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| **Colour_logo**  **DECANT POLICY**  **2024**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Author:** | Operations Manager - Housing | | **Owner:** | Housing | | **Version:** | 1 | | **Date:** | February 2024 | | **Review Date:** | February 2029 | | | |
| **1.** | **Policy statement** |
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| 1.1 | There are occasions when it becomes necessary to move tenants or groups of tenants from their permanent home, either as a temporary measure to allow work to be completed on their permanent home before moving back or to move them to an alternative permanent home because their current home is not safe for their continued occupation. This is known as a decant. |
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| 1.2 | Sandwell Council is committed to providing a customer centred approach to decanting tenants and ensuring that decants are conducted in an efficient and fair manner. |
| 1.3 | This policy sets out the assistance that will be offered to customers requested to decant to alternative accommodation. |
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| 1.4  1.5 | This policy applies to all general needs tenants, tenants of extra care schemes and owners within leasehold properties.  This policy will be implemented from February 2024. |
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| **2.** | **Scope and definitions** |
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| 2.1 | A decant may take place in a number of circumstances such as:   * In case of an emergency such as a fire, flood or health and safety risk * In the above cases, the Council will consider the use of hotel/B&B accommodation. * Scheduled major work meaning that the property is uninhabitable   (this list is not exhaustive) |
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| 2.2  2.3 | Where necessary repair or improvement work has been identified, the Council will assess the works required and decide whether minor or major works are necessary. Where the work cannot be completed with the customer continuing to occupy the property, or it would be unreasonable to expect the tenant to continue to live through the expected disruption of the work the Council will arrange alternative accommodation.  Affected tenants will be involved from the start of the decant process. We will ensure that:   * the reason why we consider that a decant is appropriate and necessary is explained * they are given an individual named contact * we discuss any alternative options that may be available * we confirm and agree on what is considered to be a reasonable offer of alternative accommodation * advise of the action that may be taken if the tenant refuses to be relocated when a reasonable offer has been made |
| **3.** | **Aims** |
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| 3.1  3.2  3.3 | The aim of the policy is to:  clarify the approach that will be taken by Sandwell MBC when decanting tenants  ensure that disruption to tenants’ lives are kept to a minimum  ensure that the decant process is not used as a means to rehousing tenants permanently unless part 4.2 of this policy applies |
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| **4.** | **Minimising Disturbance** |
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| 4.1  4.2  **5**  **6**  **7** | Where possible, we aim to carry out necessary works around tenants, while they remain in their property, with minimum disruption. If the work cannot be carried out while the tenant remains in their property, we will aim to make the decant period as short as possible. When deciding whether a tenant can remain in the property during works the following will be considered:   * the health and safety of those living in or visiting the property * the wellbeing of the household * proposed timescales and the extent of works * ensuring that the reasonable adjustment policy is applied to ensure that the individual needs of the tenant are considered   If tenants are required to move, we will aim for all tenants to be offered a suitable property for their needs. Where an individual has particular needs and their existing home has been specially adapted, we will ensure that accommodation is provided with similar adaptations. For example, tenants who live in properties larger than their housing needs require may be decanted into a smaller property that is considered suitable for them in line with our Housing Allocations policy.  If an emergency decant is required, we may need to place tenants in temporary accommodation and therefore this may not be of the same suitability as the property that they are decanted from.  In some instances, it may be decided that the tenant needs to be moved on a permanent basis, for instance   * the property needs to be demolished * the property is being disposed of   In any case, the following will be made clear to the tenant at the start of the process.  **Temporary Decant**  This is normally occurs when a property suffers from an event, such as a fire, flood, or major unplanned repair. In these circumstances, the tenant will be advised of the following   * that the relocation is temporary and will only last as long as it takes to complete the work to the property * the amount of time that they are likely to be decanted for * the disturbance costs that will be paid by the Council as a result of the decant * how we will ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum * that they kept updated on the progress of the work at their main home at intervals agreed with them at the start of the process * the tenant will remain a tenant or leaseholder of their original home   **Permanent Displacement**  In some cases, it may be decided that a tenant needs to move on a permanent basis, for example   * The property has structural defects * The property needs to be disposed of   In these circumstances, a direct offer of accommodation will be made in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy  **Assistance and payments**  Sandwell Council will provide assistance to tenants that we decant. We will   * arrange for the removal and storage of personal items * arrange for appliances such as the tenant’s cooker and washing machine to be disconnected and reconnected * cover the cost of the disconnection/re-instatement of your landline telephone and internet * cover the cost of the disconnection/re-instatement of your satellite television * we will also cover the costs for the redirection of mail for the period of the decant * cover laundrette costs (if you are rehoused in a hotel or B&B) * in some cases we may reimburse for the cost of new appliances, for example if the existing cooker cannot be connected to the new energy supply   If the decant is permanent, then the tenant may also be entitled to a statutory home loss payment will made in accordance with the Home loss Payments Legislation and Home loss policy.  **Tenancies**  The original tenancy type will be maintained during the decant process. If a tenant is required to move under a decant, the rent at the temporary home will not exceed that that is charged at their original home.  Tenants will be expected to pay the appropriate Council Tax for the property they have been moved to. Council Tax will not need to be paid for the property they have been decanted from.  In the event of emergency or where the work will be completed in a few days, a temporary stay in a hotel could be the best solution.  If the household are moved into a hotel for the duration of the work, then the Council will meet the costs of the hotel and the Council Tax on the property that they have been decanted from. The tenant will still be responsible for paying the rent on their original property.  **Review**  This policy will be reviewed every 5 years or sooner if they are any legislative changes that affect the policy. |
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