

Policy Summary

Absent tenants

Customer summary of a Genesis Housing Group policy

This policy applies to all tenants who are living in homes that are owned or managed by subsidiaries of Genesis Housing Group. The policy excludes tenants whose housing is managed on behalf of a local authority (Hackney & Westminster).

Introduction

We are committed to making the best possible use of our properties. We aim to:

- ensure our stock is used efficiently and for those in housing need;
- minimise the number of properties that are abandoned by tenants and the chances of unauthorised occupation of empty properties by repossessing abandoned properties as quickly as possible;
- ensure all enquiries and requests regarding long term absence are dealt with consistently;
- ensure the tenant remains responsible for all obligations under their tenancy agreement; and
- prevent the creation of unintended tenancies and rights of occupation.

Tenants' responsibilities

It is a key principle of holding a tenancy that the tenant uses the property as their only or principal residence. If the tenant wishes to relinquish their tenancy, they should do so by serving a notice to quit on us in writing, giving us four weeks notice. Once the notice has expired, tenants must give us vacant possession of the property.

Tenants should inform us if they intend to go away for any significant period of time, which may be specified in the tenancy agreement.

Where notice of absence is given

Where notice of absence is given, we will obtain details of the circumstances from the tenant. We will warn them that any absence longer than the agreed time may lead to possession proceedings being taken.

Tenants are entitled to be absent from their properties for a substantial period of time, as long as the property

remains their only and principal home. The following are generally accepted as valid reasons for temporary absence.

- Having a short prison sentence.
- Staying in hospital.
- Living in student accommodation in term time.
- Staying with relatives to receive or provide support and care.
- Having fixed term employment elsewhere.
- Going on an extended holiday visit.

If the length of time in prison or hospital will mean that entitlement to Housing Benefit will cease and if no definite arrangements for paying the rent can be made, the tenant will be encouraged to end the tenancy. This may involve liaising, as appropriate, with the tenant's probation officer, social worker or health worker. If the tenant refuses to give up their tenancy and rent arrears accrue, possession action will be taken for non-payment of rent.

A tenant may be absent from the property for over 12 months and have the resources to continue to make rent payments while he/ she is away. This long term absence of the tenant is not an efficient use of housing stock. In these cases, we will try to persuade the tenant to give up their tenancy.

Requests to extend the agreed period of absence

If, during their absence, the tenant does intend to return but asks for an extension of the agreed period, if reasonable, we will agree in writing. If the extra time requested is excessive or there is a suspicion that the tenant has no intention to return, we will advise that they relinquish their tenancy. If they refuse, we will consider possession action.

House-sitters

Tenants may wish to take in a house-sitter or 'care-taker' during their absence to look after their property. Tenants must request this in writing. Where we are satisfied with the reason for absence, arrangements for paying the rent and the duration for absence, we may give permission for the tenant to take in a house-sitter. This may not be appropriate

in all cases, depending on the property or scheme. Tenants with assured short hold tenancies may not be permitted to take in a house-sitter. This depends on their individual tenancy agreement. We do not permit tenants to sub-let the whole of their property.

Abandoned properties

If we consider that a tenant has abandoned their property, we will carry out investigations to determine whether this is the case.

We will make every effort to contact the absent tenant to see if they have any intention of returning and warn them that their home is at risk. When attempting to establish whether a property has been abandoned we will have regard to the welfare, safety and legal rights of the tenants. If the tenant is known or suspected to be vulnerable, where appropriate we will contact relevant support agencies.

We will only consider a property to be abandoned if the conclusion can be made that the tenant has no intention to return. If we are certain that the property is no longer the only and principal home of the tenant, we will serve a notice to quit to terminate the tenancy. We will act swiftly to secure properties that have been abandoned.

All staff will be alert to any properties that have the appearance of being abandoned.

Contact us



If you are a **PCHA customer** phone us on **020 8451 8000** or email **info@pcha.org.uk** **www.pcha.org.uk**



If you are a **Springboard Housing Association customer** phone us on **020 8475 0033** or email **info@springboardha.org.uk** **www.springboardha.org.uk**



If you are a **Pathmeads customer** phone us on one of the numbers below: Temporary housing **020 8900 4900** Octavia Hill **020 8900 4998** Key Places **020 7380 9025** or email **info@pathmeads.org.uk** **www.pathmeads.org.uk**

Company number 3802456. Housing Corporation Number L4286. Registered Office: Capital House, 25 Chapel Street, London NW1 5DT

If you need any part of this information in large print, Braille, on audio tape or explained in your own language please contact us on the number below.

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على أي جزء من هذه المعلومات مطبوعاً بأحرف كبيرة أو بطريقة برايل أو مسجلاً على اسطوانة مدمجة أو شريط صوتي أو مشروحاً باللغة التي تتحدثها، يرجى الاتصال بنا على الرقم الموضح أدناه.

Arabic

যদি আপনি এই তথ্যগুলোর যে কোন একটির সম্বন্ধে বিস্তারিত জানতে চান, অথবা আপনার নিজের ভাষাতে ব্রেল, সিডি, অডিও টেপ-এ পেতে চান তাহলে নিম্নলিখিত নম্বরে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Bengali

Si vous souhaitez obtenir une partie de ces informations en Braille, sur CD, cassette audio ou expliqué dans votre langue, veuillez nous contacter au numéro indiqué ci-dessous.

French

જો તમારે કોઈ પણ ભાગની આ માહિતી બ્રેઈલ, સીડી ઉપર, ઓડિયો ટેપ અથવા તમારી પોતાની ભાષામાં સમજી શકો તેની જરૂર હોય તો નીચે જણાવેલ નંબર ઉપર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

Gujarati

Se necessitar de parte desta informação em caracteres aumentados, em Braille, em CD, cassette áudio ou apresentada no seu idioma, por favor contacte-nos, através do telefone abaixo indicado.

Portugese

Haddaad u baahan tahay warkan afkaaga-hooyo, afka loogu talagalay dadka aan arki karaan – afka faraha ama CD-ga ama ajeladda rekorka nala xirir. Namberkan isticmaal.

Somali

Si necesita esta información en Braille, en CD, en cinta o en su propio idioma, póngase en contacto con nosotros en el teléfono siguiente.

Spanish

Telephone 020 7563 0037 or email info@ghg.org.uk