



Tenancy Policy

Approved by SMT	25 th May 2023
Approved by Committee/ Board	N/A
Effective date	25 th May 2023
Review date	30 th June 2026
Policy developed by	Senior Housing Managers
Consultations	N/A
Associated documents	Letting Policy Rent Setting Policy Starter Tenancy Procedure

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Introduction

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy describes how Connexus will let homes in a way that creates mixed, vibrant and sustainable communities. The Policy explains the kind of tenancies which will be granted; the circumstances in which we will do this; the length of tenancy terms and the circumstances in which a tenancy will be ended or a further tenancy granted.
- 1.2 In the interests of developing balanced communities and meeting very local housing needs and aspirations. Connexus is committed to ensuring that all property types and communities remain accessible to individuals and families in most need and on a low income. We are committed to offering high quality homes and services and in return we expect customers to comply with the terms of their Tenancy or Licence agreements.
- 1.3 This policy meets the requirements of the Localism Act (2011) and the requirements of the Regulator for Registered Providers to have a Tenancy Policy and has been developed taking into account the Tenancy Strategies of Shropshire and Herefordshire Councils.
- 1.4 Scope: The policy applies to the whole of the Group. This means Connexus Homes Limited, (ultimate parent) and all of its subsidiaries.

2. Problem to Solve

- 2.1 The overall aim of this policy is to ensure that customers have the right home for as long as the property is suitable for their needs taking into account the following considerations: -
 - Ensuring tenants have the skills to manage their tenancies
 - Ensuring appropriate support services are in place
 - Making best use of our stock
 - Reducing overcrowding
 - Tackling under occupation
 - Making best use of adapted properties
 - Using the flexibilities available to us.

3. Method/s

Tenancy Type

- 3.1 Connexus offers a range of tenancies and all current tenants will remain on their existing tenancies, for any new tenants we will use the following: -

Tenancy/ Agreement Type	Who this will be offered to	Length of tenancy
Assured Tenancy	Existing customers of Connexus Homes (usually customers who have successfully completed their starter tenancy.)	Until ended by the customer or the landlord obtains a court order.
Guaranteed Assured Tenancy/ Transferring Assured	Tenants who transferred from South Shropshire District Council, North Shropshire District Council and Herefordshire Council.	Until ended by the customer or the landlord obtains a court order.
Starter Tenancy	New customers	12 months with the option to extend for a further 6 months.
Assured Shorthold Tenancy	Customers moving into properties that have been identified for demolition/ redevelopment. Applicants moving in from an Institutional or Supported setting. Local Authority referrals. Those applicants assessed as suitable for Supported Living Customers occupying market rented accommodation. Rent to Buy customers	6 months 12 months
Licence Agreement	Customers who are accommodated in the Grainloft, Foyer or Refuge. Any House in Multiple Occupation Temporary Accommodation For 16-26 year old at Bath Street Younger Persons Scheme	Daily
Lease agreement	Customers who have purchased properties without the freehold. Shared owners	Dependent on the term of the lease.

3.2 On rare occasions we will rehouse 16 and 17 year olds who are in housing need. In these cases, the tenancy must be guaranteed by an appropriate agency or guardian. The Guarantor will act as the tenancy holder and will hold the tenancy in trust until their 18th birthday (excluding Foyer admissions).

- 3.3 We will also make an assessment on the length of tenancy awarded based on the tenant's immigration status. This may mean that we grant continuous assured shorthold tenancies to cover those without settled status.

Lettings and Marketing

- 3.4 Properties will be allocated in line with the Connexus Lettings Policy, following existing Lettings Procedures. Properties with an affordable rent will be clearly marketed as such via the lettings systems.
- 3.5 Each property advert will explain the tenancy type offered will be subject to this Policy, the type of tenancy, the rent charge and the conditions of the offer will be discussed in full with the prospective customer at the point of offer.

Rent Setting

- 3.6 The rents for each tenancy type will be set in accordance with our Rent Setting Policy and in all cases rents will be reviewed annually, in line with the specific terms on the individual tenancy agreements.
- 3.7 A proportion of all new lets will be let at an affordable rent in order to meet our new build delivery arrangements. We will have the discretion to convert rent properties (unless specifically developed for affordable rent) back to a social rent where a property cannot be let at an affordable rent level.

Ending the Tenancy

- 3.8 An Assured tenant can end their tenancy by providing a valid Notice to Quit (NTQ).
- 3.9 An NTQ must meet the following requirements: -
- i) Be in writing with a handwritten signature.
 - ii) Give 28 days' notice (unless the tenant(s) and the landlord agree to a shorter or longer notice being given).
 - iii) Expire on the first day or the last day of a period of the tenancy (the day the rent is due or the day before).
 - iv) Comply with any other specific requirements of the tenancy agreement.
- 3.10 Assured Shorthold Tenancies and Licence Agreements can be ended by the Tenant by giving the appropriate notice in line with their agreement.
- 3.11 If an Assured Shorthold Tenancy or Starter Tenancy has not been conducted satisfactorily then steps may be taken to bring it to an end before the end of the fixed term.

Reviewing the Tenancy

Assured Shorthold (non-starter)

- 3.12 If the tenancy has been conducted satisfactorily then an Assured Shorthold Tenancy will lapse into a periodic tenancy and will not automatically end at the end of the initial term.

Starter

3.13 At the end of the initial 12 month term there are three options: -

- If the tenancy has been conducted satisfactorily then an assured tenancy will be given.
- If the tenancy has not been conducted satisfactorily but the tenant is working to improve the situation e.g. an agreement to clear rent arrears or managing ASB then the tenancy can be extended for 6 months with authorisation from a Team Leader.
- The tenancy can be ended by serving a section 21 notice giving at least 2 months' notice and if necessary taking possession proceedings through the County Court.

3.14 Customers may appeal against the ending of their tenancy by lodging an appeal in writing within 10 days of the notification that their tenancy is being ended. This appeal will be referred to a Senior Manager who will hear the appeal. The options available are: -

- Uphold the section 21 notice and recover possession of the property
- Uphold appeal and dispense with section 21 notice (offer assured tenancy)
- Offer 6 month extension if tenancy has not been extended previously.

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment Form

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Strategy / policy / procedure / service / function / project being assessed	Tenancy Policy
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Stage 1 Lead officer	Gary Darlington (Head of Communities) Helen Corfield (Senior Housing Manager)	
Date of assessment	26 th April 2023	
Date for next review	Upon review of policy	
Reason for assessment	Amendments to existing policy	
Agreed and signed off by lead officer's line manager	Manager's signature 	Date 26/04/2023

Stage 2 Aims of the service / function / policy/project under assessment	The Policy describes how Connexus will let homes in a way that creates mixed, vibrant and sustainable communities. It explains the kind of tenancies that will be granted; the circumstances in which we will do this; the length of tenancy terms and the circumstances in which a tenancy will be ended or a further tenancy granted.	
Main stakeholders / beneficiaries	The policy applies to applicants, tenants, leaseholders and licensees.	
Who is likely to be affected by the service/ function/ policy/project?	The policy will affect new and existing tenants, leaseholders and licensees.	



Stage 3 Collect and evaluate the evidence				
Key questions	Positive impact	Negative impact	No specific impact on any one group	Evidence
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on any racial groups? Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	The Policy is intended to ensure that all tenants and applicants are treated fairly. Some groups, such as established tenants will have more rights than newer tenants but this is reflective of the current legal and policy framework. There would be no specific impact on tenants or applicants with any or all the Protected Characteristics.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on particular minority ethnic communities? Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	As above.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on individuals where English is not their first language. Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	As above; where cases are identified that require translation services, this will be undertaken.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on women or men? This includes Transgender people/ Trans people. Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	As above.
Is it possible that the service/ function/ policy could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage Transgender people/ Trans People?	No	No	Yes	As above.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people with disabilities? Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	The policy would have no specific impact. A person's disability will not affect the type of tenancy offered.

Key questions	Positive impact	Negative impact	No specific impact on any one group	Evidence
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people with particular disabilities? Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	The policy would have no specific impact. Tenancy agreements can be made available in alternative formats if required.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people of a particular age? (e.g. children, young people, older people). Describe how and which.	No	Yes	N/A	Young people, specifically those under 25, are more likely to be housed in supported accommodation. As a result, this will lead to a higher proportion of younger people being granted a licence compared to other age groups.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people with particular sexuality/ sexual orientation? Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	The policy would have no specific impact; a person's sexual orientation will not affect the type of tenancy offered.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people in terms of marriage/civil partnership status? Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	The policy would have no specific impact; that someone is married or in a civil partnership, or not, will not affect the type of tenancy offered.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people with a particular religion or belief? Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	The policy would have no specific impact; a person's religion or belief, or that they have none, will not affect the type of tenancy offered.
Does the policy or service have a positive or negative impact on people in terms of pregnancy/maternity? Describe how and which.	No	No	Yes	The policy would have no specific impact; being pregnant or with a child(ren) will not affect the type of tenancy offered.
Is it possible that the service/function/policy could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage those that do not have access to digital equipment?	No	No	Yes	The policy would have no specific impact; tenancy information/agreements will be provided via a number of routes and not solely via electronic methods.
Is it possible that the service/ function/ policy could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage or cause an individual/ community financial hardship?	No	Yes	N/A	It is possible that the policy will have an adverse effect on households who are allocated houses let at an affordable rent which is higher than a social rent.

Outsourced services	
If delivery of your strategy, policy, project or service is partly or wholly provided by external organisations / agencies, please list any arrangements you plan, to ensure that they promote equality and diversity.	The policy is wholly delivered by Connexus; if there is a requirement to involve outside agencies then this will be done within data sharing guidelines.
Relations between different equality groups	
Does your assessment show that a policy, project or service may have a differential impact between any discrete groups? If yes, please explain how this issue is going to be tackled.	Pre-tenancy assessments and regular visits will help to identify any additional support required by customers to help them to sustain their tenancy. Connexus already provides specific supported accommodation for younger people who would not ordinarily be able to access general needs units. Training and support will be offered to residents to help them access move-on accommodation.
Stage 4 – Summary of replies from individuals and stakeholders consulted, including any previous complaints on equality and diversity issues about the policy or service	
The components of the Tenancy Policy have previously been presented to tenants and were considered to be reasonable and fair.	
Stage 5 – Options resulting from this equality impact assessment, including measures necessary to minimise or remove any adverse impact and better promotion of equality and diversity. Consider any alternative solutions	
To closely monitor the delivery of the policy to minimise negative impact.	
Stage 6 – Arrangements for regular monitoring of the impact of the policy, project or service	
As outlined in the policy.	