



# Tenancy Verification Policy

Version 4.0  
February 2014



Responsible Officer: Head of Operations (Triathlon Homes)  
*(Responsibility for proposing final draft, implementation and review)*

Author: Policy and Project Officer

Approved by: Triathlon Homes' Policy Panel

Date Approved: February 2014

Date of Equality  
Impact Assessment: not applicable

EIA Review Date: May 2015

Effective Date: February 2014

Policy Review Date: May 2015

**Policy Review Statement** - This policy will be reviewed at the date mentioned above or following legislative, organisational, or changes to good practice if sooner.

# Contents

	Page/s
1. Introduction .....	4
2. Policy Statement .....	4-5
3. Context .....	5
4. Method Statement.....	5-6
5. Monitoring the policy .....	6
6. Equality Needs Impact Assessment .....	6
7. Accessibility of information/Publication.....	6

## 1. Introduction

Triathlon Homes is committed to ensuring that our housing stock is occupied by those who have a contractual agreement with us.

We will do this through undertaking regular Tenancy Verification checks. This will help ensure that:

- properties are occupied by those legally entitled to do so; and
- properties have not been abandoned.

This policy applies to all Triathlon Homes tenures with the exception of leaseholders who have staircased to 100%.

We will work closely with all partners on the East Village to prevent and address unlawful occupancy.

Triathlon Homes LLP ('Triathlon Homes') is the owner of 1,379 homes within East Village and is landlord to the occupiers of these properties and has appointed a Managing Agent to manage the properties on its behalf. The Managing Agent is also a member of the Housing Ombudsman Service.

All of Triathlon Homes' policies are its own, but are implemented by the Managing Agent on its behalf. Triathlon Homes' policies are required to comply with the Regulatory Standards of the Homes and Communities Agency.

## 2. Policy Statement

2.1 We will aim to eradicate unlawful occupation or subletting and establish early identification of abandoned properties. Triathlon Homes treats the above seriously because:

- unlawful occupation and subletting of properties deprives those who are eligible and often in most housing need from access to housing; and
- abandoned properties are most at risk of disrepair, vandalism and encourage unlawful occupation.

2.2 We will prioritise the verification of the lawful occupation of our properties by using a range of risk factors to help us identify situations of both high and low risk. .

2.3 We will undertake tenancy verifications on at least 14% of our properties each year. This may be through a mixture of random unannounced spot checks requiring immediate verification and desktop checks. All our staff will carry forms of identity at all times and will make this available to the resident at their request.

2.4 We will also utilise other opportunities of contact with the resident to undertake tenancy verification e.g. when dealing with maintenance issues.

2.5 Where the property is not being occupied by the legal tenant, prompt and appropriate action will be taken including taking possession action (see our Squatters and Unauthorised Occupants Policy).

## 3. Context

### 3.1 Statute/Regulatory code

The Housing Act 1996 - Part VI S.170 and Part VII S.123.  
Homes and Communities Agency Tenancy Standard,  
National Fraud Initiatives.

### 3.2 Links to key Triathlon Policies

Lodgers & Subletting Policy.  
Squatters and Unauthorised Occupants Policy.

## 4. Method Statement

Using a range of potential indicators we will prioritise the verification of the lawful occupation of our properties.

### 4.1 Potential Indicators

We will consider the following potential indicators:

- we have had no contact within the last 12 months from the tenant(s);
- where the resident has failed to provide access to their property in relation to repairs and maintenance or defects inspections; and
- we have information from a secondary source that requires further investigation (see ref 4.3).

### 4.2 Tenancy Verification Visits

When carrying out a tenancy verification visit, staff should be clear that their primary objective is to determine whether the legal tenant is in occupation. For Social Rent tenants and Intermediate Rent tenants, secondary to that aim, the visit is also there to provide an opportunity to ensure that:

- vulnerable tenants who may need additional services to sustain their tenancies are identified;
- the property is being kept in a good condition, undamaged and free of repair;
- tenancy conditions are being met and that permissions have been sought;
- the property is not over-crowded or under-occupied; and
- household information is kept up to date.

4.2.2 At the verification visit, the tenant will be required to provide original documents to check their identity e.g. passport, driving licence, etc. An inspection of the property will also be undertaken by the member of staff to check for signs of amongst other things sub-letting, disrepair, misuse of property and the inability to sustain the tenancy.

### 4.3 Other Sources of information/verification

4.2.1 Triathlon Homes will utilise the following information sources to investigate and ultimately prevent and/or address subletting or abandoned properties:

- information provided by residents or staff;
- information provided by local authorities;
- information provided from outside agencies including National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercises;
- information provided by staff that confirms the resident has failed to provide access to their property;
- information from maintenance led initiatives; and
- information from other partners working on East Village.

4. 2.2 We will encourage whistle-blowing through the use of publicity, but where we have evidence that reports are being made maliciously, we will take appropriate action with the individuals concerned.

## **5. Monitoring the policy**

5.1 This policy will be monitored by the Head of Operations who will review this policy periodically, capturing best practice, customer feedback and legislative changes to inform this review.

5.2 We will compile and maintain records of all ongoing subletting/abandonment cases which arise from tenancy verifications.

5.3 We will undertake quality checks to ensure the thoroughness and accuracy of tenancy verifications through a mixture of random peer reviews and sample checks by the Head of Operations.

## **6. Equality Needs Impact Assessment**

An equality impact assessment of this policy will be undertaken by May 2015.

## **7. Accessibility of information/Publication**

This policy is available on the Triathlon Homes website.