

# **King Street Housing Society**

## **Anti-Social Behaviour Policy**

### **General**

The Society does not operate in neighbourhoods known to be at risk from multiple social problems. The Housing Corporation's guidance has therefore been tailored to meet the needs of this organisation, bearing in mind its mixture of tenures and particular circumstances.

Lettings in our own properties average about 20 per year, and these are to properties in well-established settled schemes. Allocations are made according to the criteria set out in the Policy and Procedure on Tenant Selection, and include applicants on the local authority needs register.

There are inevitably problems of occasional anti-social behaviour, breaches of tenancy, neighbour nuisance and disputes, and these are dealt with on an individual basis.

### **The Society's objective**

The Society's objective and the basis on which it obtained charitable status two years ago, is to provide housing for people on low incomes. The new requirement for RSLs to create "balanced communities" is not necessarily a contradiction but does imply that more recent emphasis on bare "housing need" has led to the concentration of social problems in certain areas of publicly funded housing.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders**

The government's introduction of 'anti-social behaviour orders' (ASBOs) is one response to the difficulties of controlling disruptive, violent or criminal families or single people where their behaviour prevents their neighbours living safely or quietly nearby.

Discussions are being held in local authorities to establish how such ASBOs can assist landlords in dealing with problem tenants. This Society has joined with others in Cambridge and with the police, probation and social services to see whether joint action can succeed in restraining nuisance more effectively than simple court action for breach of tenancy.

### **Breaches of tenancy**

The Society has procedures for dealing with neighbour nuisance and disputes, and these are followed carefully and records kept of any action.

The Director and other staff have regular contact with the police, the probation department, social services and a number of voluntary agencies – drug advisory bodies and so on. Whilst these contacts are extremely

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valuable, the vital element is the tenancy agreement itself, and the rights of the Society's other tenants.

### **Private Leasing Scheme**

The majority of the Society's allocations is to people nominated by the local authorities for temporary accommodation in scattered private sector properties throughout the City and surrounding villages. The contracts we have with these local authorities include the expectation that we will house whoever we are sent. This is because our first response is to homelessness and our charitable objectives. Occasionally however, the Society refuses a nomination. Refusals so far have been on the grounds of:-

1. The pre-allocation home visit reveals an inability on the part of the nominee to maintain even minimum standards of housekeeping. Such a case resulting in refusal by the Society would be extreme.
2. The information supplied by a nominee shows a long history of rent arrears, Court actions etc. and no attempt on the part of the nominee to pay.
3. The nominee's criminal history makes it likely that publicity would surround the case and make a normal confidential letting impossible.

### **Information sharing**

The Society is bound by its own confidentiality policy as well as the Data Protection Act.

It has an agreement with both local authorities that warnings will be given in cases of people nominated with any history of violence, because of the need to protect the Society's staff. Such warnings would not necessarily mean a refusal to house the nominee but that extra safety measures would need to be taken by ourselves.

### **Housing sex offenders**

Many organisations are struggling to develop coherent policies and the Society is involved in an inter-agency working group of this kind. Events recently in Portsmouth will probably lead to new guidance on this issue, which we will await with interest.

### **“Balanced communities”**

It is not possible to create “balanced communities” unless this is simply taken to mean that RSLs should house a proportion of employed people, or people who can demonstrate successful tenancies in their pasts, rather than housing those in the greatest need.

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The Society sets out its policy and procedure on tenant selection and whilst it attempts to take these contradictory considerations into account, remains confident that in difficult circumstances its policy is as fair as it can be.

Information is requested from the local authority within reason and within its own restrictions of confidentiality. Contact with other relevant agencies takes place on a daily basis and such agencies are also consulted where action is taken against a tenant in whom others have an interest.

Overall the Society does its best to meet its obligations as a publicly subsidised body to provide for those in housing need within its geographical area.

- It takes prompt action against tenants who are in breach of their tenancy agreements, whilst taking into account both individual circumstances and the needs of neighbours, parents etc.
- It is in touch with local agencies and maintains close and co-operative contact with both local authorities.
- It consults its tenants on matters of housing management and maintains the confidentiality of individuals
- It protects its staff as far as possible from violent or unpredictable tenants.

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