



## TUNTUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DOCUMENT CONTROL		
<b>Policy name:</b>	Abandonment Policy	
<b>Version:</b>		
<b>Author:</b>	Nkosana Mthimkhulu (Housing Services Manager)	
	5 March 2026	Customer Experience Committee (CEC)
<b>Effective date:</b>	5 March 2026	
<b>Date of next review:</b>	5 March 2029	
<b>Customer-facing:</b>	YES	

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Tuntum Housing Association ('Tuntum') recognises the need to have clear procedures for dealing with properties that appear to have been abandoned by residents.
- 1.2 This policy establishes guidelines for handling potential abandonment cases while protecting both residents' rights and Tuntum's assets and ensuring the efficient use of social housing stock.

### 2. Policy statement and aims

- 2.1 To provide clear guidance on identifying and managing abandoned properties.
- 2.2 To ensure compliance with legal requirements regarding abandonment.
- 2.3 To protect residents' rights while safeguarding Tuntum's properties.
- 2.4 To minimise void periods and associated costs.
- 2.5 To maintain accurate records of abandonment cases.
- 2.6 To ensure a proactive approach to resident welfare, recognising that 'abandonment' may be a sign of vulnerability, hospitalisation, or death.

### 3. Legislation or regulatory requirements

This policy complies with:

- 3.1 The Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 (as amended)
- 3.2 Protection from Eviction Act 1977
- 3.3 Housing Act 1988 and Housing Act 1996
- 3.4 Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR)
- 3.5 Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- 3.6 Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977
- 3.7 Human Rights Act 1998

### 4. Scope

This policy applies to:



- 4.1 All Tuntum residents (including General Needs, Supported Housing, and Leaseholders)
- 4.2 Housing management staff
- 4.3 Asset Management Services staff
- 4.4 Support staff working with residents

## **5. Definitions:**

- 5.1 Abandonment: The voluntary surrender of a legal right, specifically an interest in land or property (tenancy or license) without formal notification to the landlord.
- 5.2 Notice to Quit (NTQ): Formal notice requiring minimum 28 days + 1 day notice period to end a periodic tenancy.
- 5.3 Reasonable Belief: Evidence suggesting a property has been abandoned based on physical inspections and external verifications.
- 5.4 Implied Surrender: Occurs when the actions of both the landlord and the tenant indicate that they both agree the tenancy has ended (e.g., keys handed in)

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **6.1 Housing Officers:**

- 6.1.1 Investigate potential abandonment cases within 2 working days of a report.
- 6.1.2 Make reasonable enquiries to establish abandonment.
- 6.1.3 Issue appropriate notices (NTQ or Abandonment Notices).
- 6.1.4 Maintain documentation and photographic evidence.

### **6.2 Asset Management Services:**

- 6.2.1 Secure abandoned properties to prevent squatting or vandalism.
- 6.2.2 Change locks when authorized by the Housing Manager.
- 6.2.3 Conduct an inventory of abandoned possessions.

## **7. Policy - Core Principles & Objectives**

### **7.1 Investigation Process:**

- 7.1.1 Conduct a 'carding' visit (posting a letter to the tenant asking for contact)
- 7.1.2 Contact family/friend/Next of Kin references
- 7.1.3 Check with support services/agencies and the Local Authority (Council Tax/Housing Benefit)
- 7.1.4 Verify benefit claims status and check for recent rent payments
- 7.1.5 Interview neighboring residents
- 7.1.6 Check with local hospitals and prisons
- 7.1.7 Document all enquiries made on the housing management system

### **7.2 Notice Requirements:**

- 7.2.1 Issue 28 days + 1 day Notice to Quit (or a 7-day Abandonment Notice if permitted by the specific tenancy type)
- 7.2.2 End notice on Sunday/Monday at 12 noon



- 7.2.3 Include appropriate covering letter explaining the consequences of non-response
- 7.2.4 Maintain certificate of service (and take a photo of the notice posted on the door)

### 7.3 Property Security and Goods:

- 7.3.1 Change locks after notice expiry if no contact and a 'Reasonable Belief' of abandonment is maintained.
- 7.3.2 Comply with the Torts (Interference with Goods) Act 1977: Store goods for a minimum of 28 days (or longer for high-value items).
- 7.3.3 Serve a 'Notice of Intention to Sell or Dispose of Goods' to the tenant's last known address.
- 7.3.4 Add security notice if property left insecure.

### 7.4 Vulnerable Residents:

- 7.5 If the resident is known to be vulnerable, a referral to Social Services must be made before any action to repossess is finalised.

## 8. Monitoring, including audit and review

8.1 This policy will be:

- 8.1.1 Reviewed every three years.
- 8.1.2 Updated based on legislation changes.
- 8.1.3 Approved by Board when significant amendments are made.

8.2 We will regularly monitor abandonment cases via the Void Management performance indicators.

8.3 We will always consider staff and customer feedback.

## 9. Procedure

9.1 Detailed procedures for this policy are available as separate documents.

## 10. Equality Impact Assessment

10.1 Tuntum is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will make reasonable adjustments to the policy to recognise, accommodate and support individual needs where needed. This Policy adheres to Tuntum's approach to Equality and Diversity. All staff members will take a proactive approach to ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated differently as a direct or indirect result of this Policy.

## 11. References

RELATED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	Link to reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Landlord &amp; Tenant Act 1985</li><li>• Protection from Eviction Act 1977</li><li>• Housing Act 1988 / 1996</li><li>• Social Housing Regulator Standards</li></ul>	



RELATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tenancy Agreements</li><li>• Tenancy Management Procedure</li><li>• Void Property Management Policy</li><li>• Asset Management Services Procedures</li><li>• Data Protection Policy</li><li>• Safeguarding Policy</li></ul>	

## 12. Contacts

Below is a list of key contacts who can provide support, guidance, and access to relevant information.

- General Housing Team ([generalhousingteam@tantum.co.uk](mailto:generalhousingteam@tantum.co.uk))
- Asset Management ([assetmanagement@tantum.co.uk](mailto:assetmanagement@tantum.co.uk))
- Customer Services Team ([admin@tantum.co.uk](mailto:admin@tantum.co.uk))

**Internal control not for publication:**

Policy changes	
Policy version	Proposed changes