

Date Issued	November 2011
Department	Corporate
Title	Temporary Accommodation and Decants
Review Date	February 2022
Objective	To describe the Association's approach to providing temporary and decant accommodation for tenants
Responsible	Director of Housing
Next Review Date	February 2027

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 We do not provide emergency accommodation for housing applicants but there are occasions when we may have to find temporary accommodation for our tenants because of an emergency, such as fire, flood or structural problems. Although we will try wherever possible to avoid it, we may also have to move tenants out of their homes to allow maintenance to be carried out.
- 1.2 We recognise that such situations may be stressful for the tenants and will do all that we can to minimise the stress and disruption. We will ensure that good communication is maintained both with the tenants and within the Association to make the process as problem free as possible.
- 1.3 While the tenant is decanted they will continue to be the secure tenant of their original home. The Association will make arrangements as detailed in this policy. The tenant will be responsible for ensuring that their home contents insurance continues to provide cover.
- 1.4 We will always seek to agree voluntary decant arrangements with the tenant, however, where essential work is required if the tenant refuses to move we may take action to enforce the move using ground 10 of Schedule 2 part 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 1.5 Since tenants will normally be moved out because extensive work is required to their permanent home they will not be allowed to leave anything in the property or to access their home for the duration of the works.

2.0 Emergency Accommodation

- 2.1 The situations when our tenants require emergency accommodation will normally be covered by the provisions of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 which places a duty on the local authority to provide temporary accommodation for people made homeless by fire, flood or other disaster.
- 2.2 In these situations, the emergency services (if involved) will normally contact the Homelessness Service at East Lothian Council directly. If no-one has already done so the ELHA member of staff first contacted will liaise with the Homelessness Team to ensure that accommodation is made available for the tenant.
- 2.3 We will co-operate fully with the Homelessness Team by providing necessary information and ensure that communication is maintained with the tenant for as long as they need to be away from their home.

3.0 Short Term Temporary Accommodation

- 3.1 There will be occasions when we require a tenant to move out so that essential work can be carried out to their home.
- 3.2 The action taken in these situations will depend largely on the likely duration of the work and the availability of suitable alternative accommodation.
- 3.3 Asset Management will inform Housing immediately they are aware that temporary accommodation may be required for a tenant so that Housing can involve the tenant in exploring the best options for temporary accommodation.
- 3.4 If the work is to take a short time, generally up to two weeks, the best option is likely to be bed and breakfast accommodation or, if available, a holiday home.
- 3.5 The decision as to the type of accommodation to be offered will be reached in consultation with the tenant and will take account of:
 - The family composition
 - Any health issues
 - Proximity to work/schools
 - Transport
 - Wherever possible, the tenant's preferences

Where a decant to another property is required unless agreed otherwise with the tenant we will comply with Part 2 of schedule 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 which defines suitable alternative accommodation.

4.0 Longer Term Temporary Accommodation

- 4.1 Where accommodation is required for a longer period or for more than one family (e.g. planned upgrading) it will normally be better to try to secure suitable decant accommodation.
- 4.2 Given the size of our Housing stock and low turnover it will usually be difficult to secure accommodation from within our own stock.
- 4.3 Housing will therefore gather information about the family(s) to be moved and the likely duration of the temporary move before seeking help from other social housing providers in providing decant accommodation.
- 4.4 Where another provider assists in providing the accommodation, we will generally enter into a lease with that provider.
- 4.5 Where a full decant service is required we will discuss the feasibility of a permanent move with the tenant and if this is agreed we will meet the costs detailed below for a one way move only.

5.0 What We Will Provide

- 5.1 If temporary accommodation is provided by East Lothian Council under the Homelessness legislation, ELHA will play no part in the arrangements and the cost will be covered by East Lothian Council.
- 5.2 If the tenant is moved into bed and breakfast accommodation by ELHA we will arrange and pay for:
 - the bed and breakfast accommodation
 - taking furniture into and out of storage if required
 - storage costs
 - uplifting and re-laying floor coverings if required
 - replacing flooring if damaged

In addition, a daily allowance will be paid to the tenant to cover the costs of meals, laundry and other out of pocket expenses including travel if it has not been possible to locate the tenant close to their home. Levels for allowances are reviewed annually and set out in our Authorisations and Standard Allowances Policy.

- 5.3 If the tenant is moved into a holiday home we will arrange and pay for:
 - the holiday home rental
 - taking furniture into and out of storage if required
 - storage costs
 - uplifting and relaying floor coverings if required

- replacing flooring if damaged

No daily allowance will normally be paid because the holiday home has cooking and laundry facilities, but excess travel costs will be paid if it has not been possible to locate the tenant close to their home. Levels for allowances are reviewed annually and set out in our Authorisations and Standard Allowances Policy.

5.4 If the tenant is moved into another ELHA property a summary of the arrangements to be made and by whom is provided at **Appendix 1**. ELHA will as necessary arrange and pay for:

- Removal to and from the decant property
- Uplifting/re-laying floor coverings as required
- Dis/re-connecting appliances such as cookers and washing machines
- Re-directing mail (if required)
- Dis/re-connect telephone (if required)
- Re-location of Community Alarm (if applicable)

Excess travel costs will also be paid if it has not been possible to locate the tenant close to their home. Levels for allowances are reviewed annually and set out in our Authorisations and Standard Allowances Policy.

In addition, we will arrange utility supplies to ensure that the tenant has heating and hot water in the decant property.

5.5 The tenant will be responsible for ensuring that their home contents insurance continues to provide adequate cover and for arranging services such as satellite TV or broadband. Reasonable costs incurred will be met by the Association.

5.6 If an allowance is to be paid to the tenant during the period they are unable to live in their home this will be agreed and confirmed in writing to the tenant when other details of the temporary accommodation arrangements are confirmed.

5.7 Arrangements for payment of the allowance will be confirmed at the outset but interim payments will be made where required.

5.8 Payments due to the tenant under this policy may be offset, wholly or partly, against any debt owed to the Association.

6.0 Rental Payments

6.1 The tenant will continue to be liable for the rent on their original home.

- 6.2 The Association will meet the costs of the decant property and, in addition, if the rent for the decant property is lower than the rent for the tenant's permanent home will credit the rent account with the difference between the decant property rent and the permanent property rent.
- 6.3 If the tenant is in receipt of Housing Benefit we will write to the Housing Benefit department at East Lothian Council confirming that the tenant will be returning to their main home to ensure that Housing Benefit continues to be paid on the main home.

7.0 Council Tax

- 7.1 The tenant will remain responsible for the Council Tax due on their permanent home but may apply to East Lothian Council for a reduction covering the period that the property is empty and undergoing repair. It is the tenant's responsibility to apply for this, failing which they must continue to pay Council Tax.
- 7.2 If a property is used for a succession of decants, Council Tax will be due when the property is occupied and may be waived for periods when the property is empty awaiting the next occupant. We will be responsible for ensuring that the Council Tax liability is calculated correctly and will meet the cost of the Council Tax due on properties being used for decant.

8.0 Review

The Director of Housing will ensure that this policy is reviewed at least every 5 years by the Management Committee.

Action	By Whom
Identify need for temporary accommodation	Asset Manager
Inform Housing of need for accommodation, the likely duration of the move and the urgency required	Asset Manager
Consider options and discuss requirements with tenant	Housing Manager/Housing Officer
Identify preferred option and advise Asset Management	Housing Manager
If decanting to suitable property	
Identify suitable temporary property	Housing Officer/Housing Manager
Prepare property for decant (including cleaning where required)	Asset Management
Arrange floor coverings if required	Asset Management
Ensure gas and electric supplies are available	Asset Management
Book removal	Asset Management
Arrange dis/re-connection of appliances	Asset Management
Arrange mail re-direct if required	Housing
Arrange phone dis/re-connect if required	Housing
Arrange for Community Alarm to be re-located if required	Housing
Purchase 'pop up 4G' Device and Sim Card	Housing
Recommend payment of any allowance	Housing Officer/Housing Manager
If applicable, write to HB confirming tenant will be returning	Housing Officer
Confirm arrangements to tenant in writing	Housing
Get decant Tenancy Agreement signed before tenant moves	Housing
Ensure garden maintained whilst property under repair	Housing
Confirm date for tenant to move back giving a minimum of one week's notice	Asset Management
Ensure property ready for tenant to return to	Asset Management
Arrange removal back to permanent home	Asset Management
Ensure all information relating to costs incurred are passed to the Finance Manager	Housing & Asset Management