



Tenancy Sustainment Policy

Author: Joanne Casson, Sheltered Housing Manager.

Date: January 2026



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Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out Wigan Council's approach to supporting tenant(s) to successfully manage and sustain their tenancies.

Wigan Council is committed to providing an effective housing service to all tenant(s) and recognise the role that support can provide in achieving tenancy sustainment, reducing homelessness and creating stable and thriving communities.

This policy sets out a framework which helps us to identify people who are at higher risk of a failed tenancy and sets out our flexible ways of working to meet the needs of these tenant(s), with a strong focus on future tenancy sustainability.

The current demand for social housing, combined with wider social economic factors such as fuel poverty and cost of living increases, mean that there is huge pressure on social housing stock. We want to ensure that we allocate the right property to the right person, and that the tenant(s) has every opportunity to make the property their home, and to live successfully within that property for as long as they need it.

Abandoned tenancies, rent loss and void remedial works are all financial implications associated with failed tenancies, and each of these areas has limited resources. By working together with a focus on helping tenant(s) to become successful we will reduce pressures on these areas and deliver better outcomes for our communities.

This policy supports Wigan Council's Progress with Unity vision by promoting collaborative, person-centred tenancy management. It reflects our commitment to asset-based working, community empowerment, and tackling inequalities through inclusive and innovative service delivery.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to the approach Wigan Council will take to working with Social Housing tenant(s) who live within Wigan Council Housing properties, where Wigan Council is the Landlord.

The policy applies to all tenancy types including, but not limited to, Secure Tenancies, Introductory Tenancies and Licences.

Supporting legislation

The Tenancy Standard, issued by the Regulator of Social Housing, outlines the requirements and standards in relation to Tenancy Support and Sustainability. Local Authority providers must publish clear and accessible policies which outline their approach to tenancy management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions.

Related Policies

Wigan Council's Tenancy Management Policy sets out the approach to Tenancy Management and there exists some overlap to some of the elements of this policy.

Wigan Council's Housing Allocation Policy details some of the measures taken to ensure that we allocate our stock fairly and appropriately, with a focus on getting things right first time. Our approach to allocation of our Housing stock supports wider tenancy sustainment.

Our approach to Tenancy Sustainment will draw heavily on the principles of Wigan Council's Financial Inclusion plan which refers to Wigan's approach, by working together across a partnership approach, breaking down barriers that create financial, health, educational and environmental inequalities in our borough.

Aims

- Maximise opportunities for tenancy sustainability across our stock.
- Equip our tenant(s) with the knowledge and skills to manage their tenancy effectively.
- Support early identification of people who may be at risk of a failed tenancy and timely intervention with a focus on preventing issues arising.
- Reduce financial, health, educational and environmental inequalities within our borough.
- Connect tenant(s) with the appropriate support to enable them to feel confident in managing their tenancy and to be safe and secure within their home.
- Work within communities, to support communities – helping people to access support and networks through informal, community-based routes.

Objectives

Bespoke packages designed to meet the needs of individual groups identified at greater risk of tenancy failure.

- Affordability checks pre-offer of accommodation.
- Deliver tenancy skills training to groups of individuals who are identified as at greater risk of tenancy failure.
- Practical support and advice around money management.
- Through our tenancy support team, offer direct support to those in need of practical assistance in terms of tenancy management.
- Through our wider partnerships and local communities, we will signpost people to access support and opportunities available to them within their local community.
- We will carry out in person sign-ups with our customers, and our Neighbourhood Tenant Officers will visit new tenant(s) within 6 weeks of their tenancy commencement.
- Support with completion of benefit claims, provide advice and guidance where needed around how to maximise income.
- Digital skills support to ensure people are not digitally excluded.

What is a failed tenancy?

Wigan Council understands that tenancies end for a wide range of reasons, and many of these are positive outcomes for the tenant(s). We also understand that there are occasions whereby it may not be appropriate to sustain a tenancy, such as domestic abuse, poor mobility or ill health.

We consider a tenancy has not been sustained if it ends in any of the following circumstances:

- Abandonment – the tenant(s) leaves the property and does not communicate with the Landlord that they have left, or the reasons for this.
- Eviction – the tenant(s) are evicted from the property for breach of tenancy or rent arrears.
- Tenancies which end within the first two years.

Our Approach to support

Wigan Council offer a variety of support mechanisms to support tenant(s) in sustaining their homes.

Whilst we don't have a fixed approach to how we deliver support, opting to work in ways which meet the needs of the people we are supporting, we do have some principles and practices we adhere to, which are outlined below.

Person Centred – We work alongside the individual, ensuring that they remain at the centre of our focus, encouraging and supporting their involvement in directing their own support. We will take time to get to know the individual, and will help them to identify their own goals, which will be different for each person.

Our behaviours – We will treat tenant(s) and customers with dignity and respect. We will be honest and open, and we will be transparent in our decision making.

Asset Based – We focus on the assets, skills and qualities of the individual we are working with. We get to know the person and help them to recognise and identify their own strengths, interest and personal goals, which provide the foundation for the support planning. We will work with tenant(s) to identify their strengths, aspirations, and community connections, ensuring support plans build on what matters most to them.

Community Focused – We believe that true independence and resilience come from people finding support, information and guidance within their own communities. Where possible, we will work with people to identify how they can engage with their communities, developing their skills and assets. We will collaborate with local organisations to co-design and deliver tenancy sustainment initiatives that reflect the needs and strengths of each neighbourhood.

Not time limited – When an individual is allocated a Tenancy Support Worker, there is no set amount of time support can be provided. We will work with tenant(s) to help create independence, and envisage a time when support will naturally end, but there will be no pressure for this to happen prematurely. We recognise that to adopt a truly person-centred approach we must work at the pace of the individual we are supporting.

Designated Tenancy Support Officer – Support will be provided by a named individual who will complete the initial assessment and will remain with the individual throughout the lifespan of their support. On occasion, it may not be possible to do this, due to staffing changes, so where this happens, we will endeavour to ensure a handover meeting is completed so the tenant(s) can meet their new support worker in the company of their existing support worker.

Digitally confident – We promote digital confidence with our tenant(s). A strong focus of the Tenancy Support Team is to ensure tenant(s) have access

and opportunities to learn digital skills, recognise the significant barrier digital exclusion can create.

Partnership working - On occasions whereby the referral screening identified the client may not be suitable for their service, the team will also link back to the referrer to discuss the reasons why the referral isn't being accepted, and where possible, will signpost to more appropriate agencies. Some examples of this may include whereby the needs of the tenant(s) may be better suited to a more specialised support agency such as Mental Health or Adult Social Care. All referral outcomes are logged and monitored to ensure best practice and quality assurance.

Supportive – Tenant(s) can nominate a person to act as an advocate and support them with their communications with us as their landlord. We would need to have the Tenant(s) written permission and be confident the tenant is aware of the discussions and able to make effective decisions.

Coproduced – We will regularly seek feedback from our Tenant(s) on our services, and we do this via a range of channels. We have our new tenant(s) survey, annual tenant(s) satisfaction survey, compliments and complaints process, and we record any ad hoc feedback we receive in relation to our individual services.

Wigan Council's Housing Advisory Panel: The panel is made up of tenant(s), councillors and council staff. The role of the tenant members is to provide challenge, leadership and support whilst sharing knowledge from wider tenant voice engagement and through their own lived experience. They will act as a sounding board and source of advice for the Council's Cabinet on issues of concern to tenant(s) and be able to influence and shape the housing services we provide.

Housing Scrutineer: As a housing scrutineer tenant(s) will get the opportunity to look at how we work and take part in an in-depth review of our services. Ask questions and deep dive into how things work. They will then report back any findings and make recommendations for service improvements. If you would like more information on any of the above or to get more involved in decision making, please contact the Tenant Voice and Engagement Team on 01942 486645 or TVAET@wigan.gov.uk.

How we Work with our Tenant(s) to Help Maximise Tenancy Sustainability

Prevention and Intervention

Early identification of people who may be at risk of tenancies failing is really important to ensure timely and effective opportunities for intervention.

For applicants who we are aware have previously had a failed tenancy, or for whom this is their very first home, we will automatically offer a referral into our Tenancy Support Service.

We also work with some individuals who have been accommodated in Homeless Temporary Accommodation (TA), whilst they are in the TA, and if they are allocated a tenancy with us, that support continues for at least the first 6 weeks of their new tenancy. This short term, intensive support allows assistance with setting up utilities, sourcing suitable furnishings, managing bills, and setting up the property as a home.

Pre-Tenancy Allocation

Our Allocations Team work to ensure that they identify people who may be at risk of a failed tenancy, or whom need some additional support with starting up their tenancy.

The team utilise a range of measures to help customers and ensure they are allocating housing stock effectively.

The team complete several checks around applicants before making an offer to identify any risks, vulnerabilities or support needs. If a property is identified as a 'Sensitive Let' this means that additional checks may be undertaken to understand more about the future tenant(s) to make sure the offer is right for them. A property may be deemed to be a 'Sensitive Let' for several reasons, including previous issues with anti-social behaviour. The types of checks will be specific to the applicant and property; however, they may include system checks around previous tenancies to identify any previous issues with rent arrears or behaviour, checks with Greater Manchester Police to identify any criminal convictions or concerns with the applicant, discussions with any involved support workers to identify any concerns or future opportunities for support.

Affordability checks will be completed with an applicant prior to an offer of accommodation, which looks at their income and expenditure and factors in average household bills. The purpose of the check is to ensure that the property will be affordable to the applicant. This information also assists the

Allocations team to understand the tenant(s) financial position and make recommendations for extra support measures if applicable.

The Allocations team complete a matrix with all applicants prior to offer, which helps to better understand the person as an individual, their household, and helps to identify any support opportunities. The team will have discussions with applicants around the information and may suggest other avenues of support.

Wigan Council commission an 'Enhanced Tenancy' service, which is designed for people who may struggle to source and afford items such as carpets, curtains or complete decoration works to their property, in particular, first-time tenant(s). This service offers basic floor coverings, window blinds and painting to the interior of the property or the supply of a paint pack. To ensure maximum flexibility for our tenant(s), there is no fixed criteria to accessing this service, and it would be informed by the pre allocation discussions around financial and personal circumstances of each household whilst also considering income, expenditure and disposable income.

Care Leavers

Wigan Council takes its role as Corporate Parents very seriously and proactively works to ensure we maximise positive opportunities and outcomes for young people leaving Care. We understand that securing safe, quality accommodation is challenging for young people leaving care, and as such, working alongside our Care Leavers, we have designed a specific pathway and accommodation offer to help break down some of the barriers they may face when leaving care. Our aim is to ensure young people are given the best possible start when moving into their first home.

The Allocation and Accommodation Team work with the Care Leaving Team to ensure that young people leaving Local Authority care have an offer of accommodation prior to turning 18 so that there is a seamless move on plan once their placement ends.

When a property is identified the team assess the suitability of the offer with the Care Leaving team, to ensure the property is the right fit and that the tenancy is affordable and sustainable.

Prior to a Care Leaver moving into a property, it undergoes a full enhancement, which includes decoration, floor coverings and blinds. This is available to all Care Leavers who are offered their first Wigan Council tenancy.

All Care Leavers are allocated a Tenancy Support worker at the beginning of their tenancy to provide housing related support to help them make a success of their new home.

Pre-tenancy Training

We have developed a pre-tenancy training package, which is aimed at helping people who are deemed to be at a higher risk of their tenancy failing. The package covers various aspects of general tenancy management, how to be a good neighbour, practical advice and tips on setting up a home and advice around money management and prioritising bills.

The training is delivered flexibly, to meet the needs of clients, and can be delivered via group sessions to particular cohorts of individuals, or via a one-to-one basis, through targeted directed support.

Neighbourhood Tenant Officers

Wigan Council have a dedicated resource in place to support individuals in signing up for their tenancies, their role is designed to be flexible in responding to the individual needs of the tenant(s) and their household. The Neighbourhood Tenant Officers are aligned to geographical areas which allows them to build up local knowledge and awareness of the area and develop an understanding and relationship with tenants within that community. Some examples of the support they provide are below;

- In person attendance at the property to explain the tenancy and legalities, show the person around the property.
- Provide advice around setting up utilities, and other household bills.
- An advice pack is issued to all tenant(s) which contains a wealth of information around the property, services they may find useful and benefits
- An in person check in visit for all new tenant(s) within the first 6 weeks of their tenancy which provides an opportunity to discuss how things are going and address any concerns.

Collections Team

The Collections Team take a proactive approach with new tenant(s) following sign up, we have a dedicated resource within the service who contacts each new tenant(s) to support them with ensuring their rent and council tax accounts are explained in full, and the relevant support provided to claim any qualifying discounts. Contact is made with all new tenants within one week of sign-up. Further support is provided throughout the

duration of the tenancy; tenant(s) can contact the team for support at any stage if needed.

The Collections Team help tenant(s) to maintain their tenancy through early intervention and support via our Welfare Collection and Support framework. They refer tenant(s) to our Income Maximisation team, who help tenant(s) to maximise their income and offer money management/ budgeting support to help them manage their homes and avoid eviction. We work in collaboration with partners such as Citizens Advice and Age UK who offer specialist energy and debt advice to support tenant(s).

There is a wealth of support available to tenant(s) through the 'Here for You' campaign. [Here for you](#) , Help to Claim.

Tenancy Support Team

Our Tenancy Support Team provides specific, tailored support for tenant(s) who need additional support to maintain their tenancy or where there is a higher risk of tenancy breakdown or homelessness. The team work with people who are identified as requiring some elements of support either with the initial set up of their tenancy, or longer-term support to help them sustain their accommodation. Some examples of the type of support provided are set out below, however, this is not an exhaustive list – support is designed in close discussion with the tenant(s), ensuring their views, wishes and opinions are reflected within the support plan.

- Finances, budgeting, applying for benefits
- Communication, dealing with mail, completing forms etc,
- Setting up utilities
- Attending appointments
- Preventing social isolation
- Health and Wellbeing
- Making a positive contribution

The team have an established referral process via a single point of access. Referrals can be made by individuals, professionals or on behalf of other people, and the online form is available here [Housing support](#)

The Tenancy Support team complete a screening of referrals upon receipt, to identify if the tenant(s) is suitable for their service, and to determine which pathway of support they require.

If an individual is not deemed suitable for the service, the team will endeavour to have a discussion with the referrer to explain the reasoning

behind the decision and signpost to other types of more support if appropriate.

There is no time limit on the support offered, each client will be allocated a support worker who will work with them to achieve their goals whilst promoting independence and self-reliance.

Homes and Communities Team

Along with the Tenancy Support Officers, and Neighbourhood Tenant Officers there is an Estate caretaking team who provide an enhanced service for residents on our Estates. They work collaboratively alongside the other services within the Homes and Communities' team and the wider council keeping the estates clean and tidy and free from rubbish, so they are decent places where people want to live, be proud of and want to be involved with.

Working on our Estates, our Caretakers are often the eyes and ears of our communities, providing early interventions by linking in with tenant(s) and signposting to relevant services. This has become a key component in proactively tackling issues affecting our neighbourhoods.

Our teams are aligned to geographical patches, so they have extensive knowledge of the area they work and know their community assets. This makes for a greater understanding of the dynamics of the estate.

As officers are more visible on the estates this makes accessibility easier for tenant(s) should they require assistance and guidance on issues.

Financial Support

Wigan Council have a varied range of financial support offers for tenant(s) who are experiencing financial difficulties. This ranges from welfare loans to budgeting advice and income maximisation. Our Financial Wellbeing Plan describes the Council wide approach to supporting all our residents with opportunities to create financial stability.

The Wigan Borough also has a wide range of charitable organisations offering support for lower income households around food, furniture, toiletries, clothing and school uniforms. Our Tenancy Support Teams and wider Housing staff will actively promote these services and make referrals as appropriate, with tenant(s) consent.

Representatives and Advocates

Our tenant(s) and prospective tenant(s) are always welcome to bring a friend, relative or advocate with them to any interactions they have with us

as their landlord. We want to have a positive and constructive relationship with our tenant(s) and for them to feel as comfortable as possible. All we ask is that you can make us aware of who will be attending any meetings or discussions with you. You can also give permission for someone to discuss your tenancy or housing application on your behalf, to do this, we would need you to provide us with written permission stating that you are happy for your information to be shared.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Adult Safeguarding work encompasses all the areas of work which enable an adult to retain independence, wellbeing and choice. It is about ensuring good environments and systems that prevent abuse and neglect from occurring as well as promoting good practice across all agencies for responding to concerns when they are raised.

Our approach to Safeguarding follows Wigan Councils Adult Safeguarding Board guidelines. We ensure that all our staff have attended training on adult safeguarding and are conversant with and adhere to the multi-agency safeguarding adults' protocols. Further information can be found below.

[Wigan policy and procedure \(wigansafeguardingadults.org\)](http://wigansafeguardingadults.org).

Everyone has the right to live their life free from violence and abuse. That right is underpinned by the duty on public bodies under the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Care Act (2014) includes the concept of 'Making Safeguarding Personal' (MSP), where the Local Authority has a responsibility to ensure that it operates in a person-centred manner to ensure Section 42 enquiries are managed in a meaningful, respectful and purposeful way for everyone affected.

The Care Act (2014) places a duty on the Local Authority as the lead organisation, to co-ordinate the response to make enquiries into safeguarding adult concerns if it reasonably suspects an adult is at risk, being abused or neglected, by identifying the most appropriate person to investigate the concern. Where relevant, staff will be involved in the Section 42 Enquiry and be required to attend Case Conference, where it is established (on the balance of probabilities) whether abuse has occurred, not occurred or inconclusive. The role of the case conference is to agree in a

multi-agency forum the ongoing management of risks via the formulation of a shared Protection Plan.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Children

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; we want to make sure Children and Young people feel safe and cared for in the Wigan Borough. Where our service delivery relates to Children, Young People or Families, we will work within the Wigan Safeguarding Children's Partnership guidelines and ensure all staff are familiar with the guidelines, comply with them and have completed the required safeguarding training. [Wigan Safeguarding Children's Board - Homepage \(wiganlscb.com\)](http://wiganlscb.com)

In line with section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 the Provider will ensure their functions are discharged with the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by actively contributing to the development of needs assessment, strategies, protocols, training and other measures to further the safeguarding children response across the borough and by ensuring staff work with children and families in a child-centred way, which focuses on positive outcomes, is evidence based and takes account of the developmental needs of children.

Where relevant, staff shall be involved in and contribute to section 47 Safeguarding Children enquiries and attend safeguarding children case conferences, reviews and core groups.

Corporate Parenting

As a member of Team Wigan, we have a responsibility for the children who are brought into the care of the local authority as part of our role as Corporate Parents.

We are very proud of all the children in our care and as corporate parents throughout the work we are doing, we regularly ask ourselves, "If this were my child, would it be good enough?"

A strong ethos of corporate parenting means that sense of vision and responsibility towards the children we look after, and their care leavers is a priority for everyone. Looked-after children have the same needs as other children; to be loved, cared for and feel safe.

How we work with our Partners

Stakeholders

We are committed to working to address the numerous reasons why tenancies fail, by working closely with both our tenant(s), and drawing upon the skills and expertise of partner agencies to support our tenant(s) with their individual challenges.

Within the Wigan Borough, we are proud to have a varied range of support providers, and we recognise that as a Housing Provider, we are one cog in a huge wheel. We embrace partnership working and understand that our tenant(s) need different skills and services at different times. To reduce duplication and provide excellent services to our tenant(s), it's important for us to understand the roles and responsibilities of other organisations providing support, health and wellbeing services across the borough. We have summarised below some of the current organisations we may signpost to, or work alongside, however, recognise that the landscape changes frequently, and as such regularly review our approach to partnership working to ensure the best outcomes for our tenant(s).

- Wigan Council Complex Dependency Team
- Wigan Council's Social Care Team
- Wigan Council's Community Resilience Team
- Wigan Wellbeing and Resilience
- Community Link Workers
- Community Mental Health Team
- Greater Manchester Police
- Community Engagement Teams
- Local GP's and Primary Health Care services

How we measure success?

We will regularly review our performance against several outcomes including;

Any tenancies which end prior to 2 years from commencement.

Our Tenancy Support Team has a satisfaction survey which they ask tenant(s) to complete to help evaluate and shape future service delivery.

Following a tenancy termination, former tenant(s) are sent a satisfaction survey, this is to capture any areas of good practice or areas for improvement.

Performance oversight is delivered through our Key Performance Dashboard, which is monitored by our Housing Advisory Panel, made up of Tenant(s), Local Councillors and Senior Management.

We will monitor outcomes using shared indicators aligned with borough-wide priorities, ensuring transparency and continuous improvement.

Risks

The absence of an effective and robust approach to Tenancy Sustainment can lead to reduced outcomes and opportunities for our tenant(s), leading to an increase in failed tenancies. The social and financial implications of this are significant and can lead to increased voids, homelessness and lack of future housing opportunities for applicants.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to fairness and equality for all regardless of their colour, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, religion or belief, family circumstances or offending history. Our aim is to ensure that our policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone, either directly or indirectly.

We will actively address barriers to tenancy sustainment for residents from diverse backgrounds, ensuring services are inclusive, culturally competent, and responsive to lived experiences.

Data protection and equality impact assessments have been undertaken in respect of this policy and which identified no negative impact on any person/group with a protected characteristic as a result of this policy.

Complaints and Feedback

Complaints

Unfortunately, we don't always get things right, if a customer is unhappy with the service, they have received from Wigan Council, we ask that they let us know. We are committed to making it easy for anyone who is

unhappy with a service, or experience provided by the Council, to tell us about it. Where customers require additional support, we will endeavour to provide a service that seeks to meet the needs of a particular individual or household.

- You can make a complaint to us in whichever way is easiest for you.
- Use our online form at www.wigan.gov.uk/contactus
- Email us at complaints@wigan.gov.uk
- Phone us on (01942) 827607
- Write to us at the Complaints and Information team, PO Box 100, Wigan, WN1 3DS
- Call into any public Council office

In cases where we cannot resolve complaints informally, complaints are dealt with in line with Wigan Council Complaints Policy and a Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints process is followed. If a customer remains unhappy and are not satisfied with our response, they can appeal through the Housing Ombudsman service, the Local Government Ombudsman, or their local MP.

How to complain to the Housing Ombudsman

- Use the online complaint form at [Make a complaint - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](http://Make a complaint - Housing Ombudsman (housing-ombudsman.org.uk))
- Phone them on 0300 111 3000
- Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

How to complain to the Local Government Social Care Ombudsman

- Use the online complaint form at Contact us - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- Phone them on 0300 061 0614

Feedback

It is vital we know what our customers think and that is why your feedback and suggestions are important to us.

Tell us about any feedback or suggestions you have that might make our services better or more efficient

Let us know if we have given you a good service.

This helps us to understand what is important to you and to share good practice so that we can improve our services. Use this link to complete the

Review and Version Control

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by legislative changes or operational needs. The Service Manager for Tenancy Management is responsible for coordinating the review process.

A version control table will be maintained to track amendments and ensure clarity on the current policy status.

Version	Date Approved	Summary of Changes	Approve by
1.0	January 2026	New policy issued –Tenancy Sustainment Policy 2026	Full Council