



Support Strategy

September 2017

Summary

This strategy aims to improve the quality of life for our residents and increase tenancy sustainability, ensuring residents have access to the right support services at the right time, increasing their independence

Date of Approval	September 2017
Responsible Director	Executive Director of Housing
Strategy Monitoring Body	Tenant Committee
Resident Input into Strategy	Tenancy Panel and Tenant Committee
Dates for Strategy Review	September 2020
Linked Strategies	Financial Inclusion Strategy Neighbourhood Strategy Community Safety Strategy Value for Money Strategy
Statutory and Legal Framework	
Version	1

1. Introduction

Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) recognises that providing support to our most vulnerable tenants is vital to delivering value for money by reducing the number of failed tenancies. This strategy seeks to set out the many ways that WCHG provides support to tenants, and how we work with a number of partners to ensure that our tenants can access the right service and support to enhance their lives, and increase their ability to live independently.

Our vision as set out in the WCHG Strategic Plan “Towards 2020” is “Creating a community where people choose to live and work, having pride in their homes and services”.

Local Context

Wythenshawe as a whole is in the top 20% of most deprived areas in England and this is reflected at our neighbourhood level. This means that tenants of WCHG typically experience higher levels of need and we will try to identify and support those tenants appropriately, which may be from one of our in house services or via signposting to another service, including statutory agencies.

Our profiling data shows that around 48% of tenants report being limited by a long-term health problem (STAR Survey 2014/15), and this potentially impacts on their ability to manage their tenancies independently.

There have been a succession of government changes that have also impacted some of our most vulnerable tenants, including the introduction of bedroom tax, universal credit and the benefit cap. We are seeing some of our tenants in increasing poverty, and some of our support services are directed at alleviating this.

This Strategy in particular supports the following elements of the Strategic Plan:

Services, Partnerships and Towards independence, breaking dependency

- **Services** – delivering high quality services is vital to our success, and this extends to our support services in addition to our core services.
- **Partnerships** – by working in partnership with other agencies we can achieve better outcomes for our tenants. WCHG is proud to be a partner of choice for Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Police and others.
- **Towards independence, breaking dependency** – by providing support to tenants to increase their life skills and recognise their own strengths, their independence grows and they gradually rely less on support services,

2. Strategy Outcomes

This strategy overall aims to ensure that residents are able to access services and support, which will lead to the following outcomes:

- % of new tenancies sustained
- reduction in void costs and homelessness;
- improved quality of life for residents;
- increased income and ability to manage own finances;
- Improved life skills for residents and ability to manage own affairs;
- Increase in residents accessing work programmes
- Ensure safeguarding issues are identified, managed and recorded

3. Strategy Definition and Scope

Support can be seen in many ways, and for WCHG and the services provided to our residents, this is defined as:

“providing housing related support to enable tenants to have the best opportunity to sustain their tenancies”.

Housing related support is low level, non statutory support or intervention, usually for a defined period of time.

The Support Strategy will apply to residents in WCHG properties, and in particular those who are identified as vulnerable and in need of additional support to manage their tenancies, or other elements of their lives. This could be for a number of reasons, including:

- First time tenants
- Older people, particularly those with no care package and family support
- People with physical health issues
- People with mental health issues
- People who due to substance misuse have less ability to manage
- People with literacy issues
- Those with chaotic lifestyles caused by complex needs
- People who are recently bereaved, or who have had a similar life event or crisis
- Hoarders, who are unable to address the condition of their property without support

We are committed to providing services to our tenants to ensure that support or appropriate signposting is available to enhance the quality of their life and sustain their tenancy.

In addition to our Tenancy Management Team, our Community Safety Teams and other core functions, we offer the following services to our tenants:

- Low level tenancy support
- Assisting statutory partners with medium level support
- Supporting statutory partners with complex cases, multi agency assessments and plans – via safeguarding hubs and Early Help Hubs
- Crisis management and support
- Property and Welfare
- Older persons specific services (Age Friendly)
- Out of hours service, via our 24 hour team, Assure24.

Our detailed support offer is set out as Appendix 1. When a case is closed through none engagement, we will advise our statutory partners of this.

4. Key Objectives

The delivery of this strategy is focused on achieving strategic objectives that support our Strategic Plan, and set out how our services will be offered to our tenants who need them.

The key objectives for this strategy are:

- To quantify Value for Money in delivering support services to tenants;
- To be a partner of choice for the local authority, police and agencies
- To ensure tenants have access to support services, both in house and external partners;
- To improve tenancy sustainability, and reduce failed tenancies;
- To reduce ASB, rent arrears, and tenancy related issues;
- To reduce void costs by working with tenants to improve their hoarding and property condition in a strengths based way;
- To ensure new tenants who need support to set up a tenancy have this;
- To have a range of services for our older tenants who need support and signposting;

5. Implementation

The strategy will be implemented through our internal teams, and by working closely with our partners to influence services provided to vulnerable people. We will also reduce duplication as much as possible by sharing information

Specific plans for implementation will be developed and monitored using the service plan framework.

6. Monitoring and Review

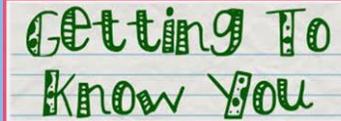
Outputs and outcomes from tenancy support, extra care and property and welfare are recorded and monitored monthly, reporting to Leadership Team.

7. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Stepped Approach for agreeing support plan
- Appendix 2 – Structure of Support

Our stepped approach for tenants and residents agreeing a support plan:

Step 1 - introduction to service, getting to know you and understanding what is needed



Step 2 - having a strengths based conversation and agreeing what we will do and what you will do and what you want to achieve - a support plan



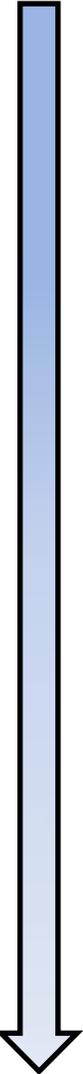
Step 3 - working through the plan, addressing issues, practical support and visits to check on you, work to goals



Step 4 - moving onto personal development, training, employment, relationships and finances, healthy living advice.



Step 5 - moving to empowerment and independence, or a long term plan of support



Support is structured and offered to our tenants via a number of strands as follows:

	Tenancy Support	Financial Inclusion	Property & Welfare	Older Persons & Extra Care	Pre Tenancy Support
Level 1	Assessment and signposting, or allocation of key worker	Referral into service, and initial assessment	Full assessment from PAW	Wellbeing assessment	6 week support plan to ensure tenancy set up
Level 2	Up to 6 week support plan to address issues or signpost	Assistance with benefits or debts short term	Agree level with tenant and agree plan to improve	Referral onto Care Provider or agency, promote activities,	Support with benefits claims, utilities and furniture
Level 3	Support plan up to 6 months with regular visits	Intensive work to prevent eviction and ensure payment	6 month support plan with practical support regular visits	Emergency alarm set up, care package provided by others	
Level 4	Intensive support for up to 18 months, then move to exit or monitor		Longer term plan with multi agency working	Intensive work required, adaptations, rehousing	
	Crisis management, one off interventions	Assessment of crisis, immediate support and signposting		Interventions to resolve temporary situation	Exit plan – visit or call to capture outcome or further referral