



Tenants' Voice Scrutiny Panel

Tenants Voice Scrutiny Panel

Scrutiny of North Star's Tenancy Sustainment Policy

September 2018

Introduction

The Tenants Voice Scrutiny Panel (TVSP) is an independent group of residents who carry out resident-led scrutiny of North Star.

As part of the current scrutiny it was decided to focus on the **Tenancy Sustainment Policy** and determine whether the policy is fit for purpose, up to date and value for money. There is a general awareness by the Scrutiny Panel and North Star management, that there has been an increase in tenancy failure during the first 12 months of the tenancy. There is also an awareness that the roll out of Universal Credit may contribute to tenancy failure, although more research needs to be carried out in order to reach a final judgement.

How to read this report

- This report is designed to be read by tenants, staff, board members and anyone who is interested in North Star.
- The report begins with a summary in which our key findings have been highlighted.
- The summary is followed by a set of recommendations, which are set out in tables that are numbered and in bold. (There are currently six recommendations set out.)
- Below each recommendation, we have provided some background so the reader can understand the policies, systems, arrangements and staff we are talking about.
- Following the background, we have described the scrutiny methods used to help us reach our recommendations.

- The final box contains the response from North Star Senior Management Team to each of our recommendations. If they disagree with any, their explanation why is in this box, and the Board may decide to call the TVSP and the Group Senior Management Team together for further discussions.
- We are completely independent of the Group Senior Management Team and our main relationship is with the North Star Board.
- We think it is sensible and efficient to let the managers prepare a response and allow for agreed changes to be made before our report goes to the North Star Board.
- At the end of this report there is an Action Plan, which shows how the management team will respond to our recommendations, who is responsible, and the timescales.
- We will use the Action Plan as a tool to monitor, track agreed improvements and to make sure that North Star carries out its commitments.
- We will meet with managers for progress reports and will use our webpage and the tenant magazine to keep everyone informed of developments.

How we chose the Tenancy Sustainment Policy

TVSP did an exercise using the scoring matrix* to select topics they looked at key documents and written policies. *see appendix 1

TVSP also looked at North Star's measurements of performance against their key business objectives (key performance indicators – KPI).

How TVSP carried out the scrutiny

TVSP have access to the information needed to carry out the scrutiny, except for certain confidential and legally protected information, as well as to the relevant North Star staff.

TVSP meet regularly to discuss the project and used the following methods to carry out this scrutiny exercise:

- **Interviews with:**
 - Azhir Bashir – Development Assistant
 - Nicola Barrett – Business Support Officer
 - Sara Herrington – Head of Customers
 - Caroline Dargue – Housing Officer
 - Dorothy Hague – Housing Officer

Kirsty Smith – Housing Officer
Keith Hadlet – Housing Officer
Katherine Allen – Information and Data Officer
Paul Wood – Interim Group ICT Manager
Graham Eason – Tenant Advisor
Sharon Harland – Tenant Advisor
Helen Sharkey – Tenant Connector
Andrea Peacock – Welfare Benefits Officer

Information analysed:

- North Star's measurements of performance against their key business objectives (key performance indicators – KPI's).
- Void information/void loss/financial implications for North Star.
- Conditions of properties with a high turnover.
- Reasons for tenancy failure, particularly during the first 12 months.
- Researched how other Housing Associations deal with tenancy sustainability.
- Researched North Star budget allocations.
- Looked at the previous years of tenancy sustainability.
- Tenant Surveys, particularly in areas which have the highest turnover.
- Government Policy affecting tenancy turnover due to benefit changes as well as the roll out of Universal Credit.
- Reviews of relevant North Star documents and webpages.
- Reading of relevant documents and webpages of Coast and Country, Thirteen and Gentoo. Research revealed that these Housing Associations were not entirely transparent in revealing their Tenancy Sustainability Policies. Please see reading list.

Findings

- ***The challenges for tenancy sustainability:***

During the research carried out by TVSP, it was noted that some areas were more challenging than others. Gresham in central Middlesbrough, Belle Vue in Hartlepool and Thornaby town properties were deemed to be **"Difficult to Let"**.

After reviewing the 'Referral reasons, Incentives & Hardship Fund Spreadsheet 2016-17', which details the incentives/ extras being used to maintain tenancies, TVSP found that these were not always successful.

One of the reasons appears to be that there are many older properties within these areas that are considered to be less desirable for future

tenants. There is also evidence that voids are increasing in these three areas.

It is evident that the average tenancy in 'hard to let areas' is around 12 months. This could be due to an increase of more diverse communities where people are more likely to move after a short period of time, due to work, zero hour contracts, greater choice of housing, financial or family circumstances. In some areas, notably Hartlepool and Middlesbrough, it could be concluded that incentives may not be enough to maintain tenancies.

Hartlepool has the highest percentage of tenancies failing in the first year. This may be due to increasing competition from other landlords. It was also noted that Gresham in Middlesbrough has seen an increase in voids over the last two years.

The number of voids is a concern to North Star management. It has an adverse effect on their budgets due to loss of rental income. TVSP acknowledge that Housing Management and Board are currently looking into this.

TVSP recognised that increasing competition within the rental market meant that some private landlords were offering better incentives such as newer properties without bonds, as well as slightly lower rents and longer tenancies. It was also noted that in some private sector rental markets, a 3 bedroom house with a garden and garage would be available at the same rent as a North Star property without such amenities.

It was encouraging to note that North Star maintains both an Incentive and Fund** in order to encourage tenants to accept a tenancy or to maintain an existing one. This can be provided by offering items such as white goods and carpets. North Star can also offer some weeks rent free; however, this can be provisional given that Universal Credit currently takes several weeks to process. **See appendix 2

The current Tenant Incentive/ Sustainability and Hardship Funds are budgeted at:

Endeavour; - Difficult to Let £37k - Hardship £9k	Teesdale: -Difficult to let £7k -Hardship £4k
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Summary

In conclusion, the group felt that owing to North Star having some hard to let properties, there being a lot of competition in the housing market along with private landlords being able to offer a wide range of incentives, this particular subject was challenging to scrutinise.

Overall the group were pleased to see that North Star hold a Hardship Fund and that this was used to help those tenants most in need and that an Incentive Fund is in place to assist with letting void properties that may seem less desirable to prospective tenants. The group appreciate whilst having a fund in place is costing North Star money initially, the reward for that is longer tenancies and fewer void properties.

TVSP have made recommendations below based on the information and evidence provided, as detailed in this report and feel that the roll out of Universal Credit may increase the need for these funds to be reviewed and analysed in more detail.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

- To consider the impact of Universal Credit on vulnerable tenants and how this may affect tenant sustainability due to rent arrears caused by computer literacy and accessibility issues.

Background

- Hull County Council's Digital Champion Project identified this challenge and received funding for tablets and laptops from the North East Procurement Fund and Barclays Bank.

Method

- Interviewed relevant staff
- Hull County Council's website. Please see reading list.
- Research into how other housing associations approach this issue.

Observation

- Further to recommendation 1 the use of Community Hubs and volunteers as Digital Champions could help tenants access funds that they are eligible for.

Senior Management Team response:

Recommendation Accepted – action completed.

Understanding the impact of universal credit on vulnerable tenants is a continuing priority. We have an operational working group in place that meets each month and the remit of the group includes looking at the impact of universal credit on both tenants and North Star. The role of the group also includes making recommendations on any additional support and resources that may be required. In all areas where we have properties, we have developed a directory of services and support available to tenants. This directory includes details of community hubs and available funding.

We have employed an additional Welfare Benefits Officer which will assist further in this and are reviewing our current housing officer patches to further develop our approach to neighbourhood management co-ordination and share workload. These will further support our working with UC affected vulnerable tenants.

CSMT/TVSP discussions –

Recommendation 2

- The current Tenancy Termination Form needs to be /revised.

Background

- TVSP found that the existing Tenancy Termination Form was not fit for purpose.

Method

- Reviewed the current Tenancy Termination Form
- Interviews with the relevant North Star staff

Senior Management Team response:

Recommendation Accepted – action completed.

The form was reviewed in June 2018 as part of the review of void processes, to update the content of the document and improve understanding of reasons for termination.

GSMT/TVSP discussions –

Recommendation 3

- To provide the Hyperlink onto the North Star website and the Tenant Portal for the You Tube Video on how to complete application forms for Universal Credit.

Background

- There is a YouTube video available that shows information on how to complete a Universal Credit application form.

Method

- YouTube 'Universal Credit full service overview'
 - Link : https://youtu.be/4WgJU8Y_bQg

Senior Management Team response:

Recommendation Accepted – completion date December 2018.

The link is currently available on our website and will be discussed for inclusion also onto the tenant portal when it goes live.

GSMT/TVSP discussions -

Recommendation 4

- To look again at the Tenancy Sustainability Incentive and Hardship Funds with a view of increasing them to help with the roll out of Universal Credit.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given that Universal Credit is possibly being rolled out across all areas by the end of 2018, there may be a need to increase the Hardship Fund.
<u>Method</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spreadsheet review Interviews with the relevant North Star staff
<u>Senior Management Team response:</u> Recommendation Accepted – completion date December 2018 Budgets allocation is reviewed annually. The budget for both Tenant Incentive and Hardship Fund were increased for 2018/19 to reflect the wider rollout of Universal Credit. Budgets for 2019/18 will be discussed later this financial year and we will consider any variation of these budgets reflecting our learning from this financial year’s activity.
<u>CSMT/TVSP discussions -</u>

Recommendation 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current Referral reasons, Incentives & Hardship Fund 2016-17 spreadsheet to enable a clearer analysis of the benefits and impacts that both funds bring to the Organisation and the tenancy sustainability strategy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TVSP found that there is no analysis of the benefits and impacts of these funds.
<u>Method</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Referral reasons, Incentives & Hardship Fund 2016-17 spreadsheet Interviews with the relevant North Star staff
<u>Senior Management Team response:</u> Recommendation Accepted – completion date December 2018. The spreadsheet will be reviewed in accordance with TVSP recommendation.
<u>CSMT/TVSP discussions –</u>

Recommendation 6

- Promotional activities to emphasise the support available through Housing Officers and the Welfare Benefits Team for tenants in hardship.

Background

- TVSP identified insufficient information for tenants regarding the financial help that may be available to them.

Method

- Reviews of:
North Stars website, magazine and promotional leaflets.
- Information obtained by TVSP members at the TPAS Conference 2017.

Senior Management Team response:**Recommendation Accepted – completion date October 2018.**

A directory of services available to tenants has been developed for each local authority area This information gives details of support available to tenants provided by North Star, charities and other organisations operating within the area As recommended by TVSP, this information will be promoted on our website, newsletter and at tenants events.

CSMT/TVSP discussions –**Observation 1**

- The types of properties that North Star currently has or might have in the future needs to be reviewed. Research has clearly shown that "Hard to Let" properties do not have gardens that may be affecting their desirability.

Observation 2

- It may be worthwhile to revise and look at the North Star offer for new or prospective tenants. For example the promotion of longer term tenancies, the current reduction of regulated rents, no bond required, possible added incentives such as decoration, carpets and white goods to attract new tenants.

Appendix 1– Scoring Matrix (Choosing a Topic to Scrutinise)

Topic Selection. Criteria for Resident-led Scrutiny for Landlord Services.	Would the subject benefit all customers? (Diversity Impact)	Do National housing standards apply?	Do policies indicate a need for scrutiny (are policies up to date and fit for purpose)?	Does performance or customer feedback indicate a need for scrutiny?	Is financial information available and is it relevant?	Could there be financial implications or impact to the company or the customer? (Value For Money)	Do other organisations have information on the subject (best practice)?	Has any internal audit/work been carried out within the last 12months	Total Score
Scoring Notes. All scores are based on a 0-5 sliding scale. 0 being low, 5 being high.	<i>If the subject benefits all customers, score 5. If the subject benefits few customers, score 0.</i>	<i>If there is Housing Standards, score 5, if there is not, score 0.</i>	<i>If a policy does not exist, or is out of date or not fit for purpose, score 5. If this is up to date or fit for purpose, score 0.</i>	<i>If there is customer feedback, score 5. If there is not customer feedback score 0.</i>	<i>If the financial information has impact or relevance, score 5</i>	<i>If there could be financial implications or impact to the customer or North Star, score 5.</i>	<i>If there is information available, score 5. If there is not, score 0.</i>	<i>If there has been an internal audit or internal works carried out within the last 12 months, score 0.</i>	
Customer Service Team - calls answered within target	5 Notes Benefits all.	5 Notes Customer Service, choice and complaint standard - section 2	2 Notes The policies are up to date, fit for purpose however the KPI's could be reviewed.	5 Notes under performing in July Balance scorecard	0 Notes There is financial information available, but this is not relevant.	5 Notes Phone call cost to the tenant / cost of organisation to recruit	5 Notes Yes	0 Notes CST currently going through a review	27
Tenancy Failure	5 Notes Voids affect the whole company and also effects the neighbours/commu nity.	3 Notes HCA standards (Rent standard / Home standard / Neighbourhood and Community Standard) could apply to tenancy failure. - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-standards	5 Notes North does not have a policy on tenancy failure.	5 Notes Increase in voids, arrears out of target.	5 Notes Financial information on void loss (rent), void renovation, Housing Officer time etc.	5 Notes If there was a reduced tenancy turnover, North Star would generate further income.	5 Notes Benchmarking information available and desktop review.	2 Notes Housing Manager carried out a recent review on tenancy failure	35

Grounds Maintenance	4	5	4	?	5	5	4	3	30
	Notes	Notes	Notes	Notes	Notes		Notes	Notes	
	Approx. 25% pay a service charge for GM. However if the area is unkempt this will affect the community	Neighbourhood and Community Standard 1.1	Policies (contract) in place, however may not be fit for purpose as they aren't carrying out the job specification.	Beth to check		Customer pays the SC.	Information available - however unknown at the moment how beneficial this would be.	On going contract management	

****Appendix 2**

Incentives to maintain tenancies:

16/17

Local Area	Incentive Offered
Redcar	Carpets living room Stairs & 2 bedrooms
Hartlepool	carpet to stairs/back bedroom
Middlesbrough	1 week rent free
Stockton	1 week rent free
Hartlepool	3 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	3 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	carpets
Hartlepool	carpet
Hartlepool	bedroom tax for 6 months
Middlesbrough	2 weeks rent free
Thornaby	Skimming
Thornaby	Paint front door
Thornaby	Paint living room & d/rom
Middlesbrough	carpet to one flight of stairs
Middlesbrough	carpet to living room, bedroom & hall
Stockton	1 week rent free
Middlesbrough	2 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	Carpets to staircase and first floor
Middlesbrough	Carpets to staircase and first floor
Middlesbrough	Carpets throughout
Stockton	Carpets
Stockton	Bedroom tax for 11 weeks
Middlesbrough	Carpets throughout
Middlesbrough	1 week rent free
Middlesbrough	1 week rent free

Middlesbrough	2 weeks rent free
Thornaby	1 weeks rent free
Hartlepool	carpets to hallway, stairs and landing
Hartlepool	carpets to stairs, landing, bedrooms
Hartlepool	Carpets throughout
Thornaby	gas and electric
Middlesbrough	Carpets in lounge and dining room
Hartlepool	Carpets throughout
Hartlepool	Carpets throughout
Thornaby	3 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	2 weeks rent free
Thornaby	Redecoration
Hartlepool	new bin
Evenwood	1 week rent free
Thornaby	1 week rent free
Thornaby	2 weeks rent free
Hartlepool	carpets/lino throughout
Hartlepool	carpets
Middlesbrough	3 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	Carpets throughout
Middlesbrough	2 weeks rent free
Thornaby	7 weeks rent free
Hartlepool	bed/fridge/freezer/settee
Middlesbrough	1 week rent free
Middlesbrough	2 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	Carpets living room, bedroom & Hall
Middlesbrough	1 week rent free
Hartlepool	4 weeks free rent
Hartlepool	green bin

Hartlepoo l	carpets throughout
Hartlepoo l	4 weeks free rent
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Skelton	6 x weeks bedroom tax @ £14.04
Norton Grange	1 week rent free
Hartlepoo l	Carpets throughout
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Thornaby	2 weeks rent free
Stockton	Washing Machine
Middlesb rough	1 week rent free
Hartlepoo l	2 weeks free rent
Thornaby	Bayonet fitting
Stockton	Carpets - ground floor
Middlesb rough	Carpets ground floor & stairs
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Hartlepoo l	1 weeks free rent
Evenwoo d	1 rent free week
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Middlesb rough	Carpets throughout
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Thornaby	Heaters x 3
Middlesb rough	Carpets to ground floor
Hartlepoo l	Carpets to ground floor/lino in kitchen
Middlesb rough	1 week rent free
Middlesb rough	3 weeks rent free
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Evenwoo d	Gates erected (ASB)
Middlesb	Carpets to ground floor and stairs

rough	
Hamstere ly	4 bags of coal
Hartlepoo l	1 weeks free rent
Skelton	Carpets 2 bedrooms
Skelton	1 week free rent
Middlesb rough	carpets stairs, landing and 2 bedrooms
Middlesb rough	1 week rent free
Middlesb rough	2 weeks free rent
Middlesb rough	Carpets to living room, 2beds &stairs
Skinningr ove	Redecoration
Hartlepoo l	
Middlesb rough	

17/18

Local Area	Incentive Offered
	4 weeks free rent
	carpet to bedroom, stairs & landing
	2 weeks rent free
	Carpet on ground floor
	fit overbath shower
	fit overbath shower
	Carpet to lounge
Stockton	Carpet to lounge/diner
Stockton	1 week rent free
Thirsk	1 weeks free rent
Thornaby	2 weeks free rent
Thornaby	Cooker hob
Middlesb rough	carpets to stairs and 2 bedrooms
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
MOD	2 weeks rent free
Hartlepoo l	2 weeks free rent
Middlesb rough	1 week rent free

Middlesbrough	carpet to 3 bedrooms
Middlesbrough	fit dusk to dawn light
Middlesbrough	1 week rent free
Hartlepool	2 weeks free rent
Middlesbrough	carpets to stairs and 2 bedrooms
Middlesbrough	fit overbath shower
Thornaby	3 weeks free rent
Thornaby	Cooker
Middlesbrough	1 week rent free
Middlesbrough	hoarder - support in removing rubbish
Hartlepool	carpets throughout
Hartlepool	4 weeks free rent
Hartlepool	carpets throughout
Thornaby	carpets throughout
Middlesbrough	2 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	3 weeks rent free given
Thornaby	Outside tap
Thornaby	1 weeks rent property in bad state
Thornaby	Bayonet fitting
Thornaby	3 weeks bedroom tax
Middlesbrough	living room carpet
Hartlepool	carpets
Thornaby	1 weeks free rent
Cockfield	cash food and electric
Middlesbrough	carpets in bedrooms and staircase
Darlington	Carpet lounge
Darlington	Carpet lounge
Darlington	Carpet lounge
Darlington	cash food

Middlesbrough	1 weeks rent free
Teesdale	cash - gas and electric
Thornaby	1 weeks free rent
Thornaby	re-decoration 3 rooms
Middlesbrough	Carpets for bedrooms stairs and living room
Middlesbrough	Flooring
Middlesbrough	Carpet lounge
Darlington	Carpet bedrooms
Darlington	Carpets bedroom, lounge, hallway
Thornaby	Redecoration full house
Middlesbrough	3 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	Carpets
Stockton	Carpets
Hartlepool	Partial Carpets
Hartlepool	Partial Carpets
Hartlepool	3 weeks free rent
Hartlepool	green BIN
Thornaby	decoration
Middlesbrough	Carpets
Darlington	Carpet
Stockton	Elec cooker and connection
Middlesbrough	Carpets
Middlesbrough	carpets throughout
Hartlepool	bath
Hartlepool	redec
Hartlepool	partial dec
Hartlepool	partial dec
Hartlepool	redec
Hartlepool	partial dec??

Hartlepoo l	partial dec
Hartlepoo l	partial dec
Thornaby	2 weeks rent free
Thornaby	1 weeks rent free
Thornaby	Full redec
Stockton	1 week rent free
Hartlepoo l	green BIN
Stockton	Carpets
Middlesb rough	2 weeks rent free
Stockton	Carpets upstairs
Middlesb rough	Carpets throughout
Middlesb rough	Carpets throughout
Carlin How	carpets throughout
Hartlepoo l	4 weeks free rent
Darlingto n	1 weeks rent free
Hartlepoo l	decoration works
Hartlepoo l	decoration works
Brotton	Carpets all through
Skinningr ove	Carpets all through
Lingdale	1 week free rent
Middlesb rough	1 week free rent
Thornaby	3 weeks free rent
Thornaby	Carpets all through
Thornaby	2 weeks free rent
Hartlepoo l	1 weeks free rent
Hartlepoo l	2 weeks free rent
Teesdale	Carpets all through
Thornaby	2 weeks rent
Thornaby	1 weeks free rent
Thornaby	1 weeks free rent
Thornaby	1 weeks free rent
Darlingto n	Gas top up
Stockton	1 week free rent
Evenwoo d	1 week free rent

Middlesbrough	1 week rent free
Thornaby	3 rent free weeks
Thornaby	bayonet fitting
Thirsk	1 week free rent
Hartlepool	6 months bed tax
Middlesbrough	Over bath shower
Evenwood	Carpets throughout
Middlesbrough	1 week free rent
Middlesbrough	Intruder alarm
Middlesbrough	Intruder alarm
Middlesbrough	Intruder alarm
Middlesbrough	Intruder alarm
Thornaby	Plane Doors after carpets fitted
Thirsk	2 further free weeks rent
Middlesbrough	Carpets all through
Middlesbrough	Carpets all through
Evenwood	Gas/electric and food
Darlington	Electric
Hartlepool	Carpet to front room/passage
Cockfield	Carpets all through
Thornaby	Lino kitchen
Thornaby	S/F Bath
Carlin How	Carpets all through
Middlesbrough	Carpets all through
Hamsterley	decoration
Hartlepool	6 month bed tax
Middlesbrough	carpets stairs and bedrooms
Middlesbrough	shower
Cockfield	Carpet in lounge and 2 bedrooms
Middlesbrough	3 weeks rent free

rough	
Thornaby	1 weeks free rent
Thornaby	Move furniture
Middlesbrough	carpet very large living/dining room
Thornaby	2 weeks rent
Hartlepool	2 weeks free rent
Middlesbrough	Carpets all through
Middlesbrough	1 week free rent
Stockton	2 weeks rent free
Middlesbrough	7 weeks bedroom tax

Hardship Fund 2016/17

EHA / THA	Date	Address	Description
THA	27/05/2016	Evenwood	Drs letter for DHP application
EHA	06/04/2016	Thornaby	bin
EHA	13/04/2016	Stockton	bin
EHA	28/04/2016	Stockton	Carpets - downstairs and stairs
EHA	05/05/2016	Stockton	bin
EHA	14/04/2016	Stockton	erect shed for hoarding issue
EHA	09/06/2016	Stockton	cooker issue on internal transfer on safety grounds
EHA	21/06/2016	Stockton	bin
EHA	22/06/2016	Thornaby	Gas and Elec
EHA	22/06/2016	Thornaby	Food voucher
EHA	22/06/2016	Thornaby	Food voucher
EHA	22/06/2016	Thornaby	Moving costs
EHA	15/07/2016	Stockton	bin
EHA	22/07/2016	Hartlepool	Flea Treatment
EHA	01/08/2016	Stockton	Washing machine and Elec cooker
EHA	10/08/2016	Thornaby	Food voucher

EHA	23/09/2016	Darlington	Gas and electric
THA	18/08/2016	Cockfield	Oven shelves and grill kit
EHA	17/10/2016	Middlesbrough	Cooker + fitting
EHA	13/10/2016	Thornaby	Food voucher
EHA	19/10/2016	Hartlepool	Gas/Electric including debt
EHA	24/10/2016	Middlesbrough	Winter duvet
EHA	24/10/2016	Middlesbrough	Electric cooker + fitting
EHA	24/10/2016	Middlesbrough	Fridge/ freezer
EHA	07/11/2016	Thornaby	Gas
EHA	07/11/2016	Thornaby	Gas
EHA	18/11/2016	Stockton	Elec cooker and connection
EHA	15/12/2016	Middlesbrough	Bins
EHA	15/12/2016	Thornaby	Gas/Electric including debt
EHA	Feb-17	Middlesbrough	Floor coverings
EHA	21/02/2017	Hartlepool	Supermarket card for food
EHA	01/02/2017	Stockton	Elec cooker and connection
EHA	27/03/2017	Skinnin grove	carpets
EHA	27/04/2017	Stockton	Bin

	2017 - 18		
EHA	08/05/2017	Loftus	Bins x 2
EHA	08/05/2017	Stockton	Removal costs following fire bombings
EHA	27/04/2017	Thornaby	Gas, Elec, Dog food
	28/04/2017	Thornaby	Food
EHA	11/05/2017	Hartlepool	Bin x 1
EHA	18/07/2017	Redcar	Cooker
THA	02/08/2017	Cockfield	Utilities/food
EHA	08/08/2017	Stockton	Bin

		n	
THA	11/08/2017	Evenwo od	Bin
EHA	13/09/2017	Middles brough	Electric mini hob
EHA	09/10/2017	Darling ton	Food
EHA	13/10/2017	Thorna by	Gas & Elec
EHA	13/09/2017	Carlin How	Gas & Elec
EHA	20/10/2017	Thorna by	Gas
EHA	20/10/2017	Thorna by	Gas & Elec
EHA	26/10/2017	Cockert on	Utilities/food
EHA	31/10/2017	Stockto n	Elec for Burr ridge and Liberty to complete the void works
EHA	31/10/2017	Stockto n	Bin
THA	10/11/2017	Staindr op	Utilities/food
EHA	03/11/2017	Thorna by	Electric mini hob
EHA	15/11/2017	Middles brough	Electronic Pest Repellent
THA	11/12/2017	Evenwo od	Gas & Elec
eha	26/02/2018	Thorna by	washer hose, gas cooker hose
EHA	07/03/2018	Thorna by	Cooker and hose
EHA	16/03/2018	Stockto n	Electric for 5 year electrical test

Reading list:

- 'Referral reasons, Incentives & Hardship Fund Spreadsheet 2016-17',
- <http://www.hull.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.coastandcountryhousing.org.uk/>
- <https://www.thirteengroup.co.uk/>
- <https://www.gentoogroup.com/for-customers/>

Tenancy Sustainability Action Plan:

Recommendation	Action	Lead Officer	Target Date	Completion Date
1. To consider the impact of Universal Credit on vulnerable tenants and how this may affect tenant sustainability due to rent arrears caused by computer literacy and accessibility issues.	A. Establish Welfare Reform Group and Maintain Universal Credit viewpoint for vulnerable tenants and the impact of UC onto tenancy sustainability.	Sara Herrington	Complete	August 2018
2. The current Tenancy Termination Form needs to be /revised.	A. Completed.	Diane Smith	Complete	June 2018
3. To provide the Hyperlink onto the North Star website and the Tenant Portal for the You Tube Video on how to complete application forms for Universal Credit.	A. Hyperlink available on North Star Website. B. Incorporate into the design of new Tenant Portal.	Julie Nixon	December 2018	
4. To look again at the Tenancy Sustainability Incentive and Hardship Funds with a view of increasing them to help with the roll out of Universal Credit.	A. Increase Tenancy Sustainability Incentive and Hardship funds. B. Review future needs for increases in funds as part of budget setting.	Sara Herrington	December 2018	Fund increased 2018/19. Budget review pending for 2019/20
5. Review the current Referral reasons, Incentives & Hardship Fund 2016-17 spreadsheet to enable a clearer analysis of the benefits and impacts that both funds bring to the Organisation and the tenancy sustainability strategy.	A. The spreadsheet will be reviewed in accordance with TVSP recommendation.	Nicola Barratt	December 2018	
6. Promotional activities to emphasise the support available through Housing Officers and the Welfare Benefits Team for tenants in hardship.	A. Promotion of “directory of services” onto North Star Website and ongoing promotion via newsletters/tenant events.	Diane Smith	October 2018	

Acknowledgements

Tenants Voice Tenant Scrutiny Panel:

Carol Pearson (Chair)

Eric Redfearn (Vice Chair)

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Barbara Hagan

Alf Hannaford

Ken Higham

Ann-Marie Basnett Roberts

Brian Jenkins

Phillip Shaw

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Caroline Dargue – Housing Officer

Dorothy Hague – Housing Officer

Kirsty Smith – Housing Officer

Keith Hadlet – Housing Officer

Katherine Allen – Information and Data Officer

Paul Wood – Interim Group ICT Manager

Graham Eason – Tenant Advisor

Sharon Harland – Tenant Advisor

Helen Sharkey – Tenant Connector

Andrea Peacock – Welfare Benefits Officer