



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
PARTNERSHIP HOMES

Decant Policy

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DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT	
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Contact Officer: Fuad Hussein (Tenancy Solutions Manager)	

THIS DOCUMENT IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:	
1. Tenancy Agreement	
2. Tenancy Policy	
3.	

REVISION HISTORY				
Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of change	Change marked	Version

DISTRIBUTION – This document has been distributed to:			
Name	Job Title	Date of Issue	Version
Paul Francis/David Balsom	Area Team Managers	20/04/2026	V1, V2 and V3
Alex O'Callaghan	Asset Management	20/04/2026	V1, V2 and V3
Darren Gunn/Rikki Kerr	Property Maintenance Team Leaders	20/04/2026	V1, V2 and V3

PUBLICITY – How will this policy be publicised to staff or tenants who may be affected?
The Policy will be published on the NPH website and will also be available on the NPH publication scheme

IMPLICATIONS – What are the implications for other NPH or WNC departments (e.g. IT, finance, communications etc) and have these been discussed?
All stakeholders have been consulted during the review of the policy. Stakeholders were given access to make amendments and suggestions on the policy. Once the policy is live, it will be discussed in Team meetings so all officers are aware.



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DECANT POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy sets out Northampton Partnership Homes' (NPH) approach to managing situations where tenants and their household members need to be temporarily or permanently moved from their home.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

This Policy applies to all West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) tenants and their household members who may need to move from their home temporarily or permanently due to planned works, major repairs, health and safety concerns, or emergency incidents.

It covers:

- All **temporary decants** which may be required to allow for investigations under AWAAB's law and essential works and safety measures.
- All **permanent decants** arising from redevelopment, demolition, or situations where a return to the original home is not possible.
- **Emergency decants** following fire, flood, structural risk, environmental hazard, or any incident that renders a property unsafe or uninhabitable.

The Policy applies across all WNC homes managed by NPH and is to be followed consistently to ensure fair, transparent, and lawful decision-making.

LEGISLATION

This Policy and Procedure takes into consideration the following legislation:

- Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 s.10A and Awaab's Law regulations and guidance;
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards (2024)—Safety & Quality, Tenancy, Transparency, Neighbourhood;
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (statutory, 1 Apr 2024);
- Equality Act 2010 incl. the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021 statutory guidance;
- Home Loss Payments (Prescribed Amounts) (England) Regs 2023;
- Homelessness Code of Guidance (suitability benchmarks incl. B&B limits for families);
- HB/UC temporary absence rules.



INTRODUCTION

West Northamptonshire Council owns approximately 12,000 properties which are managed by Northamptonshire Partnership Homes, but are due to transition back to the management of WNC by April 2027.

There are occasions where an existing Council tenant will be required to move from their property either on a temporary or permanent basis. During this period of time, NPH will make available either an alternative similar sized property for the tenant to occupy (unless the tenant is already under-occupying their current property) or provide emergency accommodation.

These instances are known as decants.

Decants can occur for a number of reasons, such as:

- To allow the Council to fulfil its statutory obligations to repair and maintain its properties, and due to the nature of the work required, means that it is not possible for the tenant to remain in their home.
- Emergencies such as fire, flood, explosion or storm which renders the property uninhabitable
- The requirement for planned maintenance works whereby refurbishment, modernisation or major works are required which would not be possible whilst a tenant continued to live at the property
- Where the tenant has caused serious neglect/damage to their property and/or there is a major infestation of the property. This can include serious cases of hoarding whereby it has been deemed unsafe for the tenant to remain in-situ.
- Where a Category 1 HHSRS hazard cannot be made safe within 24 hours, tenants must be temporarily relocated to suitable alternative accommodation until the hazard has been remedied

NPH will use the Council's housing stock in the case of temporary moves wherever possible.

There will be instances where the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation is necessary. The use of Bed and Breakfast must be limited to short periods of time, preferably not exceeding 7 days.

It may also be appropriate to determine whether the tenant is able or wishes to stay with other family members or friends without the need for NPH to find alternative accommodation.

NPH is aware that this process can be a stressful and worrying time for those tenants affected and will ensure that they act to minimise any adverse effects and maintain regular contact with them.

We will set out timescales for works and updates at the start, in line with Awaab's Law and the RSH Safety & Quality Standard.

The purpose of a decant is to manage risk and safeguard occupants and others, not to penalise the tenant.



SHORT TERM DECANT

A short term decant will be any circumstance that requires an existing tenant to move from their home for up to a maximum of 13 weeks. In such instances the tenant will be expected to return to their original tenancy once all required works have been completed and they have been notified of this.

LONG TERM DECANT

A long term decant will be any circumstance whereby the expected or actual works required take 14 weeks or more to complete.

In such circumstances, the tenant can be given the option of remaining in their decant property on a permanent basis subject to the tenant meeting the relevant eligibility criteria within the Allocations Policy for the property in question, and approval from NPH's Head of Housing Management and WNC's Allocations Manager.

RENT / HOUSING BENEFIT / UNIVERSAL CREDIT

For short term decants, the tenant remains liable for rent and service charges at their permanent address, and no rent is charged on the temporary decant property. This means Housing Benefit or Universal Credit will usually continue to be paid for the permanent home, provided the tenant remains liable for rent there.

HOUSING BENEFIT

Housing Benefit can continue during a temporary absence if the tenant intends to return and has not sublet their home.

- The standard rule allows absence for up to 13 weeks.
- Certain circumstances allow entitlement for up to 52 weeks (e.g., hospital admission, providing/receiving medically approved care, fleeing violence).

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

A tenant can continue receiving the housing element of UC for up to 6 months while temporarily absent from home, as long as they intend to return.

- Where a tenant moves out because repairs are being carried out, UC housing costs can continue with no set time limit, provided the tenant remains liable for rent at their permanent home and does not pay rent at the temporary address.

TENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Tenants should inform West Northamptonshire Council's Housing Benefit department or DWP for Universal Credit of their temporary absence and the address they will be staying at. This helps to prevent payment interruptions and supports accurate entitlement.



LONGER-TERM DECANTS

If a decant is likely to exceed the time limits for Housing Benefit (13/52 weeks) or Universal Credit (6 months), NPH will review whether the move is likely to become permanent and whether it is appropriate to offer the decant property as a permanent tenancy to avoid loss of benefit entitlement.

DECANT TO PERMANENT

Where a decant becomes permanent, the tenant will be granted a tenancy at the new property on the same security of tenure they previously held, unless their tenancy has naturally converted (e.g., from Introductory to Secure) during the decant period. From the start date of the new tenancy, rent liability and benefit entitlement will apply to the new address.

UTILITIES

For the period of time that a tenant is residing in their temporary decant property, they will not be liable for the utility charges at their permanent property. Should any electricity, gas, or water be used by NPH staff whilst undertaking essential maintenance work, NPH will be liable for these costs.

It is therefore important that in the case of a temporary decant, a tenant takes their meter readings before they move out and when they move back into their permanent property.

In the case of tenants with top up meters, it is important that the tenant ensures there is no debt on the meter before they move out. The utility company will not permit NPH to act on the tenant's behalf in view of the fact the tenancy remains in their name.

Whilst the tenant is residing in the decant property, they will be liable for any utility costs incurred during this time.

REMOVALS

Where a tenant is required to move due to circumstances beyond their control—such as fire, flood, or other emergency—NPH will arrange and fund removals from the tenant's home to the temporary decant property and, for short-term decants, back to their permanent home once it is safe to return.

Where a decant is required as a result of the tenant's own actions (for example, neglect or severe hoarding), the case must be referred to the Head of Tenancy Support, who will decide whether it is appropriate for NPH to provide assistance with removals.

KEYS

To ensure the decant process progresses without delay, it is essential that tenants return the keys to their primary home to NPH promptly so that works can begin. The Decant Officer is



responsible for overseeing the collection of keys and ensuring this is completed in a timely manner.

If a tenant has moved into the decant property but has not provided the keys to their original home, NPH may need to arrange a lock change to allow works to proceed. In such cases, the tenant will be recharged for the reasonable costs incurred.

A lock change may also be necessary where there are concerns that the tenant is continuing to access the property while works are underway, creating potential safety or operational issues. Notice will be issued prior to lock changes taking place so that the tenant is aware.

SECURITY OF TENURES – DECANT LICENCE

Where the decant is to another council property, the tenant will be signed up to a non-secure tenancy for the duration that they are occupying the property. They remain a secure tenant at their main home.

CONTENTS INSURANCE

Tenants are responsible for ensuring they have appropriate contents insurance in place to cover their personal belongings and furniture. NPH will not be liable for any loss, damage, or deterioration of personal items during the decant process, including while items are in transit or storage. Tenants are therefore expected to rely on their own insurance arrangements to cover any replacement or associated costs arising during the decant period.

REFUSALS

If a tenant refuses an offer of decant accommodation, they will be required to make their own arrangements for alternative accommodation during the decant period. Where a tenant refuses both the offer and to vacate the property to enable works to proceed, a Notice of Seeking Possession will be served under Ground 10 of the Housing Act 1985 within one week of the refusal. If the matter progresses to a court hearing, a suitable offer of accommodation will be prepared in advance and communicated to the tenant.

If a tenant refuses a decant under Awaab's Law, legal action may be taken to secure a move to alternative accommodation to ensure the safety of the tenants. Persistent refusal to move can lead to enforcement action, including possession proceedings.

DECANTS ARISING FROM TENANT CONDUCT OR BREACH OF TENANCY

Where a decant is required as a direct result of a tenant's actions or omissions, including but not limited to deliberate or reckless damage, persistent refusal of reasonable access, severe hoarding, or neglect of the property in breach of tenancy conditions, NPH may make alternative accommodation available in order to safeguard the health and safety of the household and others.

In such circumstances, the provision of financial assistance, including but not limited to removal costs, storage, or other relocation expenses, will not be automatic and may be withheld where it is reasonable to do so.

Each case will be assessed on its individual merits, taking into account:



- the extent to which the tenant's actions directly caused the need for the decant;
- any steps previously taken by NPH to prevent escalation, including support, warnings, or enforcement action;
- the presence of any protected characteristics, vulnerabilities, or support needs;
- the impact on health, safety, and wellbeing of the household and others.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, NPH will give due consideration to whether the tenant's behaviour is linked to a disability or other protected characteristic, and whether reasonable adjustments or proportionate assistance are required to avoid substantial disadvantage.

NPH will not apply blanket exclusions. Decisions to refuse or limit assistance will be:

- proportionate;
- clearly recorded with reasons;
- communicated to the tenant in writing; and
- subject to review if circumstances change.

Where full financial assistance is not provided, NPH may still offer non-financial support, advice, or signposting to external agencies where this is considered necessary to facilitate a safe and effective move or to meet safeguarding responsibilities.

NPH'S COMMITMENT TO RESIDENTS DURING A DECANT

- We will provide support and assistance throughout the entire decant process—before the move, during the period away from the home, and after works are completed—to ensure the needs of each household are appropriately met.
- We will give residents clear and timely information about the nature of the works required, the reason a decant is necessary, the expected scope of the works, and how long they may need to be away from their home.
- We will provide as much notice as reasonably possible before works begin. For planned programmes of work, we will aim to give residents *at least one month's notice* wherever feasible.
- We will keep residents informed about progress and provide as much notice as possible regarding the expected completion date of the works and their return to their home (for temporary decants).

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND VULNERABILITY

NPH is committed to delivering a fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory decant process for all tenants. This Policy applies equally to every household, and we will ensure that no resident is treated less favourably because of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.



In line with our duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), NPH will have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between different groups.

To support this, NPH will ensure that vulnerability, individual needs and personal circumstances are fully considered at all stages of the decant process, including the initial assessment, selection of temporary or permanent accommodation, support arrangements, and communication throughout the move. This includes, but is not limited to:

ACCESSIBILITY AND ADAPTATIONS

We will assess whether the decant accommodation meets the tenant's mobility needs, assistive technology requirements, adaptations, or accessibility features. Where necessary, reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure the temporary or permanent home remains safe and suitable.

HEALTH, DISABILITY AND MENTAL WELLBEING

Tenants with physical or mental health conditions will receive tailored support to minimise distress or disruption. This may include prioritising ground-floor properties, ensuring continuity of medical care, or providing additional assistance during the move.

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOLING

Where households include children, we will consider schooling, safeguarding, transport needs, and proximity to support networks to minimise disruption to education and wellbeing.

OLDER TENANTS AND THOSE REQUIRING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Older residents or those reliant on carers will receive additional planning and support to ensure the move is safe, manageable and co-ordinated with their care arrangements.

CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS OR LANGUAGE NEEDS

Where applicable, we will ensure the decant process is sensitive to cultural practices, religious observances, language requirements, and communication preferences. Translated or accessible information will be provided on request.

DOMESTIC ABUSE OR SAFETY-RELATED RISKS

If a resident is at risk of harm, including domestic abuse, the decant process will prioritise safety, confidentiality and safeguarding, in line with statutory domestic abuse guidance.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY

NPH will ensure that information about the decant, including timelines, support available and accommodation details, is provided in formats that residents can understand. This may



include large print, easy-read formats, interpreters, or simplified explanations for residents with learning disabilities.

These considerations will also apply to decisions about support, assistance, or financial contributions associated with a decant, including removals and other relocation costs.

VALUE FOR MONEY

NPH is committed to ensuring that all decant activity represents value for money and delivers the best possible outcomes for residents while using public resources responsibly.

To support this, the number, type and cost of all decants will be closely monitored, recorded and reported to ensure that Decants are only used when necessary, and alternative solutions are fully explored before a move is approved.

To support effective asset management, regulatory compliance, and resident welfare, a limited number of properties (no more than 10 within the overall stock) will be reserved for decant purposes. This represents a small and proportionate use of stock that enables quicker, more planned moves for households affected by major works or urgent health and safety issues. By maintaining a dedicated decant pool, NPH can significantly reduce reliance on expensive and unsuitable temporary accommodation such as hotels, delivering clear financial savings and better outcomes for residents. This approach also strengthens the council's ability to respond promptly to emerging requirements under Awaab's Law and other regulatory expectations, ensuring that residents can be moved without delay where living conditions pose a risk, while maintaining operational efficiency and minimising disruption.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed biennially and amended accordingly to reflect any changes in response to revised Legislation, regulatory guidelines, and standards. The policy document will be stored in NPH's strategy bookcase.

