

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The purpose of the Saffron Group's Tenancy Policy is to ensure that our tenants, residents, other customers, staff and stakeholders understand the types of tenancies issued, what rent models apply and how Saffron supports sustainment of tenancies.

1. PURPOSE

1.1 It is a requirement as set out in the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenancy Standard for all Housing Associations to develop and publish a tenancy policy, having regard to the tenancy strategies of local authorities in whose areas they operate. This Policy is designed to set out Saffron Group's position and approach to its tenancies. Due to the geographical spread of Saffron Group's properties and the differences in local authority allocation strategies, other options may be considered where it is appropriate to do so

2. POSITION STATEMENT

2.1 Saffron Group will let properties in accordance with choice-based lettings schemes and other local authority lettings frameworks where these exist. Local Lettings Policies may be used where appropriate to address issues arising in local communities – e.g. to enable management issues to be addressed or where housing may be in proximity to sheltered or supported units etc.

2.2 We will aim to work with residents to help sustain their tenancies, and where possible to prevent homelessness arising as a result of tenancy failure. Where applicants for housing or existing tenants have identified support needs, we will refer them to external support providers where we have consent to do so.

2.3 In the event of tenancy failure we will notify the Local authority Homelessness Team at the earliest opportunity where we have consent to do so.

2.4 We will have in place appropriate policies, procedures and processes to help tenants and residents understand and keep to their contractual tenancy obligations.

2.5 Early identification and intervention - where appropriate - is critical to the resolution of tenancy issues as they arise, and we will monitor new tenancies and signpost residents to the relevant agencies where there is evidence of financial difficulty or other problems. Saffron Group is also committed to investigating and dealing with tenancy fraud and will take appropriate action against the perpetrator of the fraud.

3. RENT MODELS

3.1 Rents are determined with reference to Saffron Group's Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy.

3.1.1 Saffron Group will offer new tenants:

- A tenancy let on an Affordable Rent (AR) model at a rent at 80% of the local market rent, with the surplus generated being used to develop additional

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accommodation to meet the growing need for housing). Housing with Support, Supported Housing, Housing with Care or properties where S.106/Planning agreements restrict the use of other than social rents will not be let at Affordable rents. [Prior to an offer of tenancy or other letting being made, 'affordability' checks will be undertaken to confirm that the prospective tenant is able to pay rent and sustain the tenancy particularly noting changes brought about by the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The use of Affordable rents will be monitored in relation to their impact on households where no or part Housing Benefit is in payment]

or

- A tenancy let on a social rent model at a target rent in line with national guidelines.

or

- A tenancy let at an intermediate rent
- A tenancy issued on any day of the week across all tenure types. This means that tenancies can start from any day during the week not just a Monday. All tenants will need to pay a minimum of one weeks rent in advance.

3.1.2 Existing Saffron Group Tenants

3.1.2.1 Existing Saffron Group tenants (currently paying a social housing rent) who transfer within Saffron Group's housing stock will be offered a property at a Social Housing Rent unless that property is already designated/ let as an 'Affordable Rent' unit.

3.2 Selection of properties for re-letting at an Affordable Rent

3.2.1 Whilst the Affordable Rent Programme (or other scheme enabling use of Affordable Rent) applies, all 'relet' properties in each financial year (subject to the exclusions at 3.1.1 and 3.1.2) will be let at an Affordable Rent until the target number of properties for that financial year (within the Affordable Rent programme) has been met.

3.2.2 Properties will not be let at Affordable Rents where;

- the Affordable Rent is less than the current target rent, or where the service charge is such that it reduces the 'rent element' of the Affordable Rent charged (this level will be decided by the Assistant Director (Housing Management)).
- where a sole tenancy becomes a joint tenancy (through creation of a new tenancy) or a joint tenancy becomes a sole tenancy through assignment.

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4. TYPES OF TENANCIES GRANTED AND CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THEY WILL BE ISSUED

4.1 All Saffron Group tenants will be issued with individual tenancy agreements setting out the terms and conditions relating to their tenancy. Rents are determined with reference to Saffron Group's Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy.

4.2 The types of tenancies offered by Saffron Group are:

Tenancy Type Use

Licence Agreement

- Tenants in short term temporary accommodation Where an occupier does not have exclusive occupation or where the occupier holds a tenancy elsewhere (e.g. where the occupant has been 'decanted' from another property). Customers using garages or parking spaces

Assured Shorthold tenancy

An Assured Shorthold tenancy is a periodic (rolling) weekly tenancy that can be ended at any time after 6 months from the start of the tenancy by the giving of 2 months' notice through service of a Notice Requiring Possession (NRP) under S.21 Housing Act 1988. It can be used in the following circumstances;

- Customers living in housing where Saffron Group have limited interest in the property including where Saffron Group leases a property from a third party where the lease is short term and/ or precludes the issuing of a more secure form of tenure/ requires vacant possession at the end of the lease term.
- Intermediate rent properties (Note - Saffron Group lets its Intermediate rent properties as Starter/Assured tenancies and in line with the respective sections below).
- Where occupation is likely to be short term e.g. where future refurbishment or disposal of the property is being considered

The duration of such tenancies will be decided on individual circumstances and may be periodic or fixed term

Starter Tenancy

New tenants of general needs and supported housing will be offered a starter tenancy, which will be converted to a full assured tenancy after one-year subject to satisfactory conduct although these tenancies can be extended by a maximum of a further 6 months - to 18 months in total

The management of Starter tenancies and the obligations of Starter Tenants are set out in Saffron Group's Starter Tenancy Policy

Assured Tenancy

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Existing Saffron tenants (who have completed their Starter Tenancies where this applies) who transfer within Saffron Group's stock will be offered Assured tenancies (also known as 'lifetime' tenancies').

Leasehold

- Customers who own a share in their property
- Customers who own their home and Saffron own the freehold of the land

Demoted tenancies

Where an existing social housing tenant causes serious anti- social behaviour or allows it to be caused, Saffron Group may apply to the County Court for an order to reduce the security of the tenure to a Demoted Tenancy (Assured Shorthold tenancy)

Board/Committee	Board
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