

Temporary Decant Policy



Effective from: 11.12.2018	Author: Keith Cane	
Version: Draft 6	Department: Operations	Page 1 of 6

Table of Contents

	Pages
1. Introduction	3
2. Scope of the Policy	3
3. Aims and Objectives	3
4. References	3
5. Needs Assessment	4
6. Suitable Alternate Accommodation	4
7. Discretionary Disturbance Payments	5
8. Appeals Process	6
9. Policy Review	6

Effective from: 11.12.2018	Author: Keith Cane	
Version: Draft 6	Department: Operations	Page 2 of 6

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out how TCH will accommodate tenant households that need to move out of their homes temporarily. This is known as 'temporary decanting'.
- 1.2 A temporary decant may be needed:
 - Where an unexpected event has caused a property to become uninhabitable, for example a fire or flood
 - Where there are health and safety risks if the residents remain in the property
 - To allow essential works or improvements to take place and it would be unreasonable to expect the residents to remain
- 1.3 Local authorities have a legal duty to assist any person who is homeless because their property is uninhabitable and should be contacted in an emergency situation, out of hours, where this is the case.

2 Scope of the Policy

- 2.1 This document applies only to authorised occupants. It does not apply to sub-tenants or households that have been placed in TCH stock on a temporary basis by a local authority under their duty to the homeless. These households remain the responsibility of the relevant Local Authority.

3 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 In recognising that moving home can be a stressful experience TCH will:
 - Ensure tenants are fully informed and receive accurate and consistent information throughout the process
 - Advise tenants of their rights and any other relevant tenancy related matters.
 - Secure suitable alternative accommodation where tenants need to be decanted.
 - Ensure additional support is provided to vulnerable tenants as required.
 - Seek to ensure tenants are no worse off financially in their temporary accommodation than they would have been in their permanent home.

4 References

- 4.1 Internal
 - TCH Lettings Policy
 - TCH Assured Tenancy Agreement
 - TCH Equality and Diversity Strategy
 - TCH Customer Service Standards
 - TCH Complaints Policy
 - TCH Asset Management Strategy
 - TCH Pet Policy

Effective from: 11.12.2018	Author: Keith Cane	
Version: Draft 6	Department: Operations	Page 3 of 6

5 Needs Assessment

- 5.1 Tenants will need to provide the following information to establish their temporary housing needs:
- Current household composition
 - Any relevant health issues
 - Circumstances supporting a specific location for temporary rehousing.
- 5.2 The Housing Options Team who will be responsible for arranging the temporary accommodation and communicating with the tenant as regards:
- The type and location of accommodation available
 - The date they can expect to move into their temporary accommodation
 - The length of time they will be in their temporary accommodation
 - Removals and other assistance available to move home
 - Subsistence payment eligibility (where applicable)

6 Suitable Alternative Accommodation

- 6.1 The period of time that the tenant needs to be away from their home will inform the type of alternative accommodation to be provided. The main options are:
- Staying with family and friends
 - Bed & Breakfast accommodation
 - Holiday let
 - Temporary occupation of a vacant TCH property under a licence
- 6.2 Tenants who need to move on a temporary basis will not be eligible to bid for alternative accommodation through the local Choice Based Lettings system.
- 6.3 Alternative accommodation will be considered suitable where it reasonably meets the housing and support needs of the household. Subject to availability, TCH will also have regard to tenants' geographical areas of preference.
- 6.4 Under-occupying households will usually be offered alternative accommodation appropriately sized to their current needs. Where a household includes permanently resident children aged 18 or over, the children may be offered separate accommodation.
- 6.5 TCH will pay for removals where necessary and for storage where the tenant household is being decanted to furnished accommodation and/or their main home needs to be empty of furniture and possessions.
- 6.6 Tenants will usually be expected to:
- Ensure all members of their household are aware of decant arrangements
 - Pack up their belongings (when required)
 - Ensure fridges and freezers are empty and clean (unless an emergency situation prevents this)

Effective from: 11.12.2018	Author: Keith Cane	
Version: Draft 6	Department: Operations	Page 4 of 6

- Provide vacant possession of the property they are leaving by a pre-agreed date
- 6.7 Vulnerable tenants requiring additional support to move to unfurnished accommodation or where their possessions need to go into storage will be offered:
- Help with packing
 - Help with clearing unwanted items from the property
 - Adaptations identified as part of the assessment of their housing need.
- 6.8 TCH will also liaise with family members or other recognised advocates and work with other organisations or agencies, for example in connection with any care or support needs.
- 6.9 Where household pets are not permitted in the alternate accommodation the tenant will generally be responsible for arranging temporary rehoming of with their nominated pet guardian as per TCH Pet Policy. If a resident has to go into hospital or care and a temporary home cannot be found for their pet, then by law (1948 National Assistance Act, Section 48) if they are incapable due to illness, or have been taken in to care or hospitalised social services will provide temporary care. The relevant social services department at the resident's local authority should be contacted for advice and assistance.
- 6.10 Whilst temporarily decanted, the tenancy of the permanent home will continue and the tenant remains liable for rental charges including any arrears. Tenants will not have to pay rent for their temporary accommodation home but may be liable for utilities charges where these are levied separately as they will not be paying these at their main home.
- 6.11 Items left behind in temporary accommodation will be cleared and disposed of and the cost recharged to the tenant.
- 6.12 Where the need for alternative accommodation is as a result of damage or neglect by a member of the tenant household or a visitor the tenant may be recharged the cost of remedial works where they are responsible under the terms of their tenancy.
- 6.13 In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to permanently decant the tenant, for example where the current accommodation no longer meets the households needs. TCH's permanent decant policy will apply in such cases..

7 Disturbance Payments

- 7.1 Temporarily decanted tenants are not eligible for a statutory home loss payment but will usually qualify for discretionary disturbance payments, irrespective of the time they have occupied the property.

Effective from: 11.12.2018	Author: Keith Cane	
Version: Draft 6	Department: Operations	Page 5 of 6

- 7.2 In the first instance tenants will be encouraged to stay with family and friends. Subsistence of up to £10 per day may be claimed for each displaced household member.
- 7.3 Displaced households that cannot stay with family or friends will usually be offered Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Where there are no meal preparation or laundry facilities subsistence allowances may be claimed as follows:
- A daily meal allowance per adult up to £20
 - A daily meal allowance per child under 16 up to £10
 - A weekly laundry allowance of up to £20 per week, payable on production of receipts
- 7.4 TCH will consider reimbursement of other reasonable expenses if agreed in advance and supported by receipts. This could include redirection of post or disconnection and reconnection of cookers etc. by suitably qualified tradespeople.
- 7.5 Where a tenant has to move out due to their own damage or neglect they will not usually be entitled to any discretionary disturbance payment.

8. Appeals Process

- 8.1 Where an offer of temporary alternative accommodation is refused or an appeal is lodged in respect of how the policy has been applied, a senior staff member not involved in the case will investigate and respond with their findings within the timescales set out in TCH's complaints policy.

9 Policy Review

- 9.1 The policy will be reviewed at least every three years and revised in light of operational experience, recognised best practice or relevant regulatory or statutory changes.

Effective from: 11.12.2018	Author: Keith Cane	
Version: Draft 6	Department: Operations	Page 6 of 6