

# CLEARING HOUSE

## Case Closure & Reopen Policy

### Monitoring

This policy is reviewed every two years or in line with service changes, whichever comes first.

### 1. Introduction

Tenants in RSI properties who started their tenancy prior to 1st Sept 2008 did so with the expectation that there would not be a requirement to move on from that tenancy in the event that they no longer required the support of the TST. Many of these tenants required support for a period of time after moving in, but are now managing their tenancy without the need for continuing support from TST. These RSI tenants can be referred to as dormant, as they remain in RSI properties but do not receive the TST support that other RSI tenants receive. This protocol does not apply to any tenants who were issued with Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) starting after 1st Sept 2008.

Case closure is the formal process of recognising that the tenant no longer requires TST support but due to the nature of their tenancy (an assured tenancy) will remain in the property. Case closures occur following an agreement between TST and the Landlord.

### 2. Case closure guidance

The TST's own support needs assessments and the quarterly outcomes submitted to Clearing House should be considered when assessing the decision to close a tenant's case. This information should indicate a reduction in the tenant's support needs and need for on-going TST support.

In order for a case closure to be appropriate the tenant should:

- Be managing their income and outgoings with no support (such as benefits, rent and utilities).
- Have a reduced requirement for support with only minimal visits and contact from TST (quarterly or less).
- Where necessary be consistently and well engaged with local agencies around their needs and the tenant is fully aware of local services that can provide support and meet their needs.
- Be completing agreed support plan targets with little or no support from TST.

Case closure would not be appropriate when:

- The tenant still requires regular, frequent support from TST (monthly or weekly contact).
- The tenant is facing or at risk of eviction.
- The tenant has rent arrears that they require support to address.
- There are current issues that threaten the tenancy or tenant (e.g. ASB, harassment).
- The tenant has recently been contacted by outreach services relating to street activity (bedded down or begging, for example).

### **3. Staged reduction in support**

It is important that case closures are made in a planned and considered way by gradually reducing the frequency of support to the tenant over a period of three months prior to making the case closure report. A staged approach to the reduction of support will enable TST to ensure the tenants ability to manage with less support and that other community based services are satisfactorily meeting the tenant's needs.

Any services that are working closely with the tenant (such as mental health services, care providers) should be closely consulted and updated regarding any plan to reduce and eventually end TST support for the tenant.

There may be occasions where the tenant is unwilling to engage with TST support and wishes their case to be closed but the circumstances dictate that this is not possible (e.g. tenancy at risk, on-going ASB, tenant has current support needs that are not being well managed, etc.) It is expected that where this is the case, TST will keep the case open until the tenant is supported to engage or the tenancy comes to an end and the tenant moves on.

There may be times when a tenant wishes to continue receiving TST support but it is the judgement of the TST worker that the tenant can safely be supported by other community based services (or has no active need for support). It is expected that TST workers will recommend case closure after addressing the issue of dependency on the TST service.

### **4. Process**

TST will submit a 'support case closure' report to Clearing House via the online system. This can be found on the 'Nomination/Tenancy' record of the client whose case will be closed. Prior to submitting the case closure report and confirming any case closure the TST team should:

- Complete a staged reduction in support with appropriate involvement of other services and care providers involved in the tenant's case.

- Obtain consent and agreement from the Housing Provider to close the case, this will be confirmed in the online report submitted by TST. TST should have agreement from the Housing Provider that the tenancy is not regarded as at risk.
- Check with the Clearing House to see if the tenant has recently been observed engaged in any street-based activity (e.g. rough sleeping, begging, etc.) as this may require TST to continue to provide support to the tenant.
- TST must have informed the tenant of the decision and allowed time for an appeal to be lodged (within 10 working days of the decision being communicated) and dealt with (within 10 working days of the appeal being received).

Once the case closure has been submitted and formally accepted by the Clearing House, TST should meet with the tenant six months after case closure to review the decision and re-activate support if necessary.

### **5. Re-opening closed cases**

The Clearing House will maintain records of all closed RSI cases and will meet at least annually with Housing Providers to check whether they are aware of any problems pertaining to these tenancies (e.g. arrears, ASB) that may require support to be re-opened and also to confirm whether the tenant is still in the property.

Housing Providers will also be able to contact the Clearing House on an ad-hoc basis to alert them to any other problems with RSI tenants who have had their cases closed.

RSI tenants who have had their cases closed will, for all intents and purposes, revert to having the same status as general needs tenants. In certain instances where a tenant requires only minimal on-going support or a brief intervention, the Housing Provider should look to refer the tenant to a local floating support service. If there is no floating (or other) support service available locally, the Housing Provider will contact the Clearing House. Clearing House will then approach the relevant TST manager with the Housing Provider's request to meet with the tenant and re-establish TST support.

In the instance that Clearing House receives a notification of a Bedded down contact (BDC) from the CHAIN system and the tenant has had their case closed, Clearing House will notify the TST that covers the patch and the landlord. TST will be required to undertake an assessment of the client with a view to reopening the case and/or supporting the client and landlord with move on options.

Where the Housing Provider and TST agree that a case needs to be re-opened urgently, e.g. due to impending legal action or an increased risk to the tenant's welfare if the tenant does not receive support, the case can be re-opened. However, there must be an exchange of information or handover between the TST and the Housing

Provider to ensure that TST have the most relevant and up-to-date information regarding the tenant's support needs. The TST must inform the Clearing House that they have re-opened the case, so that the Clearing House can update the database.

The Clearing House will gather statistical information from Housing Providers and produce relevant reports that will allow TST and GLA to examine the extent of any tenancy failure amongst closed cases and consider what may need to change in the operation of this protocol or in the work of the TST to ensure that unplanned departures are managed appropriately and reduced to minimum.

## **6. Dispute resolution**

Any dispute between tenant, TST or Housing Provider on whether a case should be closed or re-opened can be dealt with using the Clearing House's dispute resolution procedure. Clearing House will endeavour to mediate in any dispute in order to ensure the best outcome for the tenant.

## **7. Getting help**

For help and advice about this policy or procedure please contact a member of the Clearing House Team on 020 3856 6008 or at [ch@mungos.org](mailto:ch@mungos.org).

## **8. Related policies, references and forms**

Complaints and Appeals policy & procedure