

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a set of keys. The keys are silver and include a large, dark metal key and a smaller silver key. The background is a blurred interior with a brass door handle visible in the lower right corner. A white diagonal line cuts across the image from the top left to the bottom right.

Tenancy Sustainment
Strategy
2022 - 2025

Introduction

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. As a social landlord with over 4000 homes in management, we have a profound understanding of the link between providing additional support to enable our customers to sustain their tenancies and preventing homelessness.

In our Customers and Communities Strategy, we set a target of 0 evictions and abandonments where customers are engaging with us, because we understand that prevention is better than the cure; homelessness is costly and disruptive to lives, impacting significantly not only on the household concerned but also on the local community, our partners and stakeholders.

This strategy is driven by the aim to make a positive difference to the quality of life and future opportunities of our customers and communities, and sets out how we will provide support to our customers so that they can remain in their tenancy for as long as they choose.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Officers work collaboratively with our Housing Management Team to provide an holistic service. This includes bringing in any specialist services needed to support customers to provide an excellent, responsive service that generates trust and confidence with our customers. It is a whole 'Team Orwell' responsibility to highlight customers who may be struggling to maintain a tenancy for a variety of reasons, and we want to work together with the aim of keeping customers in their homes and managing their tenancy responsibilities.



Our

P**A****C****E** values

People Focused · **Ambitious** · **Collaborative** · **Effective**

This strategy aligns with our PACE organisational values.

People-focused: We believe that high quality relationships are key to effective service delivery. We will work with our colleagues across the organisation to ensure they have the time to develop trusting relationships with our customers. We will establish a relationship with our customers of collaboration and engagement, so we understand everything that is happening in that customer's life. This will enable us to empathise and respond accordingly. Having honest conversations will be paramount to success.

Ambitious: With our commitment to continuously improve our service we can use the knowledge, skills and experience of our colleagues combined with data to make informed decisions. For some, it will involve support where needed and signposting to essential services. This will offer flexibility for those who need it within our digital offer, targeted support to reduce rent arrears, anti-social behaviour, and tenancy failures.

Collaborative: This means knowing our customers and communities. Knowing and working closely with the agencies that operate locally and nationally means that we can signpost to appropriate agencies as early as possible.

Effective: Our Customer and Community Insight work, alongside the knowledge of our officers from the relationships they build with our customers, will enable us to identify areas where support is required and direct resources where they will have most impact.



GRATITUDE 2021
VIP
Rob

GRATITUDE 2021
VIP
Sally

GRATITUDE 2021
VIP
Sally

Our Mission

We want our customers to flourish. However, we recognise that our customers are facing unprecedented pressures at the moment. On the back of the COVID-19 pandemic, external factors such as the war in Ukraine are fuelling the perfect storm; the most severe cost of living crisis the UK has seen in a generation driven by rising energy costs, inflation and interest rates. In addition to this, we understand that our customers are struggling with many challenges that may affect their ability to manage their tenancy easily; mental and physical health problems, learning disabilities, neurodiversity, weak financial health and digital poverty are just some of the issues which confront our customers on a daily basis.

Our mission is to provide a customer centric housing, care and support service which puts the ethos of “together we make a difference” at the heart of what we do. We recognise that we have a role in enabling our customers to navigate the daily challenges they face and believe that social landlords can, and should, provide added value to the communities in which they work above and beyond being a good landlord. Our tenancy sustainment offer is at the core of this mission.

What is a sustainable tenancy?

A sustainable tenancy is one which can be maintained successfully by the tenant throughout the life of the tenancy (CIH).

We are pleased to present our Tenancy Sustainment Strategy for 2022-2025, which sets out the approach we will take to delivering sustainable tenancies for our customers in the current context of increasing external pressures.



Our Objectives

The Strategic Plan sets out our 6 key priorities. Effective tenancy sustainment underpins our success in meeting 3 of our strategic objectives:

1 Providing exceptional customer service - putting customers at the heart of what we do to ensure our decisions are driven by customers' needs and aspirations.

Our target is:

↗ Customer satisfaction with tenancy sustainment support received at 95%

To meet this objective:

- ↗ We will take a restorative approach, communicating in a clear, consistent and respectful way that avoids stigmatising people.
- ↗ We will work with our customers around their responsibilities, providing additional support where this is needed.
- ↗ We will listen to customer feedback to design and shape our service.



2 Supporting our customers to have control over their future - we aim to support them to be independent and have the greatest chance to be healthy, happy, and safe'

Our targets are:

- ✔ An 85% tenancy sustainment success rate where customers engage with our service.
- ✔ Work collaboratively with partners to enable at least 30 customers to access a bespoke tenancy sustainment course within 2022.
- ✔ Support at least 130 customers per year through our in-house service' and a fourth one to say 'Build capacity so that by the end of the strategy we are able to offer pre-tenancy training to any first-time tenant we house

To meet this objective:

- ✔ We will adopt an early intervention approach, recognising that prevention is better than the cure, focussing on first time tenants.
- ✔ Tenancy sustainment will be a whole 'Team Orwell' responsibility with all colleagues empowered to refer customers to the service.
- ✔ Customers will be empowered to self-refer and we will offer a range of easy ways to do this, including digital options.
- ✔ We will proactively seek out partnerships with other agencies who can provide services to our tenants that we are unable to provide.
- ✔ Our initial partnership will be with through Independent East (a group of local independent Housing Associations) and an organisation called Your Own Place. Within 2022 we will offer Tenancy and Independents Living Skills (TILS) courses designed to improve the tenancy knowledge, skills and resilience of our customers.
- ✔ Following on from the completion of this partnership we will review the success of it before looking to continue or seek out other partnerships.
- ✔ We will also work collaboratively with partners in an Affordable Warmth Task and Finish Group throughout 2022 and beyond, to seek creative joined-up solutions for our customers around coping with increasing energy prices, tackling fuel poverty and improving the energy efficiency of our homes.



3 Making a positive social impact in our diverse communities- through better understanding of needs and developing services that create social value.

Our target is:

📈 Zero Evictions or abandonments where customers have engaged with support

To meet this objective:

- 📈 All colleagues in contact with customers will seek to develop strong and restorative relationships with those most at risk, calling upon the services of others from within and external to Orwell and when is needed.
- 📈 Eviction will be viewed across the organisation as a last resort, and eviction action will not be taken without a prior offer of support.
- 📈 We will work closely alongside other partner agencies and make referrals to them as most appropriate. We will ensure our staff have the most up to date knowledge on what support and services are available for our customers.
- 📈 Where we are notified, any tenant who is claiming Universal Credit will be referred to our Welfare Reform Officer for additional support with their claim.
- 📈 All tenants in housing without care and support will receive an introductory visit from their Housing Officer within 2 months of the tenancy.





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