing need, homelessness duties, nominations arrangements and sustainable communities. Applicants and nominees will be subject to the Association's usual verification, affordability, suitability and tenancy sustainment checks before an offer is confirmed.

7. Tenancy Management and Tenure

- 7.1.** HCHA will grant tenancies, licences or leases that are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of the household, the sustainability of the community and the efficient use of the Association's homes. The form of agreement used will comply with current law, regulatory standards, funding requirements and any applicable referral or support arrangements.

8. Tenancy Sign-Up and Information

- 8.1.** At tenancy sign-up, HCHA will explain the tenant's rights and responsibilities, rent and service charge obligations, repairs reporting arrangements, property care expectations, complaints routes, anti-social behaviour reporting, safeguarding concerns and how to access support. Information will be provided in a clear and accessible way, with reasonable adjustments made where required.

9. Tenancy Sustainment

- 9.1.** HCHA will seek to sustain tenancies wherever reasonable and appropriate. Support may include pre-tenancy advice, tenancy sign-up guidance, settling-in visits, probationary tenancy reviews, help to understand tenancy responsibilities, benefits and income maximisation advice, signposting to specialist support, referrals to statutory or voluntary services, assistance with communication needs, liaison with support workers and multi-agency casework where appropriate.

10. Rent, Service Charges and Income Management

- 10.1.** HCHA will manage rent and service charge accounts fairly, consistently and in accordance with its Rent Setting and Fixed Service Charges Policy, tenancy agreements, leases and legal requirements. Tenants and shared owners will receive clear information about what they must

pay, when payment is due, how charges are calculated and how to seek advice or query a charge.

10.2. The Association will promote a rent-first approach while recognising the financial pressures that households may experience. HCHA will take prompt action where arrears arise, prioritising early contact, affordability assessment, repayment arrangements, benefits advice and signposting to debt or money guidance. Legal action will normally be a last resort where reasonable support and engagement have not resolved the issue, or where the circumstances require escalation.

11. Repairs, Property Condition and Safe Homes

11.1. HCHA will provide and maintain homes that are safe, secure and in a good state of repair, in accordance with its repairs, asset management, health and safety and compliance arrangements. Housing management staff will work closely with Property Services to ensure that repairs, hazards, access issues, property condition concerns and tenant vulnerabilities are identified, recorded and acted upon promptly.

11.2. Reports of damp, mould, emergency hazards and other health and safety concerns will be triaged and escalated in line with HCHA's legal duties, Awaab's Law requirements, repairs procedures and relevant health and safety policies. Where a home cannot reasonably be occupied safely while works are completed, HCHA will consider appropriate temporary or alternative accommodation arrangements.

12. Anti-Social Behaviour, Neighbourhoods and Community Safety

12.1. HCHA believes that residents have the right to live peacefully in their homes and communities. The Association will prevent, record, investigate and respond to anti-social behaviour, harassment, hate incidents, domestic abuse, neighbour nuisance and other community safety concerns in accordance with its Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and related procedures.

12.2. HCHA will use early intervention, mediation, warnings, acceptable behaviour agreements, support referrals, partnership working and enforcement action where appropriate. The response will be proportionate to the nature, evidence, risk and impact of the behaviour. Victims, witnesses and vulnerable residents will be supported and kept informed where responsibility rests with HCHA.

13. Estate Management and Communal Areas

13.1. HCHA will manage communal areas, schemes, neighbourhoods and shared spaces in a way that promotes safety, accessibility, cleanliness, pride in place and sustainable communities. This may include scheme inspections, patch walks, resident inspections, communal health and safety checks, grounds maintenance monitoring, engagement with local authorities and police, and action to address hazards, nuisance or environmental concerns.

13.2. Residents will be encouraged to report concerns about communal areas, estates, security, defects, hazards or neighbourhood issues. HCHA will consider tenant feedback when planning improvements, setting local priorities, reviewing service standards and making decisions about changes to communal services or facilities.

14. Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Support

14.1. HCHA will take reasonable steps to identify and respond to vulnerability, support needs, safeguarding concerns and barriers to accessing services. Staff will consider individual circumstances when communicating with tenants, arranging appointments, pursuing tenancy action, investigating complaints, managing access and making decisions that may significantly affect a household.

14.2. Where safeguarding concerns are identified, HCHA will follow its safeguarding procedures, make appropriate referrals and work with statutory agencies and partners. The Association will balance the wishes and confidentiality of the person affected with its duties to protect people from harm, comply with the law and manage risk.

15. Tenancy Breaches and Enforcement

15.1. HCHA will respond to tenancy breaches in a fair, proportionate and evidence-based way. This may include breaches relating to rent arrears, property condition, unauthorised occupation, abandonment, tenancy fraud, anti-social behaviour, refusal of access, unauthorised alterations, damage, nuisance or failure to comply with tenancy obligations.

15.2. Wherever possible, HCHA will seek to resolve breaches through advice, support, clear expectations, written agreements and early intervention. Formal action, including notices, injunctions, possession proceedings or other legal remedies, may be used where necessary to protect residents, staff, communities, property, income, public funds or the integrity of HCHA's housing stock.

16. Mutual Exchange, Transfers and Management Moves

16.1. HCHA will support eligible tenants to consider mutual exchange, transfers and other rehousing options where these are appropriate and lawful. Requests will be considered in accordance with relevant policy, tenancy conditions, nominations arrangements, property suitability, affordability, housing need and any risks to tenancy sustainment or community safety.

16.2. Management moves may be considered in exceptional circumstances, including safeguarding risk, serious harassment, domestic abuse, emergency decant, major repairs, severe medical need, operational requirements or other significant housing management reasons. Decisions will be authorised, evidenced, recorded and kept under appropriate oversight.

17. Tenant Voice, Feedback and Complaints

- 17.1. HCHA will provide clear, accessible and timely information about housing management services, service standards, policies, performance, tenant rights and responsibilities, complaints and opportunities to influence services. Tenant feedback will be used to shape service delivery, review policies and inform Board assurance.
- 17.2. Complaints will be handled in accordance with HCHA's Complaints Policy and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. HCHA will distinguish between service requests, complaints, anti-social behaviour reports and other contact types, while making sure dissatisfaction is recognised and handled appropriately. Learning from complaints, compliments, comments and tenant feedback will be recorded and used to improve services.

18. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 18.1. HCHA will apply this policy fairly and consistently and will comply with equality and human rights duties. The Association will make reasonable adjustments where required, provide information in accessible formats where reasonably practicable and support tenants, residents and applicants to use services.
- 18.2. Equality impacts will be considered when developing or reviewing housing management services, policies, procedures, local lettings plans, enforcement approaches and decisions that may materially affect tenants, residents or applicants.

19. Data, Records and Confidentiality

- 19.1. HCHA will keep accurate, secure and proportionate housing management records. Records may include applications, tenancy agreements, contacts, visits, support actions, rent account activity, repairs information, complaints, ASB reports, safeguarding concerns, photographs, risk assessments, decisions, authorisations and correspondence. Personal information will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation, HCHA's data protection policies and relevant information-sharing protocols.

20. Roles and Responsibilities

- 20.1. The following roles have the following responsibilities:
- Overall responsibility and accountability for implementation of this policy lies with the Chief Executive and the Board.
 - Senior leaders and managers are responsible for ensuring this policy is translated into procedures, staff guidance, training, case management practice, monitoring arrangements and Board assurance.
 - Tenancy Services and Sustainment staff are responsible for delivering housing management services in line with this policy, recording actions, supporting residents, managing cases, escalating risks and working with colleagues and partners.

- Property Services staff are responsible for working with Tenancy Services to respond to repairs, property condition, compliance, hazards, access issues and planned investment matters that affect housing management outcomes.
- All employees, contractors and partners must act in accordance with this policy, relevant procedures, tenancy agreements, safeguarding duties, data protection requirements, health and safety obligations and HCHA's values.

21. Monitoring and Review

21.1. HCHA will monitor housing management performance through management reporting, Board reports, rent arrears monitoring, voids information, tenancy sustainment outcomes, ASB case reviews, complaints learning, tenant satisfaction, service requests, safeguarding referrals, allocations data, estate inspection findings and regulatory compliance assurance.

21.2. Performance information will be used to identify trends, manage risk, improve services, evidence compliance, inform staff training and support transparent reporting to tenants and the Board.

22. Update and Review

22.1. This policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently if required by changes in legislation, regulation, operating arrangements, organisational structure, tenant feedback, complaints learning, audit findings or continuous quality improvement processes.