

Housing Services Settling in Visit Policy

Department	Housing Services
Responsible Person	Director of Housing
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Housing Services is committed to helping every new tenant feel supported and settled in their new home. Moving into a property can be a significant change, and the Settling in Visit is designed to make this transition as smooth as possible.
- 1.2 The Settling in Visit provides an early opportunity for tenants to ask questions, raise concerns, and receive guidance, while also allowing the Council as the landlord, to ensure that the tenancy has begun positively and in line with the tenancy agreement.

2. Purpose of the Settling in Visit

- 2.1 The Settling in Visit is intended to offer reassurance and practical support during the first few weeks of a new tenancy. It allows Housing Services to confirm the tenant has moved into the property and is comfortable managing their new home. During the visit, the Housing Services officer will discuss rent payments, benefit applications, and household bills to ensure that everything has been set up correctly. The visit also helps the tenant understand their responsibilities, including maintaining the property and garden, reporting repairs, and following the conditions of their tenancy.
- 2.2 The visit is also an important opportunity to identify any early support needs. If a tenant is experiencing difficulties whether financial or personal, the Housing Services officer can help connect them with the right services. This early intervention helps prevent issues from escalating and supports tenants to sustain their tenancy successfully.

3. Scope of the Policy

- 3.1 This policy applies to all tenants that move into a new property including both introductory and secure tenants. It covers all general needs and sheltered properties, regardless of size or type. The Settling in Visit must take place within the first six weeks of the tenancy start date, ensuring that tenants receive timely support and that any issues are addressed early.

4. What Tenants can expect during the visit

- 4.1 During the Settling in Visit, the Housing Services officer will have a conversation with the tenant about how they are settling into their new home. The Housing Services officer will check that the tenant has moved in, that the property is being used as their main home, and that they understand the key parts of their tenancy agreement. This includes paying rent on time, avoiding anti-social behaviour and keeping the property and garden in good condition.
- 4.2 The Housing Services officer will also discuss rent accounts and welfare support, and if the tenant is unsure about any of these processes, will explain what needs to be done and, where necessary, arrange support from respective services.
- 4.3 A brief inspection of the property will take place to identify any unreported repairs or concerns. This is not an inspection of the tenant's lifestyle but a way to ensure the home is safe, secure, and free from issues that could cause problems later. If any unauthorised alterations have been made, the Housing Services officer will explain what steps need to be taken, depending on whether the tenant is introductory or secure.
- 4.4 If there are any indications that the tenancy is not in occupation and/or indications of possible subletting, the Housing Services officer will make further enquiries in line with tenancy fraud procedures. This is to protect council homes for those who genuinely need them.

5. Supporting Tenants and Identifying Vulnerability

- 5.1 Housing Services understands that some tenants may need additional support when settling into their new home. The Settling in Visit provides an important opportunity to identify any vulnerabilities, such as health conditions, disabilities, financial difficulties, or social or emotional challenges. Housing Services officers will approach these conversations sensitively, ensuring that tenants feel comfortable discussing any concerns that may affect their ability to manage their tenancy.
- 5.2 Where a tenant is identified as having support needs, the Housing Services officer will discuss these openly and work with the tenant to understand what type of help may be beneficial. Referrals may be made to Social Care, North East London National Health Service (NHS) Foundation Trust (NELFT), or other relevant support services such as Community Navigators to ensure that

the tenant receives the right assistance at the right time. The aim is always to prevent issues from escalating and to help tenants feel secure and confident in their new home.

- 5.3 If a tenant is assessed as having high or ongoing support needs, Housing Services will ensure that they receive more regular contact and follow-up. In these cases, the Housing Services officer will arrange to revisit the tenant sooner than the standard schedule, for example every three months, to check on their wellbeing, review any outstanding issues, and ensure that support arrangements remain appropriate. This proactive approach helps maintain stability and reduces the risk of tenancy difficulties developing later.
- 5.4 Housing Services, recognising that early support can make a significant difference in helping individuals sustain their tenancy and feel settled in their home.

6. Tenancy Responsibilities and Early Compliance

- 6.1 The Settling in Visit reinforces the importance of understanding and following tenancy conditions from the start. Tenants are expected to pay their rent on time, keep the property and garden in good condition, and report repairs promptly. The Settling in Visit provides an opportunity to clarify any parts of the tenancy agreement that the tenant may be unsure about.
- 6.2 If rent arrears are already present, the Housing Services officer will discuss this openly and encourage the tenant to engage with the rent team as soon as possible. Early communication helps prevent arrears from escalating and ensures that tenants receive the support they need to manage their finances.

7. Follow-Up and Next Steps

- 7.1 After the visit, the Housing Services officer will update the relevant teams about any issues raised. This may include informing the rent team about arrears discussions, reporting repairs, or notifying Social Care of any vulnerabilities or support needs. If the tenant requires help with benefit applications, the Housing Services officer will arrange a referral to the Housing Benefit Outreach Team.
- 7.2 Where concerns about occupation or tenancy compliance have been identified, the Housing Services officer will arrange appropriate follow-up actions, such as a tenancy audit or further visits. The aim is always to work

with the tenant to resolve issues early and support them in sustaining their tenancy.

8. Equality Impact

- 8.1 Applying this policy consistently and sensitively will ensure that all tenants and their household members in Council owned homes who have protected characteristics and/or are deemed vulnerable for other reasons receive services that are based on a recognition of their vulnerability. The Council will make all appropriate adjustments to the services they receive in order to mitigate any potential negative impacts on them and to ensure they receive fair and equal treatment from the Council as their landlord.