

SUBJECT: HOUSING TENANCY FRAUD POLICY

DIRECTORATE: HOUSING AND INVESTMENT

REPORT AUTHOR: MARIANNE UPTON, TENANCY SERVICE MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To present the reviewed Housing Tenancy Fraud Policy document.

2. Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP) Consultation

LTP have been involved in this area of work by being consulted on the content of the policy and providing feedback.

The Panel had a workshop on 19th February 2025 to look at the policy & collate feedback.

They confirmed that they found the policy easy to read and provides a clear understanding of preventing, identifying, and acting on tenancy fraud.

2.1 LTP requested the following:

- On page 5, the start of the last paragraph to be reworded from “we accept” to “we understand” – this was updated
- On the final page, a brief explanation for why references, legal frameworks, and regulatory framework is included, e.g. why is it important to the policy? – this was updated to be clearer
- Adding a section in the policy that explains where an individual can get support either from the Council or from other extra support – this was not added because it relates to procedures and information to the public, but it has been requested that web page is updated to include this
- On the website there is a link to different forms for reporting and these could be included – the link to the relevant web page was added
- Adding a section for if you suspect someone/yourself is a victim of fraud tenancy then can report it - this was not added because it relates to procedures and information to the public, and it is already on the web page

3. Background

3.1 As a Registered Provider of social housing, we have obligations under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 to identify and prevent tenancy fraud.

3.2 It is also a requirement of the Regulator’s Tenancy Standard that we make every effort to identify and prevent tenancy fraud.

3.3 This is a reviewed version of the Housing Tenancy Fraud Policy that was created in November 2020.

3.4 This policy was present to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 17 March 2025.

4. Policy Content

4.1 The policy provides the legal and regulatory context for managing tenancy fraud.

4.2 The Policy makes clear reference to measures we will take to identify, prevent, and minimise the risk of tenancy fraud occurring.

4.3 It reflects a clear intent that we will take decisive action where we have evidence that fraud has taken place, including supporting prosecutions.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's Reduce All Kinds of Inequality

To have a fair and consistent approach to tackling tenancy fraud that may otherwise deprive people in housing need waiting to be housed.

5.2 Let's Deliver Quality Housing

Quality housing is not solely about the condition of the property. It is also about making a positive environment where people can thrive. This includes a responsibility for making the best use of our housing stock and ensuring it is well-managed so that tenants can clearly see that we care about delivering an excellent, fair service.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are potential financial implications to all forms of fraud, but this policy does not add to what is already currently done to address tenancy fraud.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are legal implications of this policy in terms of the potential resource impact on the Legal Services Team of any increase in enforcement action arising from a proactive approach to tackling tenancy fraud.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

There may be circumstances where occupants of a property may be affected by enforcement action when they were an unwitting participant in fraudulent activity. The policy commits to risk assessing these individually and providing a minimum level of support depending on their needs and the circumstances.

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored

There are no risks associated with the policy.

7.2 (ii) Key Risks Associated with the Preferred Approach

N/A.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Executive is asked to consider approval of the Housing Tenancy Fraud Policy.

Is this a key decision?

No

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

1

List of Background Papers:

Tenancy Fraud Policy

Lead Officer:

Marianne Upton, Tenancy Services Manager
Email address: marianne.upton@lincoln.gov.uk