



## **PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY HOMES TENANCY MANAGEMENT POLICY**

<b>Version:</b>	Draft June 2026
<b>Lead Directorate:</b>	Homes and Communities
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Head of Thriving Neighbourhoods
<b>Approved by:</b>	
<b>Effective Date:</b>	TBC
<b>Review Date:</b>	TBC

### **Contents**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Purpose & Anticipated Outcomes**
- 3. About this Policy**
- 4. Tenancy Sustainment & Early Intervention**
- 5. Home Visits**
- 6. Abandoned Properties**
- 7. Breaches of Tenancy and Proportionate Enforcement**
- 8. Tenure Framework**
- 9. Mutual Exchanges**
- 10. Succession and Assignment of Tenancies**
- 11. Under- Occupation, Overcrowding and Best Use of Homes**
- 12. Tenancy Fraud**
- 13. Vulnerable Residents and Support**
- 14. Accessibility, Communication and Appeals**
- 15. Performance, Assurance and Tenant Satisfaction Measures**
- 16. Governance and Monitoring**
- 17. Roles and Responsibilities**

## **18. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

## **19. Key Legislation & Regulatory Compliance**

## **20. Related Documents**

### **1. Introduction**

This policy sets out how Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) allocates, grants, manages and ends tenancies, how we support residents to sustain their tenancies over time, and how we make the best use of our homes. We recognise that there is a direct relationship between the quality of our engagement with residents at the start of their tenancy and their ability to sustain that tenancy in the long term. We want residents to feel positive about their homes and communities and to look after their homes in accordance with their tenancy agreement. This policy applies to all social and affordable rented homes managed by PCH, including general needs, older persons' housing and designated schemes, and ensures compliance with all relevant legal and regulatory frameworks.

### **2. Purpose and Anticipated Outcomes**

**2.1** This policy reflects the terms and conditions of PCH's tenancy agreements. Should policies vary from our tenancy conditions, the tenancy agreement and associated conditions will take precedence.

**2.2** Colleagues and residents fully understand each other's responsibilities as outlined in the tenancy agreement.

**2.3** PCH is committed to ensuring that our working practices and services meet the needs of all our residents, and particularly for those with disabilities or those with temporary or short-term conditions who might otherwise be disadvantaged. In meeting this key business objective, we will make reasonable adjustments to our services. These may include alternative means of communication methods to suit individual needs, alterations to premises or amendments to policies and procedures. In all instances we will seek to ensure that our services can be accessed by all residents with disabilities, as well as those who do not.

**2.4** Ensure that residents can exercise their rights under the terms of the tenancy agreement.

**2.5** Appropriate advice is provided to residents to support them to maintain their tenancies.

### **3. About This Policy**

**3.1** Treat residents and prospective residents with fairness and respect, provide clear, accessible information, and support meaningful engagement.

**3.2** Support residents to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions through early intervention and appropriate advice/assistance.

**3.3** Offer tenancies that are compatible with household needs, community sustainability, and efficient stock use; meet all legal requirements in form and use.

**3.4** Tackle tenancy fraud and address under-occupation/overcrowding through fair and resident-focused services.

**3.5** Ensure reasonable adjustments, accessible formats, and advocacy support where required.

#### 4. Tenancy Sustainment & Early Intervention

4.1 We will provide services that support residents to maintain their tenancy or licence and prevent unnecessary evictions, with a proactive, data-led approach:

Triggers for early intervention (examples):

- Rent arrears  $\geq 2$  weeks or sustained arrears trend.
- Repairs/condition concerns, including damp and mould reports.
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) early warnings.
- Changes in household composition, vulnerability or health reported.

Where data and early warning indicators are used to identify tenancy risk, PCH will ensure that this is done in a fair, lawful and transparent way, with the primary purpose of supporting tenancy sustainment rather than penalising households.

In practice, this means PCH will ensure:

- A clear and documented lawful basis for processing personal data, in line with data protection legislation, and consistent with PCH's Privacy Notices. Data will only be used where it is necessary and proportionate to support residents or manage risk.
- Information used for early intervention is limited to what is relevant for the purpose of identifying support needs, preventing harm, or sustaining tenancies, and is not used for unrelated or unnecessary decision-making.
- Appropriate information-sharing arrangements are in place where data is shared with partners. These arrangements will be governed by agreed data-sharing protocols or information-sharing agreements, which set out what information may be shared, for what purpose, and how it will be protected.
- Transparency with residents about how information is used. Where early warning indicators are applied, residents will be informed through PCH's Privacy Notices and through clear communication from officers about how information is being used to support them, reduce risk, and prevent problems from escalating.
- Staff understand their responsibilities when handling personal data and sharing information. This will be supported through mandatory data protection training and service-specific guidance, rather than detailed procedural rules being set out within this policy.

Further detail on data handling, data sharing and resident information rights is set out in PCH's Privacy Notices and Data Protection policies, which sit alongside this Tenancy Management Policy.

#### 4.2 Support Offer

- Tenancy Sustainment referral (budgeting, income maximisation, benefits advice).
- Financial inclusion and hardship pathways; signposting to specialist agencies.
- Coordinated support for vulnerability (safeguarding, health/mental health, language).
- Hoarding support will include early identification, trauma-informed engagement delivered in a respectful and non-judgemental way, use of recognised assessment tools such as clutter image

rating, and coordinated multi-agency working to address health, fire safety and safeguarding risks.

- Early intervention activity will be monitored to assess its impact on tenancy sustainment, repeat issues and escalation to enforcement, with learning reported through assurance processes to the Customer Focus Committee (CFC) and Board. Additionally, it will be captured in our Tenant Satisfaction Measures reporting.

### **4.3 Safety Issues**

Where tenancy management activity identifies health or safety risks within a property, PCH will ensure prompt referral and coordination with Repairs, Asset Management and Building Safety teams. This includes risks identified through:

- Damp and mould reports in line with Awaab's Law
- Hazards assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Gas, electrical and fire safety requirements
- Building safety obligations within higher-risk buildings

Tenancy management does not replace statutory safety duties; however, it plays a critical role in early identification, access facilitation and resident engagement to support timely resolution.

## **5. Home Visits & Tenancy Audits**

**5.1** PCH will complete a tenancy check with all new residents within 12 weeks of tenancy commencement. This may be delivered through a home visit or another appropriate method based on risk and resident need. Where no support needs are identified, a follow-up contact will be made within the first 12 months.

Additional visits will be carried out where risk indicators are present, including vulnerability, arrears, property condition concerns, safeguarding, or tenancy fraud risk.

## **6. Abandoned Properties**

**6.1** We recognise that residents may not be at their home for a period of time for a variety of reasons. Our tenancy agreements usually state that residents must notify us in writing if they intend to be away from home for 28 days.

Where we believe that the resident may have abandoned a property, we will take enforcement action in line with legislative requirements and follow our procedures to regain possession of the property.

We will ensure that all appropriate checks and enquiries have been made to establish, as far as is reasonable, that a property has been permanently abandoned before issuing a Notice to Quit and taking possession of the property.

## 7. Breaches of Tenancy & Proportionate Enforcement

**7.1** We will investigate alleged breaches (ASB, property condition, failure to allow access, unlawful use). Where possible, we will prioritise the resolution of issues through engagement and support before enforcement is considered. Where enforcement is necessary, we will act proportionately, conduct a proportionality assessment, to consider vulnerability, and use lawful possession routes under Section 8 (Housing Act 1988). With forthcoming changes, Section 21 will not be used; we will align to the assured periodic regime as social sector commencement occurs.

## 8. Tenure Framework

**8.1** PCH will provide the most secure and appropriate tenure consistent with regulatory and legal requirements and good asset/tenancy management:

- Default: Assured periodic tenancies (weekly/monthly rental period).
- Licences: used only where occupation does not confer exclusive possession (e.g., temporary decant/licence).
- Legacy PCC transfer rights: retained per stock transfer commitments.

This approach anticipates the Renters' Rights Act 2025 shift to assured periodic tenancies and ends reliance on Assured Shorthold Tenancies/Section 21 models.

## 9. Mutual Exchanges

**9.1** We will support relevant residents living in eligible housing to mutually exchange their homes, with clear published criteria, process steps, and timescales.

## 10. Succession and Assignment of Tenancies

**10.1** PCH recognises that succession and assignment are significant tenancy management matters, often arising at times of bereavement, change and vulnerability. We will manage all requests in a fair, reasonable and sensitive manner, taking account of individual circumstances and vulnerabilities while balancing our responsibility to make the best use of social housing and meet our legal and regulatory obligations.

Decisions will be evidence-based, proportionate and clearly explained, with residents informed of any available review or appeal routes.

**10.2** Succession is the transfer of a tenancy (not a property) to a qualifying person following the death of a tenant.

Where a tenancy is held jointly, the surviving joint tenant will take the tenancy automatically by survivorship, and this does not constitute the grant of a new tenancy.

Succession will be considered in accordance with:

- Statutory provisions.
- The terms of the tenancy agreement.
- Any preserved or protected tenancy rights.

**10.3** Succession rights are normally limited to one succession per tenancy, subject to any preserved or protected rights.

Eligibility may arise for:

- a spouse or civil partner
- a person living with the tenant as their spouse or civil partner
- a qualifying family member, where provided for in the tenancy agreement

In all cases, the property must have been the individual's only or principal home at the relevant time and for 12 months preceding any assignment.

**10.4** In exceptional circumstances, PCH may consider discretionary succession or the grant of a new tenancy where there is no statutory or contractual right.

Such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of factors such as:

- vulnerability or safeguarding concerns
- caring responsibilities
- length of residence
- housing need and availability

Decisions will be clearly recorded and explained, including the reasons for the outcome reached.

**10.5** PCH will consider whether the property is suitable for the successor and their household.

**10.6** Where accommodation is not suitable to the successor's needs, PCH will take lawful and proportionate steps to support alternative housing options and will clearly explain the reasons for any decisions made.

**10.7** Assignment is the transfer of a tenancy by a living tenant and requires PCH's written consent.

Assignment will only be considered in limited circumstances, including:

- Where the proposed assignee would qualify for statutory succession
- Through mutual exchange
- Other exceptional circumstances in line with PCH procedures

Requests may be refused where it is reasonable to do so, and clear reasons will be provided.

**10.8** Residents may request a review of succession or assignment decisions through PCH's complaints and appeals processes.

We will respond within published timescales and signpost residents to the Housing Ombudsman where appropriate.

Where a property is significantly under-occupied or contains adaptations that are no longer required, we may support the resident to move to suitable alternative accommodation. Any such approach will be handled sensitively, with advice and assistance provided throughout.

## **11. Under-occupation, Overcrowding & Best Use of Homes**

**11.1** We will develop and work in partnership with Devon Home Choice to deliver services to address under-occupation/overcrowding, centred on resident need:

- Downsizing incentives and moving support for under-occupation.
- Priority pathways for overcrowded households into suitably sized homes.
- Transparent criteria for offers, refusals, and alternative options.

## **12. Tenancy Fraud (Prevention & Action)**

**12.1** PCH will take robust and proportionate action to prevent and tackle tenancy fraud, in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Tenancy Standard. Tenancy fraud undermines fairness in allocations, community sustainability, and the effective use of social housing. Enforcement action taken will be proportionate, evidence based and consistent. Learning from fraud investigations will be used to strengthen prevention and reduce repeat risk.

**12.2** We will seek to prevent tenancy fraud through a proactive, risk-based approach, including:

- Routine tenancy audits and home visits, including verification of occupancy and household composition.
- Data-led intelligence, lawful data matching, and cross-service information sharing will be undertaken in line with data protection legislation and only where necessary to identify risk and support tenancy sustainment.
- Targeted checks at key tenancy events, including mutual exchange, succession, assignment, and extended absence.
- Clear, accessible information for residents explaining what constitutes tenancy fraud, their responsibilities under the tenancy agreement, and how concerns can be reported safely.

## **13. Vulnerable Residents and Support**

**13.1** PCH want residents to maintain their tenancies successfully and prevent unnecessary evictions. We offer appropriate advice and support to help residents meet the conditions of their tenancy agreement and remain in their homes. We offer financial inclusion support and may provide tenancy sustainment services directly or through referral to another specialist agency.

**13.2** PCH will consider the needs of those households who are vulnerable for example by reason of age, disability or illness, financial hardship, ASB, Domestic Abuse and households with children. We recognise that residents may need short term or ongoing support.

**13.3** Where a resident has been identified as vulnerable, we will ensure they have access to additional support to help understand their tenancy and the review processes. Our support teams or other appropriate agencies may provide this support. Vulnerable residents will be expected to engage with relevant support agencies to ensure they fully understand their tenancy obligations. Where support is offered, we will clearly explain expectations and work with residents to remove barriers to engagement. Decisions relating to tenancy enforcement will always consider vulnerability, proportionality, and the availability of appropriate support.

**13.4** PCH will use alerts on our computer systems where we have identified a risk to our staff or a vulnerability, for example a resident has a disability which may result in them taking longer to answer the door.

## **14. Accessibility, Communication & Appeals**

**14.1** This policy supports the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, including fairness, transparency, resident engagement and proportionality. Decisions made under this policy can be:

- Reviewed internally, in line with PCH procedures
- Challenged through PCH's Complaints Policy
- Escalated to the Housing Ombudsman, where appropriate

Learning from complaints, resident feedback, scrutiny activity and Housing Ombudsman determinations will inform service improvement and future policy review.

**14.2** Policies and plain-English summaries will be published online and available in alternative formats on request.

**14.3** Residents will receive clear information on rights, responsibilities, services, and performance to support effective scrutiny, challenge and influence over how residents' services are delivered.

## **15. Performance, Assurance & Tenant Satisfaction measures**

**15.1** We will embed Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and tenancy-management KPIs into quarterly reporting to CFC and Board and publish performance information for residents, consistent with consumer regulation.

## **16. Governance and Monitoring**

**16.1** Decision-making under this policy will be subject to clear governance and accountability arrangements.

- Delegated authority for tenancy decisions, including enforcement escalation and the use of discretion, will be set out in procedures.
- Proportionality assessments will be conducted to consider the reasonableness of enforcement and consideration of vulnerability will be explicitly tested and recorded in case notes.
- Outcomes and risks will be reported through governance structures including Executive Leadership Team, Audit and Risk Committee, and the Board, providing assurance over compliance and fairness.

## **17. Roles & Responsibilities**

- Policy Owner: Executive Director Homes and Communities.
- Accountable Leads: Head of Thriving Neighbourhoods
- Tenancy Sustainment: Head of Supported Housing and Safeguarding.
- Strategy, Data & Insight: Head of Strategy Data and Insights - TSMs, equity monitoring, dashboards.
- Governance: Head of Governance - policy reviews, assurance reports, inspection liaison

## **18. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

**18.1** PCH complies with the Equality Act 2010 by having due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity for people who share protected characteristics and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between different groups.

We ensure that no resident is treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We will make reasonable adjustments to support residents with additional needs, ensure accessible information is available, and review our processes regularly to identify and address any inequalities arising from the implementation of this policy.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and will be reviewed as part of the policy lifecycle.

**18.2** Staff will record vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustments consistently within PCH systems to ensure appropriate support, continuity of service and proportionate decision-making.

## **19. Key Legislation & Regulatory Compliance**

**19.1** In delivering this policy, Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) will comply with all relevant legal and regulatory duties, including but not limited to:

- Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996
- Localism Act 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 106
- Tenancy Standard
- Rent Standard
- Renters Rights Act 2025
- Awaab's Law (2025)
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Protection from Eviction Act 1977
- Care Act 2014 and Children Act 2004

**20. Related Documents**

- Tenancy Allocations Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Tenancy Fraud Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Mutual Exchange Procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy

**20.1** The policy replaces and integrates the Tenancy Management, Tenancy Fraud and Terminations policies, establishing a single, comprehensive framework that supports consistent decision-making and improved governance.

**Document Control – Change History**

Version	Effective Date	Responsible Policy Owner	Details of Review / Amendments
1	TBC	Head of Thriving Neighbourhoods	New Policy