

APPENDIX B



Short-term Alternative Accommodation

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Appendix A: Short Term Alternative Accommodation Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy sets out Crawley Homes' approach to accommodating residents on a temporary basis if their home becomes unoccupiable for a short period of time. This might be because it has become unsafe, is subject to repairs or planned works needing the property to be vacant, or due to an emergency.
- 1.2. The policy does not cover unusual circumstances such as where a property is to be demolished, or large-scale redevelopment or regeneration of an area, to which different arrangements and mandatory compensation awards apply. It does, however, include limited circumstances where a permanent move may be considered.
- 1.3. The policy sets out what residents can expect, under what circumstances and how we will ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible, without causing them undue disruption and difficulty.

2. Background and legal context

- 2.1. This policy sits within the context of far-reaching changes to the regulation of social housing included in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The Act aims to increase accountability and raise standards within social housing.
- 2.2. At all times, we will work within the law and any relevant regulation, which also includes but is not limited to the:
 - Building Safety Act 2022
 - Housing Act 2004
 - The Decent Homes Standard:
 - Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
 - Equality Act 2010

3. Policy statement

- 3.1. We consider that any move away from a person's home, for works to take place, should only be considered as a last resort and in exceptional circumstances. Wherever possible our teams and contractors should endeavour to work around the resident in their home, taking steps to minimise disruption and ensure that their needs are met.

- 3.2. Wherever possible we encourage residents to consider staying with family or friends, but we will always consider their own wishes and circumstances.
- 3.3. If short-term accommodation is sought, it may not be of the same size and specification as the resident's existing home, due to the need to act quickly and reliance upon what property is available at the time. However, we will ensure that we meet the requirements of the Equality Act and all statutory minimum household requirements.
- 3.4. Decants are emotive and need to be handled sensitively and thoroughly to ensure the resident can return to their home in a timely manner. We will ensure that works are completed as quickly as possible, and that costs and disruptions are minimised (without impacting on quality) whilst ensuring clear channels of communication.
- 3.5. Our objective is to offer alternative accommodation on a temporary basis and residents would be expected to return home on completion of the works.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. **All staff** are responsible for raising any health and safety concerns or hazards within a resident's home.
- 4.2. **The Operations and Maintenance Manager or Asset Manager** is responsible for notifying the Tenancy Services Team that alternative accommodation is to be sought and for coordinating the work with all parties so that the temporary move is as short as possible.
- 4.3. **The Tenancy Services Team** will support residents with practical, financial and other arrangements and provide a named point of contact for the duration of the move. Specifically they will be responsible for:
- Identifying the needs, preferences and circumstances of the resident and their family and coordinating a plan that best meets these needs
 - Issuing a license agreement/ non-secure tenancy (as applicable) for the ongoing accommodation
 - Supporting with the move or continuation of claims for Housing Benefit/Universal Credit payments
 - Clearly informing the resident of their responsibilities, for example to continue to pay any rents and charges agreed.

4.4. **The resident is responsible for:**

- Meeting the conditions under which the accommodation is let. This would normally be a non-secure tenancy, but for shorter-term moves, a license agreement, or any booking conditions of external short-term rental accommodation.
- Continuing to pay rent on either their main home or short-term accommodation
- Paying utility payments such as gas, electricity, internet, and phone bills (charges made when the resident is not living at their original accommodation may be claimed back.)
- Following any processes agreed around, for example, access to their main home, safekeeping or storage of possessions
- Support will be provided with these responsibilities if this is identified as a need during planning of the move.

5. **Circumstances leading to short-term alternative accommodation**

Emergencies such as fires or floods that make the home uninhabitable.

- 5.1. In the event of an unplanned incident such as a fire or a flood, where the long-term outcome is not known, we will work closely with housing allocations to address immediate and ongoing housing need.

Poor or uninhabitable condition

- 5.2. If an inspection or visit reveals a home is in poor condition or uninhabitable, we will assess the level of hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) against the potential impact on the resident(s.) Examples might include where any HHSRS hazard present could have a significant effect on a member of the household due to them having a health condition (such as a respiratory condition that presents heightened risk from damp and mould.)

Planned works requiring an empty property

- 5.3. Occasionally it may be necessary to carry out extensive repair works to a property that require it to be vacant and cannot wait for the current resident to move permanently. Short-term accommodation may also be considered necessary where medical information suggests that an impact upon an existing health condition or cause disruption that the resident would not be able to manage.

6. Alternative accommodation options

6.1. The accommodation provided will depend on several factors such as the expected length of works and the housing needs of the resident. If the resident has insurance, and damage prevents them being able to stay in the home, short term accommodation costs may be covered by their policy. If this is not appropriate the housing officer will consider the needs of the household with the resident and look at options such as:

- Stay with family and friends
- Stay in hostel/hotel or holiday 'service-let' provided by the Council
- Stay in alternative Council accommodation on an insecure basis from any empty stock
- Stay in the sheltered guest room if the move is short-term and the resident is eligible (over 55.)

7. When a more permanent move may be considered

7.1. Our intention is to move people only temporarily from their home due to the upheaval and potential emotional impact of moving permanently. However, in rare circumstances, and in full consultation with the resident(s) concerned, it might be more appropriate to work with Housing Allocations Team to enable a permanent move property. These are when:

- A significant amount of work is needed on a property that is considered unsuitable for the resident's needs (e.g. overcrowding or under occupying)
- Where the resident or a member of the household would be negatively impacted by the insecurity or experience of moving temporarily to another property, for example as a result of age, disability or for health reasons.
- The proposed works are likely to take more than 6 months to be completed.
- The resident requests that their temporary property becomes a permanent transfer. A transfer in these circumstances is covered by the Council's Allocations Policy and not decided by Crawley Homes. Alternatively, a permanent offer can be granted at the discretion of the Head of Crawley Homes as a management transfer. We cannot guarantee that this will be possible but will consider these requests, particularly if the ongoing accommodation is more suitable. We will not consider this if the need for the move is caused by intentional damage to the original property.

- 7.2. In these circumstances, mandatory home loss and disturbance payments may not apply, and further advice will need to be taken. However, disturbance payments may be made on a discretionary basis.

8. Tenure

- 8.1. Residents who move from their home temporarily will be offered a licence or non-secure tenancy dependent on the circumstances. If the move is intended to be very short term, we will usually offer a licence, but if intended to last over a longer period (one-six months) we will usually offer a non-secure tenancy.

9. Preparation and practical support

- 9.1. We will ensure that residents are consulted about the proposed temporary move, with clear information about why this is necessary, how long this is likely to be for, and when they can return to their home.
- 9.2. In each instance, the resident will be given a single point of contact in the event of concerns and to receive regular updates.
- 9.3. The Housing Officer or other named contact will work with the resident to create a plan and assessment of the needs of the household, including where any protected characteristics and reasonable adjustments need to be considered. This will highlight individual circumstances such as reasonable distances from work, family, or schools wherever possible, and steps to minimise disruption.
- 9.4. The plan will also cover access arrangements whilst the resident cannot occupy their home. Once the move to the new accommodation has taken place, residents must not be expected to provide access for contractors, tradespeople and out of hours and must be able to expect to live peacefully away from the disruption. Equally, for any work to take place quickly and efficiently, contractors and tradespeople will require clear, uninterrupted access, so any arrangements for collecting items, including post, or visiting the property must be clearly set out and agreed by all parties involved.
- 9.5. This plan will include contact preferences for updates and set out a regular check in to share any concerns, progress and timescales should these change.
- 9.6. Responsibility for any furnishings and possessions left in the main home will be set out in the plan.

- 9.7. The plan will be made and reviewed whatever onward accommodation is chosen to ensure that it remains suitable; for example to reassess suitability over time if a resident has gone to stay with family or friends, or if circumstances such as school places have changed.

10. Return to the resident's home

- 10.1. Before a resident returns to their home, a thorough inspection and health and safety check will be completed. Any outstanding minor touches will be communicated with the resident with timescales for completion.

11. Expenses and moving services

- 11.1. Residents who are temporarily moved will be entitled to reimbursement for reasonable expenses associated with the move. This may include:

- Meal vouchers / meals if decanted into a property without cooking facilities such as a hotel
- Additional travel costs as a result of moving location
- Subsistence payments if staying with family/friends
- Reconnection costs associated with internet/satellite
- Washing facilities or laundry arrangements if no facilities are available
- Mail redirection services
- Provision of window coverings such as curtains or blinds and poles/rails if not provided

- 11.2. The items/services for which the Council will agree to pay will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Housing Officer and Area Housing Manager based on the type of accommodation the resident will be moving to and the reason for the move, for example, what would be considered reasonable if the damage or concern prompting the move has been caused by the resident.

- 11.3. As far as possible, these expenses will be agreed ahead when the support plan is made. If items or provisions can be directly purchased by Crawley Homes or an allowance paid upfront, we will make efforts to do so to avoid hardship to the resident.

- 11.4. Receipts, invoices or other proof must be provided for any items to be reimbursed. The resident should also not incur any costs without first

agreeing the amount with the Council. If the resident does not do this, they risk the refusal to pay for the item and/or the full amount incurred.

- 11.5. If the resident chooses to make their own arrangements rather than accept assistance from the Council, the Council will reimburse them only up to the value the Council would have agreed to pay had the resident accepted assistance.

12. Payment of rent during a short-term move

- 12.1. If an alternative property is offered on a temporary (insecure) basis to allow the works to be completed, the resident will be expected to continue paying rent on the lower of the two properties and charges on the other property will be suspended. This will ensure that they are not financially disadvantaged by any temporary move.
- 12.2. The Housing Officer will liaise with the relevant internal departments regarding Council Tax arrangements and change of address details.

13. Housing costs

- 13.1. Residents are not able to claim Universal Credit housing costs or Housing Benefit on more than one home. The resident will only pay rent on one property, and this will be on the Crawley Homes property where they are a tenant.

14. Record keeping

- 14.1. Clear records must be made of all contacts, calls or meetings with the resident concerning their move and any queries during the period.
- 14.2. This information will be recorded as a CRM contact in the Council's housing management system.

15. Complaints or disputes about the policy

- 15.1. If you feel that this policy has been applied incorrectly you can escalate this through the council's complaints policy [Complaints | Crawley GOV](#).

16. Equalities implications

- 16.1. An equalities impact assessment has been completed to ensure that no group is negatively impacted due to possessing any protected characteristic. It is envisaged that the robust planning and contact arrangements set out in

this policy will pay due regard to equalities by ensuring that any needs arising from a protected characteristic can be effectively identified and acted upon.

17. Environmental implications

- 17.1. Environmental implications include the need to reduce the consumption of energy, fuel and single-use items as a result of implementing this policy. For example, we will need to ensure that the short-term move does not require the purchase of items that cannot be reused, excess vehicle transport due to location of the new accommodation or replacement e.g. of carpets, furniture or soft furnishings unnecessarily.
- 17.2. This policy does make possible work which otherwise would not be possible with the resident in situ – for example major refurbishment works to create better insulated, warm and energy efficient homes.

18. Consultation

- 18.1. All policies are subject to resident consultation. As a minimum this includes each policy being placed before our Tenant and Leaseholder Action Panel (TLAP) for scrutiny, and drawing upon feedback gained through resident engagement activities. Wider consultation will also take place depending upon the nature, complexity or impact of a policy.
- 18.2. Details of consultation can be found in the Equality Impact Assessment relating to the policy and in consultation summary documents where consultation has been more wide-ranging.
- 18.3. All policies must also have agreement of SMT and Cabinet.

19. Staff training, monitoring and review

- 19.1. All staff of Crawley Homes are expected to undertake as a minimum the following training, which will support the application of this policy:
 - Housing Ombudsman’s Dispute Resolution Training 1 and 2
 - Crawley Borough Council’s suite of customer care training – parts 1, 2 and 3
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training
 - A suite of training around potential issues affecting residents and their wellbeing, including mental health awareness and neurodiversity.

Appendix A: Short Term Alternative Accommodation Plan

Short Term Alternative Accommodation Plan

PART A: IDENTIFYING NEEDS

This plan aims to address the needs of the household, including any reasonable adjustments needed to minimise loss and disruption arising from short-term relocation from the home.

1. Name of tenant/joint tenants:
Current address:
Contact phone number(s)
Email address(es)
Staff note: please ensure that these details are accurate on Active H

2. Household members and ages: Continue onto a separate sheet if necessary.	
Name	Age

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<p>3. Do any members of the household have specific requirements relating to a health condition, disability, religious requirement or to protect their safety and wellbeing? Please provide details: Continue onto a separate sheet if necessary. Please provide any evidence as requested.</p>	
Name	Requirement

<p>4. Does any member of the household travel regularly to school, work, family commitments, voluntary work, place of worship any other regular commitment?</p>	
Name	Requirement

5. Do you have any other circumstances, issues or concerns you would like to us to consider?

Signed Tenant	Signed Crawley Homes
Date:	Date:

PART B: DETAILS OF ACCOMMODATION AND ASSISTANCE

1. Name of tenant/joint tenants:
Temporary address:
Contact phone number(s) for duration of move (if changed)
Email address(es) for duration of move (if changed)
Staff note: please ensure that these details are accurate on all housing management and financial systems.

How will needs identified in Part A be met?

Have the needs identified in part A been met through the ongoing accommodation? If not, what mitigation is possible, for example if there are no cooking facilities what can be offered instead?

Identified Need List all applicable	Crawley Homes will:	The resident will:

Expenses and limits agreed:

Do not include expenses that are already covered by existing arrangements e.g. bus travel that is already covered by an existing bus pass. Calculate only the excess cost over and above the cost of the resident had stayed in their own home.

Expense	How has expense been arrived at	How applied? E.g. daily, per mile, per week

Is any assistance needed to move essential items? (Please bear in mind that this is a short-term move of limited duration and we can only support reasonable costs. This would not normally include any furniture unless specifically adapted)

Food provision/cooking facilities

Safekeeping of personal effects, furniture and belongings

Arrangements for the safe relocation or covering of furniture and personal belongings. The resident is responsible for relocating items that may be damaged or removing personal or valuable items where it is possible to do so.
Please set out any expected actions for the contractor or assistance that is needed by the household.
Please include any photographs of the condition of significant items/decoration.

Accessing your home

You are not expected to provide access for contractors, tradespeople or out of hours. If any request is made, please direct this to your housing officer or the duty housing officer.

Tradespeople will require clear, uninterrupted access to your home and to protect site safety. You will not be able to visit without prior arrangement so please make sure that you take all essentials with you.

If a regular visit is required, what will the arrangements be?

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If I need to arrange a one-off visit, I will contact:

Name	Contact details

How much notice do they require?

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Arrangements for collecting or redirecting post:

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Meter readings at point of departure * as applicable

Electric Gas Water

Signed Tenant	Signed Crawley Homes
Date:	Date:

PART C: CONTACT ARRANGEMENTS

Staying in touch

Agree who will update you, how, when and how regularly during the course of the work

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Details of contact/updates to resident

Date	Contact by whom and notes