

Tenure Policy

How are our values demonstrated/supported through this policy?	We do what's right – we provide clear, lawful and transparent occupancy arrangements so residents understand their rights, responsibilities and the type of accommodation they occupy.
	We work with heart – we use tenure as a supportive framework to help residents sustain accommodation, build independence and move on positively wherever possible.
	We build real connection – we explain occupancy arrangements clearly at sign-up and throughout a resident's stay, working with residents, commissioners, local authorities and partners to prevent homelessness and support planned move-on.
Policy holder	Housing Improvement Lead
Equity, Diversity & Inclusion implications of this policy	This policy supports fair and consistent treatment of all residents and applicants. Staff must consider individual needs, vulnerabilities, communication requirements and protected characteristics when explaining tenure, issuing notices, taking enforcement action or supporting move-on. Reasonable adjustments and accessible communication must be provided where needed.
Youth Voice consideration. (e.g.how does this policy meet our youth voice strategy?)	Residents should be helped to understand their occupancy agreement in clear language, including what it means for their rights, responsibilities, support, rent/service charges and move-on. Feedback from residents and young people should be used to improve how we explain tenure and housing rights.
Version Control	Version number: 01
Review Information	First published: July 2026 Reviewed: New policy Next Review Date: July 2029
Is policy owner satisfied that this policy meets requirements/	Yes
Forum/Working group this policy has been to for review	Housing Improvement Project Team
Does this policy require approval from the Extended Leadership Team?	No
Policy requires approval from Director	Yes, in lieu of Director in post, this policy was approved by the Housing Improvement Project Team in September 2026

Version control

Version #	Date of review	Reviewer	Summary of changes	
			Location of change e.g. paragraph no. or section heading	Change made
01	July 2026	CC	Whole policy	New policy drafted to define YMCA DLG tenure

				types and management approach.
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1. What is this policy about?

1.1 Purpose

YMCA DownsLink Group (YMCA DLG) provides accommodation to children, young people and adults at risk across a range of supported housing, move-on and general needs settings. This policy explains the types of tenure we use, when each tenure is appropriate, and how we manage occupancy arrangements fairly, consistently and lawfully.

- ensure residents receive the correct written agreement before they occupy accommodation;
- make sure residents understand their rights and responsibilities;
- support tenancy sustainment, positive behaviour and planned move-on;
- manage breaches, notices and endings of occupation proportionately and in line with the relevant agreement;
- maintain accurate records on housing management and case management systems.

2. Who needs to read this policy?

This policy applies to all YMCA DLG staff and managers involved in allocating, letting, managing, supporting, charging for, reviewing or ending accommodation. This includes Housing and Community Services teams, Rents and Finance colleagues, Asset and Maintenance colleagues, Safeguarding, Quality and Compliance, and senior leaders with responsibility for housing services. It should be read alongside local service specifications, occupancy agreements and related housing policies and procedures.

3. Policy principles

- YMCA DLG will use tenure arrangements that are appropriate to the accommodation, support model, property ownership or management agreement, commissioning requirements and legal status of the occupation.
- We will not use tenure to avoid our responsibilities as a landlord or managing agent.
- We will explain the agreement in plain language, provide residents with a copy of their signed agreement, and make sure staff understand which agreement applies before taking action about rent, behaviour, access, abandonment, notice or possession.
- Our approach is based on fairness, transparency, prevention of homelessness, resident safety, regulatory compliance, effective use of housing stock and positive move-on.
- Any decision to refuse, change, renew, transfer or end occupation must be proportionate, evidenced, recorded and authorised at the correct level.
- This policy also supports YMCA DLG's compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards, particularly the Tenancy Standard and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

3.1 Tenure types used by YMCA DLG

YMCA DLG may use the following tenure or occupancy arrangements, depending on the accommodation and service model:

- **Excluded licence agreements** – commonly used in supported housing, hostel-style or shared accommodation where residents receive housing-related support and YMCA DLG requires the ability to manage accommodation intensively and safely.

- **Licence agreements** – used where occupation is permission to occupy rather than a tenancy, including some temporary or short-term accommodation models.
- **Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs)** – used where residents occupy self-contained or general needs accommodation and the accommodation does not require the same level of intensive management.
- **Assured or other tenancy arrangements** – used only where legally required, contractually required or agreed through a property ownership, lease or management arrangement.
- **Emergency or temporary access arrangements** – used where accommodation is provided quickly to respond to immediate need, with the appropriate agreement completed as soon as possible.

3.2 Choosing the correct tenure

The correct tenure must be confirmed before sign-up. Staff must consider the accommodation type, whether support is integral to the accommodation offer, whether the accommodation is shared or self-contained, the resident group, commissioning requirements, property ownership, management agreements, rent setting requirements, and any legal advice or approved template agreements. This decision must be fair, transparent and consistent with the purpose of the accommodation, the resident's needs, the sustainability of the community and the efficient use of YMCA DLG housing stock. Where staff are unsure which agreement applies, they must seek advice from their manager before issuing an agreement.

3.3 Fixed terms, periodic agreements and general needs housing

YMCA DLG normally uses periodic occupancy agreements rather than fixed-term tenancies. Excluded licence agreements usually operate week to week and Assured Shorthold Tenancies usually operate month to month, depending on the property and service model. Fixed-term tenancies will only be used where they are legally appropriate, compatible with the purpose of the accommodation and approved through the relevant management process. Where a fixed-term tenancy is used for social housing, YMCA DLG's usual expectation is that the term will be at least five years. A shorter fixed term must only be used in exceptional circumstances, must not normally be less than two years, and must be supported by clear written reasons. YMCA DLG does not routinely use probationary tenancies. If a probationary tenancy is used, it must be limited to 12 months, or up to 18 months only where reasons are given, the decision is recorded and the resident is offered a review. Where general needs accommodation is provided, including newly acquired properties, the agreement used must be checked against current legal and regulatory requirements before letting, particularly where any proposed tenancy would provide less security than the usual expectation for general needs social housing.

3.4 Fixed-term review, renewal and non-renewal

Where YMCA DLG uses a fixed-term tenancy, the resident must receive clear written information before the tenancy ends. This must explain whether a further tenancy will be offered, the reasons for the decision, any conditions attached to renewal, the resident's right to ask for a review or appeal, and the support available to help them find alternative accommodation if a further tenancy is not offered. Decisions about renewal or non-renewal must take account of the resident's household needs, vulnerability, children in the household, safeguarding, equality duties, tenancy sustainment, community sustainability and the efficient use of housing stock.

3.5 Succession, mutual exchange and tenancy fraud

Discretionary succession rights and mutual exchange are not generally applicable to YMCA DLG's supported accommodation model. Where YMCA DLG provides general needs social housing, staff must check the tenancy agreement, legal status of the accommodation and any relevant SOAS or specialist occupancy agreement before responding to a succession or mutual exchange request. If discretionary succession applies, the decision must be made fairly, consistently and in writing, taking account of household circumstances, vulnerability, children, occupation history, legal requirements and the

purpose of the accommodation. If mutual exchange is permitted for relevant general needs tenants, YMCA DLG will provide clear information about the service, eligibility, application process, publicity or exchange route, support available and reasons why consent may be refused. Requests must not be refused informally. Staff must seek management advice, record the decision and provide a clear written response. YMCA DLG will also take reasonable steps to prevent, identify and respond to tenancy or occupancy fraud, including false applications, unauthorised occupation, subletting, abandonment or misuse of accommodation. Concerns must be recorded, investigated proportionately and managed in line with the relevant agreement and safeguarding requirements.

3.6 Reviews, complaints and appeals

Residents and prospective residents must be told how to raise concerns, request a review or make a complaint about the type of agreement offered, the length of any fixed-term tenancy, a renewal or non-renewal decision, the way tenure has been explained, a decision that affects their occupation, or the support offered to sustain or move on from accommodation. Complaints must be managed through YMCA DLG's Complaints Policy and, where a specific review or appeal process applies under another policy or agreement, staff must explain that process clearly and record the outcome.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 All staff

All staff must understand the occupancy agreement that applies to the residents they support or manage. Staff must explain key rights and responsibilities clearly, record relevant decisions and contacts, follow approved procedures, and seek management advice before taking any action that could affect a resident's occupation.

4.2 Managers

Supported Housing Managers, Deputy Managers and relevant service managers are responsible for ensuring the correct agreement is used, sign-up is completed properly, tenure-related decisions are recorded, breaches are managed consistently, notices are authorised correctly, and staff have access to the guidance and templates they need.

4.3 Heads of Service and Directors

Heads of Service and Directors are responsible for oversight of tenure management, approval of higher-risk decisions, consistency across services, compliance with regulatory expectations, and ensuring any legal advice is obtained where needed.

4.4 Rents, Finance and systems colleagues

Rents, Finance and systems colleagues are responsible for ensuring rent accounts, charges, tenancy keys, property records and movement forms accurately reflect the tenure and occupancy dates. They will support services to manage rent liability, arrears, credits, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit implications and former resident accounts.

5. How we apply this policy

5.1 Before occupation starts

Before a resident moves in, staff must confirm eligibility, suitability, risk, support needs and the correct occupancy agreement. The resident must be given time to read the agreement and ask questions. Staff

should explain the type of agreement, rent and service charges, notice requirements, house rules, support expectations, access arrangements, repairs reporting, complaints, data sharing, safeguarding, reasonable adjustments, advocacy or representative support, and what may put the accommodation at risk. Information should be provided in a clear and accessible way, with reasonable adjustments made where needed.

5.2 During occupation

During occupation, YMCA DLG will manage tenures in a way that supports residents to sustain accommodation and prepare for independence. Staff will use support planning, risk management, rent conversations, warnings or interventions, safeguarding responses and partnership working to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity. Breaches of occupancy agreements must be addressed promptly, consistently and proportionately. Where a resident has vulnerabilities, disability, illness, caring responsibilities, children, communication needs or other circumstances that affect their ability to sustain accommodation, staff must consider reasonable adjustments and additional support before enforcement action is escalated.

5.3 Transfers and move-on

Where a resident transfers room, project or accommodation type, staff must follow the relevant transfer procedure and check whether a new occupancy agreement is needed. The transfer procedure must be consistent with this policy, including the requirement that an existing social housing tenant should not lose security of tenure solely because they move within YMCA DLG accommodation, unless there is a clear legal, contractual or regulatory reason. Rent accounts, movement forms and system records must be updated promptly. Planned move-on should be discussed early and regularly. Residents should be supported to understand how rent arrears, former resident arrears, Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, notice periods and property condition may affect move-on. Where YMCA DLG decides not to offer further accommodation, staff must provide timely advice and assistance on alternative accommodation options, including referral routes, local authority homelessness support, move-on planning and relevant partner agencies.

5.4 Ending occupation

Occupation may end because a resident gives notice, moves on, transfers, abandons the accommodation, dies, or YMCA DLG serves notice in line with the relevant agreement. Staff must follow the correct process for the tenure type, use approved notices and templates, record reasons and evidence, complete movement forms, manage keys and belongings, arrange inspections, and update rent and case management systems. Any decision to serve notice must consider vulnerability, safeguarding, equality, proportionality, risk, reasonable adjustments, prevention of unnecessary eviction and alternative options to prevent homelessness where possible. Written communication must explain the decision, next steps, relevant timescales and how the resident can raise concerns or make a complaint.

5.5 Decants, redevelopment and temporary moves

Where residents need to move temporarily because of major works, redevelopment, emergency repairs, health and safety concerns or business continuity arrangements, staff must protect the resident's existing rights as far as the agreement and circumstances allow. Residents must not be offered a shorter or less secure agreement simply because they have moved for works or operational reasons. The reason for the move, the expected timescale, support arrangements, rent implications and return or move-on options must be confirmed in writing wherever possible.

5.6 Access, safety and repairs

Staff must respect residents' rights to occupy their accommodation and must only access rooms or homes in line with the agreement, legal requirements and safety procedures. Emergency access may be required where there is an immediate risk to life, safety, property or safeguarding. Planned access for repairs, inspections, compliance checks or void preparation must be explained and recorded.

5.7 Records and assurance

Accurate records must be kept on the appropriate housing management and case management systems. This includes agreement type, sign-up documents, rent account information, notices, warnings, interventions, abandonment checks, move-on plans, forwarding addresses, inspections, keys, belongings and any management approvals. Tenure data will be used to support compliance reporting, performance monitoring, audit, resident safety and learning. Periodic assurance checks should confirm that the agreement type recorded matches the accommodation type, service model, rent account, signed agreement and current resident status.

6. Consumer Standards;

This policy has been cross-referenced against the Consumer Standards action plan and specifically addresses the tenure matters identified under the Tenancy Standard and related transparency, accessibility and landlord service requirements.

Consumer Standards matter	Where addressed in this policy
Types of tenancies or occupancy agreements granted	Sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 define excluded licences, licences, ASTs, assured or other tenancy arrangements, emergency arrangements and how the correct agreement is selected.
Length of fixed terms and periodic arrangements	Section 3.3 confirms that YMCA DLG normally uses periodic agreements and does not routinely use fixed-term tenancy renewals or probationary tenancies.
Circumstances for granting a particular agreement type	Sections 3.1 and 3.2 set out the decision-making criteria, including accommodation type, support model, resident needs, property ownership, commissioning and legal requirements.
Appeals, complaints and review routes	Section 3.5 explains how residents and prospective residents can raise concerns, request a review or complain about tenure decisions or the type of agreement offered.
Vulnerability, disability, illness, households with children and reasonable stability	Sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4 require clear communication, reasonable adjustments, advocacy or representative support, support planning and proportionality before escalation.
Advice and assistance where further accommodation is not offered	Section 5.3 requires move-on planning, advice and assistance on alternative accommodation, local authority homelessness support and partner referral routes.
Succession, mutual exchange and tenancy fraud	Section 3.5 sets out how discretionary succession, SOAS or specialist agreements, mutual exchange requests, support information and tenancy fraud concerns must be checked, recorded and responded to.
Decants, redevelopment, emergency moves and no loss of security	Sections 5.3 and 5.5 confirm that residents should not lose security because they move within YMCA DLG accommodation, or because they have moved for works, redevelopment, emergency repairs or operational reasons.
General needs, newly acquired properties and move-on/reletting arrangements	Sections 3.2, 3.3 and 5.3 require the agreement type to be checked before letting, including for newly acquired general needs properties, transfers, move-on arrangements and reletting decisions.
Fixed-term renewal, non-renewal, written notice and appeals	Sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6 set out the requirements for fixed-term length, exceptional shorter terms, written notice before

	expiry, renewal or non-renewal decisions and review or appeal routes.
Clear, accessible information about rights and landlord services	Sections 5.1, 5.4 and 6 require plain language, accessible communication, written explanations, complaints information and clear next steps.
Assurance, evidence and policy review	Sections 4.3 and 5.7 require oversight, compliance monitoring, accurate records and periodic checks that tenure data matches agreements, rent accounts and resident status.

7. Further information

This policy should be read alongside the following YMCA DLG policies, procedures and documents:

- Allocations and Lettings Policy
- Void Management Policy
- Rent Setting Policy
- Income Collection and Arrears Management Policy
- Warnings Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young Adults policy
- Complaints Policy
- Approved occupancy agreement templates and local service specifications.