

# Tenancy Audit Policy

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## 1. Our policy statement

- 1.1. This policy sets out Sage's approach and options for carrying out tenancy audits. Sage is committed to supporting customers in sustaining their tenancies whilst ensuring best use of housing stock.
- 1.2. This policy details how we conduct tenancy audits, seek to detect tenancy fraud and support fair allocation and good management of homes.

## 2. The scope of this policy

- 2.1. Tenancy audits apply to Sage Homes Rented Customers only.
- 2.2. Sage is committed to ensuring that its services are accessible to everyone. We will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real, may exist that may make it difficult for people to access our services. Our approach to this is set out on Sage's Helping You Access Our Services Policy.
- 2.3. Sage will exclude customers on starter tenancies from the audit program as issues are picked up through scheduled visits made during the first twelve months and property condition checks are part of this process if required. Additionally, Sage captures customer profile information at sign-up, which will be up to date within the first 12 months. Where a customer on a starter tenancy refuses to engage with Sage, the case will be dealt with under the Starter Tenancy Policy.

## 3. Tenancy audits

- 3.1. The purpose of conducting tenancy audits is to check the property condition, reduce tenancy fraud to ensure homes go to those in most need, and identify tenancy management issues including identifying support needs for customer who may require help to sustain their tenancies.
- 3.2. Sage will use tenancy audits to identify opportunities for service improvement, including customers who wish to be involved with Sage Homes and their preferred methods of involvement.
- 3.3. Our approach to accessing properties for tenancy audits will combine pre-arranged visits and unannounced visits where required. Where possible, Sage will combine tenancy audit appointments with other services to minimise disturbance to customers e.g. during gas safety checks, repairs and maintenance appointments.
- 3.4. The properties to be audited will be identified on the basis of the following, but not exhaustively:
  - 3.4.1 Referrals from Housing Operations Team for no-access for works.
  - 3.4.2 Referrals made for properties identified as having poor living conditions.
  - 3.4.3 Tenancy audits carried out on tenancies of those who have perpetrated antisocial behaviour (including domestic violence and harassment).
  - 3.4.4 Properties identified as high-risk tenancies e.g. high rechargeable repairs or a high number of repairs, repeat offenders for missing gas servicing appointments and customers who have not contacted us for over 12 months.

## 4. Detecting tenancy fraud

- 4.1. The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 made it a criminal offence for social housing tenants to sublet or acquire social housing through deception. Sage will use the act where possible to prosecute these individuals who can potentially be fined and/or jailed for two years.
- 4.2. Internal and external data will be used to target visits with customers who are potentially subletting their properties and/ or not using their properties as their principal home.
- 4.3. As outlined in the tenancy agreement, customers must give officers access to the property to complete the audit. This includes a visual inspection of each room to identify issues including fire hazards, damp and mould, and disrepair.
- 4.4. When we visit, we will ask the customers and the household for proof of identity. We will ask for two forms of identification, which must include one photographic form of ID.
- 4.5. Suitable forms of identification could be: a utility bill, bank statement, passport, birth certificate (and for children), driving licence, official communication from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) or another government body (in the past year).
- 4.6. If there has been no response or contact from the customer, suspicions of abandonment or fraud may be raised. Sage may take legal action to recover properties, which they believe are being sublet, ensuring they are available for families or individuals in genuine need of housing.
- 4.7. In addition to the audits completed on a rolling basis, unannounced visits are undertaken to combat fraud in the following circumstances:
  - In response to validated information passed to Sage Homes.
  - Where discrepancies have been revealed by data comparisons.
  - Where access has been difficult for contractors.
  - Where there are signs of abandonment such as an overgrown garden or dirty windows.
  - Where Sage needs to verify tenancy information for welfare or other relevant purposes.
- 4.8. Audits will be supported by desk-based investigations such as analysing the frequency and types of interaction between Sage Homes and the customer over the preceding year, examining rent accounts for unusual transactions and cross-referencing data with other agencies such as the National Anti-Fraud Network.

## 5. Equality and diversity

- 5.1. Sage is committed to making sure all services are accessible to all our customers. Our staff will be trained to make sure they are communicating appropriately with our customers, and they have the relevant information.
- 5.2. This policy will be applied in a way which makes sure we treat all customers with fairness and respect. We recognise our duty to advance equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination or victimisation on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and

civil partnership and any other protected characteristic defined within the [Equality Act 2010](#).

- 5.3. On request we will provide translations of all our documents, policies and procedures in various languages and formats including braille and large print.

## 6. Delivery of this policy

- 6.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies, some of which can be found on our website [here](#):
- Helping You Access Our Services Policy
  - Tenancy Fraud Policy
  - Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
  - Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
  - Accessible Homes Policy
  - Tenancy Policy
- 6.2. This policy has been developed in compliance with the Regulatory Framework for social housing in England.
- 6.3. The effective delivery of this policy including training, guidance and support required by staff for implementation of this policy will be provided by the Housing Operations Team.

## 7. Monitoring

- 7.1. The Regional Housing Managers are responsible for ensuring that tenancy audits have been carried out on all property referrals. The Head of Housing Operations will produce a report annually which will be shared with their team and submitted to the Managing Director of Assets and Operations.

## 8. Policy review

- 8.1. We will review this policy at least once every three years to make sure it remains relevant and accurate unless:
- Legislation/regulation or industry changes require otherwise, making sure that it continues to meet our aims and industry best practice
  - We identify any problems or failures in this policy as a result of customer and stakeholder feedback, complaints, or findings from any independent organisations.

Version	Checked by	Amendments	Approved at/by	Date of Approval	Published by	Date of Next Review
1.0	Head of Housing Operations	Strategic review and update to corporate template	LT	06 March 2025	Policy & Service Improvement	March 28