Bristol City Council Housing and Landlord Services

Tenancy Sustainment Policy

Version 2

Approved by: Head of Service

Author: Policy and Practice Team

Date approved: 10th November 2025

Date for Review: 3 years

Service Area: Housing Management and Estates

Classification: Operational

History of most recent policy changes			
Date	Page	Change	Origin of change (e.g. legislation)
September 2025	Whole Document	Desktop Review. Changes to wording and length to ensure accessibility	Requested by BCC Housing and Consumer Standards programme

OFFICIAL

Contents

1. Purpose 3
2. Scope 3
3. Aims and objectives 3
4. Roles and Responsibilities and Authority 3
5. The Policy 4
5.1 Legal Context and Consumer Standards 4
5.2 Tenancy Sustainment Definition 4
5.3 Early Identification of Support Needs 4
5.4 Supportive Tenancy Management Process 5
5.5 Referral for Support 5
5.6 Partnership Working 5
5.7 Safeguarding and Crisis Response 5
5.8 Equality and Diversity 6
5.9 Complaints 6
6. Quality Assurance 6
6.1 Publishing 6
6.2 Review 6
6.3 Monitoring and Reporting Requirements 6
7. Appendices 7
Appendix A – Roles and Responsibilities 7
Appendix B – Legal and Policy Context 8
Appendix C – Glossary of terms 9
Appendix D – List of Stakeholders 9

OFFICIAL

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out Bristol City Council's approach to helping tenants maintain safe, secure, and stable housing. It outlines how tenancy sustainment is supported through early intervention, respectful engagement, and coordinated working with internal teams and external partners.

This policy provides a framework for staff to identify risks, respond to support needs, and promote tenancy resilience. It also ensures that services are delivered in a consistent, inclusive, and trauma-informed way, helping to prevent tenancy breakdown and reduce homelessness.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Bristol City Council Secure, Demoted, and Introductory tenants. It also applies to staff and contractors within Housing and Landlord Services who support tenancy sustainment.

The policy covers the full tenancy lifecycle from pre-tenancy assessments and sign-ups to ongoing management and enforcement. It guides how services work together and with partner agencies to support tenants with additional needs.

While the policy promotes tenancy sustainment, it does not override statutory duties under housing, safeguarding, or care legislation. It also does not guarantee that all tenancies can be sustained but ensures that reasonable steps are taken to prevent tenancy failure.

3. Aims and objectives

The aim of this policy is to promote tenancy resilience and prevent tenancy failure by providing timely, consistent, and inclusive support to tenants.

Objectives:

- Identify and respond to factors that may affect a tenant's ability to manage their tenancy.
- Use early intervention and assessment tools to spot support needs and reduce risk.
- Make appropriate referrals to internal and external services to address unmet needs.
- Promote safeguarding awareness and ensure staff act on concerns appropriately.
- Support tenants through a trauma-informed and person-centred approach.

4. Roles and Responsibilities and Authority

The Head of Housing Management and Estates is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

All colleagues involved in tenancy-related activities are responsible for delivering this policy.

Detailed roles and responsibilities can be found in Appendix A.

OFFICIAL

5. The Policy

5.1 Legal Context and Consumer Standards

This policy supports Bristol City Council's legal duties under the Housing Act 1988 and the Equality Act 2010. It ensures tenancies are managed fairly, protects tenants from discrimination, and promotes inclusive practice through the Public Sector Equality Duty.

This policy reflects the regulatory requirements set out by the Regulator of Social Housing, specifically the Tenancy Standard (2024) and the Consumer Standards, which require landlords to:

- Support tenants to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions;
- Treat tenants with fairness, dignity, and respect;
- Provide clear, accessible, and timely information about tenancy management and available support;
- Ensure services are inclusive and responsive to individual needs, including through the use of reasonable adjustments as required under the Equality Act 2010.

This policy also supports Bristol City Council's responsibilities under the Care Act 2014, which places a duty on local authorities to promote individual wellbeing and prevent, reduce, or delay the need for care and support. It reinforces the importance of identifying unmet needs early, making appropriate referrals to Adult Social Care, and working collaboratively to safeguard adults at risk. In doing so, the policy ensures that tenancy management contributes to wider statutory duties around care, protection, and prevention and where appropriate children.

5.2 Tenancy Sustainment Definition

Tenancy sustainment is the proactive support offered to help tenants maintain safe, secure housing. It involves early identification of risks such as financial hardship or health issues and tailored interventions to prevent tenancy breakdown. We promote tenancy resilience through trauma-informed, inclusive practice.

This approach is designed to prevent tenancy failure, which occurs when a tenancy ends prematurely or unsuccessfully such as through eviction, abandonment, or early termination. Tenancy failure is often linked to unmet support needs and can result in significant personal disruption and financial cost to both tenants and Bristol City Council.

5.3 Early Identification of Support Needs

Early identification of support needs is central to our approach to tenancy sustainment. Recognising signs of difficulty such as financial strain, property neglect, or changes in behaviour allows us to intervene before issues escalate.

Tenancy Management staff are expected to take a proactive approach to understanding each tenant's circumstances. This includes using assessment tools, reviewing existing records, and engaging with tenants to identify risks and strengths.

This process begins at the pre-tenancy stage, where staff meet with prospective tenants to understand any support needs before tenancy sign-up.

Where support needs are identified, we will take appropriate action, including referrals to internal and external services. The Supportive Tenancy Management Process (STMP) and Tenancy Resilience Assessment Matrix (TRAM) are key assessment tools used to guide this work.

OFFICIAL

5.4 Supportive Tenancy Management Process

The Supportive Tenancy Management Process (STMP) is a structured way of helping tenants when there are serious concerns about their ability to manage their tenancy. It can be used at different stages not just when someone is close to losing their home but whenever issues like property neglect, safeguarding concerns, or difficulties with day-to-day living arise.

Staff use the Tenancy Resilience Assessment (TRAM) to understand what's going on and agree on actions with the tenant.

Sometimes other services like social care or health teams are involved, but we know this isn't always possible. Tenants may not want to engage, or other services may not be able to help.

In those cases, tenancy staff continue working with the tenant directly, using a trauma-informed and person-centred approach.

STMP is about helping tenants stay in their homes safely. Enforcement is only considered when all reasonable support options have been tried, and things still haven't improved.

5.5 Referral for Support

Some tenants face more complex challenges that need extra help. When this happens, Housing Officers can refer them for support from a Sustainment Officer. The Sustainment Officers work with tenants to access appropriate support services. They do not provide direct support but coordinate with other agencies to ensure tenants receive the help they need. Before making a referral, staff talk to the tenant, explain what support is available, and get their agreement. The Sustainment Officer then works with the tenant to create a personalised support plan, involving other services if needed. Their goal is to help tenants build confidence, manage their tenancy better, and avoid eviction or homelessness.

5.6 Partnership Working

Effective tenancy sustainment relies on strong, collaborative relationships with tenants and with partner organisations. Tenants are active participants in shaping the support they receive, and their experiences and choices are central to successful outcomes.

Many tenants face challenges that extend beyond housing, such as health, financial, or safeguarding concerns. Bristol City Council works closely with internal services and external agencies to ensure a joined-up approach that delivers the right support at the right time.

A list of stakeholders we collaborate with to deliver coordinated support is available in Appendix D.

Bristol City Council takes privacy seriously. When working with other organisations to support tenants, personal information is only shared when necessary and always in line with data protection laws. Tenants are informed about what is being shared and why, and their permission is sought wherever possible.

5.7 Safeguarding and Crisis Response

Bristol City Council has a legal duty to protect children, young people, and adults at risk from harm, abuse, or neglect. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across Housing and Landlord Services and is central to tenancy sustainment.

Staff must be able to recognise signs of risk and respond appropriately, following established procedures and working with other agencies to ensure a coordinated approach. This includes making

OFFICIAL

referrals to Adult or Children's Social Care where necessary and ensuring all staff are trained and confident in safeguarding practice.

In addition to safeguarding, staff must be prepared to respond to tenancy-related crises that may place individuals or households at immediate risk. These may include:

- All forms of abuse, including domestic abuse, coercive control, and honour-based violence.
- Mental health emergencies
- Imminent eviction or homelessness
- Fire, flood, or other property emergencies

In these situations, we will act swiftly to prioritise safety, assess the situation, and coordinate support using a trauma-informed approach. Responses may involve contacting emergency services, liaising with internal teams (e.g. Housing Options), or working with external partners such as health and social care services.

5.8 Equality and Diversity

We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities, and we will take positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been reviewed and agreed by the Equalities Team.

5.9 Complaints

If residents are unhappy with the services provided by BCC or how their concerns have been handled, they're encouraged to use the official complaints procedure. Complaints and feedback

6. Quality Assurance

6.1 Publishing

This policy will be published on the BCC Website and communicated to relevant operational teams via policy briefings and other appropriate communications.

6.2 Review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years or sooner if there is a change to legal or regulatory requirements, in accordance with our procedures.

6.3 Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

Service delivery and performance is measured against the Housing and Landlord Services Performance Framework.

BCC uses performance management to enhance service delivery standards and improve tenant experience. We measure performance to monitor success. In relation to this Policy BCC will:

- Keep track of how many tenants are being supported through the Supportive Tenancy Management Process (STMP) which helps identify people who might be at risk of losing their home as well as the number of referrals made to the Tenancy Sustainment Team within the Tenancy Management Service.
- Conduct regular tenancy audits, ensuring that 20% of all homes are reviewed annually so that every property is audited at least once within a five-year cycle.

OFFICIAL

Services need to meet the KPI's set and other reporting responsibilities to the regulator. BCC monitor satisfaction, using data and insight from, as a minimum reporting in relation to:

- Complaints
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures

7. Appendices

Appendix A – Roles and Responsibilities

Job/Team Name	Description of responsibilities
All Homes and Landlord Services Staff	• Following the BCC Corporate Code of Conduct, which includes the duty to protect children and vulnerable adults. • Preventing discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. • Fostering good relations between different groups. • Making reasonable adjustments to ensure services are accessible. • Being alert to signs that a tenant may need extra support, especially during home visits. • Checking existing records (e.g. housing systems or the Housing Support Register) before requesting information from tenants. • Completing needs assessments where appropriate, considering both risks and strengths. • Maintaining accurate and up-to-date records of any factors that may affect a tenant's ability to manage their tenancy, and - where appropriate referring them to internal or external support services to help address those factors. • Completing all required safeguarding training and reporting any concerns through the correct channels. • Raising unmet care or support needs with Adult Social Care where a Care Act assessment may be needed.
H&LS Managers	• Make sure all staff have completed required safeguarding and relevant training, including any necessary refreshers. • Act on recommendations from reviews such as Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR), Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR), and Safeguarding Children Reviews (SCR), as well as guidance from the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership, including trauma-informed practice. • Ensure staff are working safely and that health and safety procedures are followed.
Housing Officer	• Use STMP to support tenants in sustaining their tenancies through proactive engagement and early intervention. • Identify and assess tenants' support needs using tools like the Tenancy Resilience Assessment Matrix (TRAM). • Conduct routine and priority tenancy audits • Make appropriate referrals to internal and external support services with tenant consent. • Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of tenant interactions and support needs. • Follow safeguarding procedures and report concerns about children or vulnerable adults.

OFFICIAL

	• Apply the principles of trauma-informed practice in all tenant interactions. • Ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, including making reasonable adjustments for disabled tenants. • Collaborate with other teams and agencies to coordinate support for tenants with complex needs. • Participate in training and development, including safeguarding and tenancy sustainment practices.
Income Team	• Monitor rent accounts to identify early signs of financial difficulty and intervene promptly to prevent arrears from escalating. • Proactively contact tenants in arrears to understand their circumstances and offer appropriate support or referrals. • Work with tenants to ensure they are receiving all entitled benefits and income, including signposting to welfare rights or money advice services. • Develop and agree realistic and sustainable repayment plans with tenants, based on their individual financial situations.
Tenancy Sustainment Team	• Take ownership of complex or high-risk STMP cases, including those involving multiple support needs, safeguarding concerns, or persistent tenancy breaches. • Conduct in-depth assessments to understand the full range of issues affecting a tenant's ability to sustain their tenancy, including health, financial, social, and environmental factors. • Create tailored tenancy sustainment plans in collaboration with the tenant, outlining clear goals, actions, and support pathways. Coordinate input from internal teams and external agencies. • Support tenants to build resilience and independence by promoting life skills, budgeting, and engagement with community resources.
Repairs and Maintenance Staff	• Carry out repairs and maintenance work in line with Bristol City Council's standards and health and safety procedures. • Be alert to signs that a tenant may be struggling to manage their home (e.g. property neglect, hoarding, or safety risks) and report concerns to Tenancy Management staff. • Respect tenants' homes and communicate clearly about appointments, delays, or follow-up work. • Work in a trauma-informed way, recognising that some tenants may find repair visits stressful or overwhelming. • Support tenancy sustainment by helping to keep homes safe, secure, and in good condition.

Appendix B – Legal and Policy Context

- Housing Act 1988
- Housing Act 1985
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

OFFICIAL

- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Regulator of Social Housing – Consumer Standards
- Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code

Related Policy

- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Tenancy Changes Policy
- Rental Income and Arrears Management Policy
- ASB Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Tenancy Audit Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Gain Access Policy
- Hoarded Homes Policy Statement

Appendix C – Glossary of terms

Safeguarding	The duty to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse, or neglect.
STMP (Supportive Tenancy Management Process)	A structured process used to support tenants facing challenges with their tenancy. It can be started early and doesn't rely on external agency involvement, focusing on tailored, tenant-led support.
Tenancy Resilience	Tenancy resilience is the ability of a tenant to sustain their tenancy over time despite challenges, through access to support, financial stability, and secure housing conditions.
Tenancy Sustainment	The support and actions taken to help tenants maintain stable, secure housing and prevent tenancy breakdown.
TRAM (Tenancy Resilience Assessment Matrix)	A tool used to assess a tenant's strengths and risks to identify support needs early.
Trauma Informed Approach	A way of working that recognises the impact of trauma and ensures services are delivered in a safe, respectful, and supportive manner.

Appendix D – List of Stakeholders

The following stakeholders may be consulted as part of Tenancy Sustainment work carried out by Tenancy Management and Estates.

This list is not exhaustive.

OFFICIAL

External Stakeholders	
Hub of Hope	https://hubofhope.co.uk/
Missing Link	https://missinglinkhousing.co.uk/privacy-warning/?incognito=true
Second Step	helpwhenyouneedit@second-step.co.uk
St Mungos	https://www.mungos.org/our-services/where-we-work/bristol/
Keyring	https://www.keyring.org/who-we-are
Rethink Community Support Service	https://www.rethink.org/help-in-your-area/services-in-your-area/
Avon Wiltshire Partnership	https://www.awp.nhs.uk/
Brunelcare	hwynireferrals@brunelcare.org.uk
Brigstowe	https://www.brigstowe.org/
Nextlink	https://nextlinkhousing.co.uk/
One25	https://one25.org.uk/about-us/
Bristol Male Domestic Violence Service	https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/resources/avon-and-somerset/
Avon and Somerset Victim Support	https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/avon-somerset/
SARI	https://saricharity.org.uk/
Brandon Trust	https://bhcds.org.uk/
Off The Record	https://www.otrbristol.org.uk/
Bristol Mind	https://bristolmind.org.uk/
Bristol Law Centre	https://www.bristollawcentre.org.uk/
Resolve West	https://resolvewest.org/
Bristol Drugs Project	https://www.bdp.org.uk/
Developing Health and Independence (DHI)	https://www.dhi-online.org.uk/get-help/adult-drug-alcohol-treatment/bristol-roads
Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership	https://bristolsafeguarding.org/

OFFICIAL

South Bristol Advice Service	https://southbristoladvice.org.uk/
North Bristol Advice Centre	https://northbristoladvice.org.uk/
Internal Stakeholders	
Housing Related Support Services (HRSS)	
Bristol Resettlement Team	
Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service (WRAMAS)	
Revenues and Benefits	
Accessible Homes	
Homelessness Prevention Team	
Community Engagement Team	
Housing Options	
Children Services	
Adult Care Team	

OFFICIAL