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| Date Approved | November 2012 | Date of Next Review | November 2014 |
| **Policy owner(s)** | Heads of Neighbourhoods | | |

## 1. Scope

This policy applies to customers of Oxford Citizens H A, Oxbode H A, GreenSquare Community H A, Westlea H A (all trading as GreenSquare), and Oakus in the following categories: general needs, 55+, temporary stock, mortgage rescue, supported housing, shared ownership and privately rented properties.

**2.** **Policy**

Our aim is to issue tenancies or terms of occupation in correct legal format which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the communities in which we operate and the efficient use of our housing stock.

**3****.** **Our Approach**

* We are committed to working with our local authority partners to help them meet their duty to assist people in housing need. Therefore we will have regard to the tenancy strategy produced by each LA in our area of operations
* We will issue each customer with a detailed tenancy agreement or term of occupation setting out the rights and responsibilities of both parties
* We will use our Tenancy Sustainment Team, 55+ team and external partner agencies to work with customers before and during their occupancy in order to help them sustain their tenancies
* We will only use eviction as a last resort when addressing breach of tenancy
* We will identify and tackle tenancy fraud in our stock within reasonable resources
* We are currently not using fixed term tenancies made available by the Localism Act

**4. Our Tenancy Options**

We have a range of different tenancy types that we use across the Group. The table below outlines the various agreements that we have and when we will generally use them:

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| **Tenancy Type** | **Who offered to** |
| Licence Agreement | * Customers who do not have exclusive occupation of their property * Some Supported Housing customers * Garages * Refuge units |
| Secure Tenancy | * Existing customers with this type of tenancy who are transferring to another of our properties. |
| Assured Shorthold Tenancy | * Customers living in a property where we are the leaseholder * Some Supported Housing customers * Customers living in units of temporary accommodation * Where a customer has been granted temporary rights to stay in a property whilst seeking alternative accommodation * Where a customer has former tenancy arrears * Where a customer has previously been the perpetrator of ASB * Where an Assured tenancy has been “demoted” by court order due to ASB * Customers renting privately on either an intermediate market rent or a full market rent |
| Assured (Non- Shorthold)Tenancy | * Existing customers with this type of tenancy who are transferring to another of our properties. * Customers who are moving to GreenSquare from another social housing provider where they have an existing tenancy of this type or other form of tenancy protection. * All customers within age defined General Needs housing or Sheltered Housing who are not on a Starter Tenancy * Some customers who we define as ‘Vulnerable’ * Some customers supported in shared housing |
| Equitable Tenancy | * Given to customers under 18 years of age and converting to Assured at the tenants 18th birthday. |
| Starter Tenancy (converting to Assured after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct) | * New customers who will be living in a local authority area who have indicated through their tenancy strategy that they wish us to use starter tenancies. * New customers over the age of 18 who have not previously held an Assured tenancy with a Social Landlord * Some supported customers in shared housing |
| Affordable Rent Tenancy | * New customers paying an Affordable Rent under the terms of GreenSquare’s development contract with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) |
| Family Intervention Tenancy | * To avoid a customer being evicted for ASB * To support the provision of behaviour support services |
| Mortgage Rescue Tenancy (3 year fixed term assured shorthold) | * For new customers referred to us via the government’s mortgage rescue scheme. |
| Shared Ownership Lease | * New customers purchasing a property on a shared ownership basis |
| Private Owners Lease | * Customers who have purchased their flat outright. |

**5. Pre-tenancy**

Before starting a tenancy we will evaluate the personal circumstances of new customers in order to assess the risk to tenancy sustainment and whether support can be provided, internally or externally, to enable them to maintain their tenancy effectively.

**6. Tenancy management**

Most new customers will be given a Starter Tenancy Agreement (Assured Shorthold) which, subject to satisfactory conduct, will automatically convert to an Assured periodic tenancy after 12 months. Further details are in our Starter Tenancy Procedure. Customers can appeal against our decision not to convert under GreenSquare’s Complaints policy.

We aim to support all our customers to maintain their tenancies successfully. Our Tenancy Sustainment and 55+ Teams will play a key role in achieving this. We will refer customers to appropriate external agencies if necessary.

We will make sure that the home continues to be occupied by the customer we have let the home to in accordance with the requirements of the relevant tenancy agreement. We will seek to address breaches of tenancy agreements through co-operation with our customers. If necessary we will use legal action as a remedy; ensuring that legal notices are served correctly and within appropriate timescales. Eviction will only be used when all other remedies have failed.

**7. Mutual Exchanges**

We subscribe to the internet-based, national “Homeswapper” mutual exchange scheme in order to facilitate mobility and support existing customers who wish to swap tenancies with other social housing tenants. Further details are in our Mutual Exchange Procedure.

**8. Succession**

Joint tenants will succeed to the tenancy by survivorship. Married or civil partners (or those living as the tenant’s married or civil partner) have the right of statutory succession. We will grant one contractual right of succession to qualifying family members through the tenancy agreement unless it specifies an additional right.

We may exercise our right, on limited occasions, to make a discretionary succession to a person who is not entitled to succeed to the tenancy. Further details are in our Succession Procedure.

**9. Equality & Diversity**

This policy will be carried out in conjunction with GreenSquare’s Equality & Diversity Strategy and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. In short, we will ensure that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons on account of any diversity strand. We will also ensure our residents have fair access to our tenancy service and provide translation services for community languages when required.

**10. Monitoring and review**

We will monitor performance and report performance and customer satisfaction to GreenSquare Board and Communities Boards as required. The Policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis, unless there are significant changes in legislation or there are found to be any deficiencies or learning points from a complaint, or findings from any independent organisation.

**9. Value for Money**

As part of our commitment to deliver an economical, efficient and effective service, we will use external benchmarking services and best practice groups to monitor our costs and service outcomes.