

KEY POLICIES



**SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Lettings policy

Background

1. Zebra Housing Association Limited ('Zebra') has a number of objectives that it aims to achieve through this policy which are laid out below. This policy is intended to inform those dealing with the lettings process so they can understand the guiding principles around it that Zebra has adopted and to feed into the processes and procedures that are used during Zebra's letting process.

2. Zebra was established to provide accommodation to international students and that remains its mission and the policy below reflects that.

3. Zebra Housing Association is mindful of its responsibilities under legislation in this area including the Housing Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010. We also operate within the regulatory framework for housing associations and seek to follow the guidance & good practice recommended by the National Housing Federation. We are also an ANUK (Accreditation Network UK) member and so need to ensure that our policies & procedures are compliant with their requirements.

Objectives

4. The objectives that this policy is trying to achieve are as follows in order of importance & priority:

1. To ensure that applicants are dealt with in accordance with Zebra's mission and values.
2. To ensure that tenants are able to sustain their tenancies.
3. To minimise the loss of rent incurred after a tenant gives notice and before a new tenant moves in, through both letting properties quickly and maximising tenancy length.
4. To match applicants' family size & needs to the size & type of accommodation offered.
5. To operate a fair letting process for applicants.
6. To communicate regularly with applicants on the progress of their application for accommodation.
7. To create mixed communities within the buildings owned by Zebra, as allowed by our waiting list.

Zebra's mission & values

5. Zebra's mission is to support overseas students. For that reason priority will always be given to international applicants over UK citizens. Also Zebra will only house full-time university students studying either undergraduate or post-graduate courses as the tenants are the only ones able to have student tenancies. Priority will be given to those on post-graduate courses as opposed to undergraduates.

6. Zebra's values are reflected in the other objectives as detailed below.

Sustaining tenancies

7. Allowing applicants to become tenants in properties which they will not be able to sustain the tenancy for is self-defeating. When Zebra considers the allocation of properties to tenants, affordability for the applicant will be considered as a key part in the process.

8. Zebra will also only consider applicants attending universities or other equivalent institutions of higher learning in London to avoid tenants having to endure long travel times to attend their courses. This comes from Zebra's values to support residents and help them to connect with their community.
Minimising rent loss

9. Zebra is a charitable organisation and its rents are set below market levels. Because of this it needs to ensure that flats are relet on a timely basis to minimise the rents lost and ensure that the association can continue to fund its work and keep its properties at a high standard. This comes from our values to provide active guardianship of our properties and to ensure that Value for Money is achieved.

10. This is partly achieved by having an efficient letting and voids process, but also by looking for applicants who are able to move in quickly and those who have longer left on their courses, so as to minimise future void period, so those applicants will be prioritised.

Matching applicants to properties

11. Zebra will not allow applicants to view or occupy properties that would result in their household becoming overcrowded as defined in Zebra's allocation procedure. It is accepted that household sizes may change over time and Zebra will aim to deal with this using its transfer process, the policy for which is included below.

12. Where applicants have particular needs, including but not limited to those arising from a disability, Zebra will consider these when allocating properties. Priority may also be given to those with medical conditions relevant to their housing need or suffering harassment or discrimination in their current accommodation.

13. These points come from Zebra's values around safety, community and quality.

Fair letting process

14. Where applicants are of equal priority based on the above criteria preference will be given to those who have been on Zebra's waiting list for the longest period of time.

15. Applicants on the waiting list will be contacted periodically to ask whether they are still in need of accommodation and wish to remain on Zebra's waiting list.

16. Zebra will treat all applicants with dignity and respect and in accordance with its Customer Care and Equality & Diversity policies. This springs from our quality and community values.

Communication with applicants

17. Zebra aims to communicate with applicants regularly to ensure excellent levels of customer service. This includes but is not limited to;

- acknowledgement of application,
- acceptance onto the waiting list,
- availability of a suitable property,
- arranging a viewing, either in person or remotely,
- offering a property, and
- acceptance as a tenant.

18. If an applicant is offered accommodation that fulfils the criteria that they requested on their application form but refuses it, then they will be removed from the waiting list but advised that they may re-apply if they wish. This springs from our quality value.

Creating mixed communities

19. In Zebra's mission we express our desire to bring people and cultures together, also in our value on community we say 'encourage respect for each other while promoting equality and diversity'. In line with this Zebra reserves the right to give priority to other nationalities if one nationality occupies 25% or more of Zebra's accommodation in total or in the building where a vacant property is located.

Transfers

20. Tenants will only be accepted onto the transfer waiting list if they meet one of the following criteria:

- A medical condition, supported by documentation, that shows clear need for transfer to a different type of accommodation, or a different location.
- Over- or under-occupation of the existing accommodation.
- A change in economic circumstances meaning a tenant can no longer afford their existing rent.
- The resident is suffering or threatened by domestic violence, anti-social behaviour or feels unsafe in their home.
- The property requires a repair which cannot be carried out with anyone in occupation.

21. Tenants on the transfer waiting list will have priority over applicants on the waiting list.

Renewals

22. When an existing tenant's tenancy ends they will be allowed to renew their tenancy as long as they continue to be a full-time student at an approved institute of higher education, they are not overcrowded in their existing accommodation, they have no outstanding complaints against them in respect of anti-social behaviour and they are up to date with their rent payments. If one of the residents living with a tenant whose tenancy is ending is full-time student at an approved institute of higher education then we can transfer the tenancy to that resident.

Monitoring & reporting

23. The board will receive information at each meeting on;

- number of applications,
- number of applicants on the waiting list,
- void losses,
- the number of lettings,
- relet times.

24. Once a year the board will receive an Equality & Diversity report and this will include an analysis of applicants' nationality and ethnic identity, compared to the nationality and ethnic identity of the current residents.

Resident engagement policy and communication strategy and policy

Incorporates guidance from:

- Together with tenants (NHF)
- Code of Governance
- Housing White Paper

Zebra is very different from social housing landlords for which the above were primarily written. Our residents are not permanent occupants and they have choice in terms of their landlord, type of accommodation and location. They are very focussed on their studying and are already empowered through their education. So we tailor our strategy and policy with that in mind.

From our Code of Governance

1.2 Resident focus: the needs and safety of the organisation's current and future residents and other customers are placed at the heart of the board's decision-making.

(1) There are policies, frameworks and opportunities which enable, encourage and support residents and other customers to engage with, influence and contribute to strategic decision-making.

(2) The board has access to insight into the views and needs of the organisation's residents and other customers (including insight into their concerns and complaints) and uses this to inform decisions where appropriate.¹

(3) There are policies in place which reflect that the safety of residents and other customers (as well as that of the workforce² and the wider public) is an overriding priority, and the board regularly seeks assurance on their operation.

The organisation regularly reports to its residents on how its commitments to resident focus have been delivered.

Inclusion and Communication

- Newsletter and Zebra news
- House Meetings (at least twice, per residence, per year)
- Residents' soundboard – A facility to invite opinion and suggestions from residents electronically.
- Warden meetings – Twice yearly warden meetings. An opportunity to share experience, look at procedures and feed back to the Association.
- Regular surveys and feedback – consultation on major

housing management issues, where appropriate.

- Bi-annual opinion survey – The next survey will be carried out in Spring 2022.
- Annual Garden Party – An opportunity for all residents, staff and Board members to social and network in a social setting.
- Ex residents on the Board – Bringing to bear the experience of having lived in our residences.

Reporting

- Annual report to Board – What residents have said to us, what they like, what improvements they feel we could make.
- Annual Residents report on Website

Domestic abuse and safeguarding policy & procedure

Domestic abuse and safeguarding policy & procedure

Zebra will not tolerate domestic abuse. This policy outlines our victim centred approach, which ensures that we create a culture where residents who have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse feel supported when making a report.

This policy applies to all residents, staff, board members, contractors, sub-contractors, and agents working for Zebra. All staff and external partners have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of residents as far as possible, to minimise the risk for abuse and/or neglect.

All staff should be aware of their responsibilities and how to act in ways that protect tenants from harm, and themselves from wrongful allegations of abuse.

Zebra acknowledges its safeguarding responsibilities as a Housing Association providing affordable homes to post-grad international students and their families.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Antisocial Behaviour policy.

Definitions

Domestic abuse is “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional abuse (Home Office 2013).

Safeguarding children and young people

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best 4 outcomes. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE, 2015)

A 'child' is anyone who is aged up to 18 years.

All children and young people have the right to be safe from harm and need safe environments to grow with confidence. Everyone is responsible for helping to keep children safe. Safeguarding children and young people means protecting them from any potential source of harm.

There are links between domestic abuse, substance misuse, mental health needs and poor outcomes for families and

children. Families may demonstrate levels of resilience with appropriate support, and therefore it is not inevitable that families who experience problems are at risk and in need of protection. We also need to consider circumstances where families may not reach the criteria for safeguarding, but where interventions such as signposting to appropriate services may act to prevent deterioration and the need for statutory intervention.

Safeguarding adults

Safeguarding means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

Organisations should always promote the adult's wellbeing in their safeguarding arrangements. People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things they want for themselves. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how that can be best achieved. Professionals and other staff should not be advocating “safety” measures that do not take account of individual well-being. (Care and Support Statutory Guidance Issued under the Care Act 2014, DoH)

Six key principles underpin all adult safeguarding work:

- Empowerment – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent;
- Prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs;
- Proportionality – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk resented;
- Protection – support and representation for those in greatest need;
- Partnership – local solutions through services working with their local neighbourhoods, where people have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse;
- Accountability – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Implementing the Policy

This section includes:

- o Procedures for implementing the policy
- o Responding to complaints or concerns of abuse
- o How to proceed with the concern
- o Managing safeguarding concerns - follow-up stages for all concerns
- o Reporting safeguarding concerns to regulators and/or relevant agencies and their criteria
- o Other organisations or services in our area and nationally that can help with safeguarding concerns.

Identifying vulnerability and early intervention

The lead officer for both domestic abuse and safeguarding is the Head of Resident Services, Steve Musham.

If Zebra is informed or becomes aware of domestic abuse or that abuse of a child, or a vulnerable adult is taking place this must be reported to the Head of Resident Services (HRS). Early action and intervention is vital as is giving the correct advice. Any member of staff, contractor or stakeholder who suspects or receives an allegation has a duty of care to report it to the HRS immediately. The HRS will consult the CEO and refer to the local protocols to report the case to the local authority Safeguarding Board, local Women's Aid, and/or the police where appropriate. Any discussions and actions carried out should be recorded and stored securely. Zebra's general approach will be to accept the victim's view of matters and to work with local specialist agencies to support the victim, to investigate any alleged breach of tenancy agreement and act where appropriate

A person can become at risk at any time and all staff, board members and contractors have a responsibility to be aware of actual and potential risk to adults and children and to ensure that the correct procedure is followed. Children and families will always benefit from having emerging problems responded to at the earliest opportunity. Zebra acknowledges that its staff have a key role in identifying emerging problems and potential unmet needs for individuals.

Residents can report issues in different ways, for example via email to a member of staff or verbally to their warden. The HRS will investigate all reports of domestic abuse, including those made in confidence, and those made by individuals not directly involved such as neighbours or contractors.

On receipt of a report, the safeguarding lead will consult with involved staff, wardens, and any other witnesses and report the case to the local authority without delay, and/or the police if appropriate. All safeguarding cases will be logged securely to ensure effective recording, progress monitoring and ensure confidentiality.

Zebra aims to ensure that tenants who are presenting as at risk or giving rise to a cause for concern are identified at an early stage and receive appropriate advice and support as required to help them stay safe in the community of their choice and maintain their tenancy.

In carrying out their work, which can include entering tenants' homes on a regular basis, at a tenant's request or to carry out cleaning or maintenance inspections, staff or live-in wardens might observe evidence of harm. They may become concerned about the safety or welfare of a child, young person or adult in a number of ways:

- The person may tell you;
- The person may say something that worries you;
- A third party may voice concerns;
- You may see something – an incident or an injury or other sign.

Concerns can take many forms; evidence of an impoverished environment, lack of food, heat, access to medical treatment, poor hygiene, repairs not reported, evidence of rent arrears, lack of children's bedding, toys, or facilities. Relationship issues such as the way people communicate with children or a spouse may alert staff.

All staff should be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- Is disabled and/or has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs;
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- Is in family circumstances presenting challenges for the child such as substance misuse, adult mental health problems, or domestic violence and abuse;
- Is showing early signs of abuse or neglect.

Staff have a responsibility to react if symptoms and triggers of abuse and neglect are observed among tenants, and to share that information with their manager and/or the safeguarding lead, and work together to provide support to tenants.

The HRS will provide a safeguarding annual review to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Zebra is committed to continually developing good practice and monitoring standards, in conjunction with our partner agencies. The service is subject to internal audit and recommendations from internal audit will be adopted.

Zebra will publicise its policy to residents, contractors and stakeholders.

Staff training

As part of their induction, all relevant staff, wardens and deputy wardens are required to read and understand this policy to ensure they may be able to identify domestic abuse and children, young people and adults who may be at risk, and to act appropriately. Training will also be provided.

Zebra will make informational materials on domestic abuse readily available to any staff expressing an interest in or need for it.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Zebra understands the importance of ensuring that personal data is always treated fairly, lawfully, and appropriately and

that the rights of individuals are upheld. However, we are clear that where an individual's safety is at risk, we are required to report our concerns to the responsible authorities and share information with them.

Information that may be shared includes names, contact details, information about a person's physical or mental health, or relations with others. The sharing of this information will be restricted to those who have a demonstrable need to know and robust protections, such as encryption, should be used to share this information.

Zebra will report incidents to the police on behalf of individuals or support them in doing so (with their permission), where they feel too intimidated to report incidents themselves.

If a member of the Zebra team becomes concerned about the safety or welfare of a tenant, it is imperative that advice is sought from the HRS. However, the option of speaking to a staff member of the same or opposite gender, should the tenant express a preference, will be made available.

Zebra will endeavour to let tenants experiencing any form of domestic abuse know that they can meet staff in confidence at our office or at an agreed choice of safe venue. We will also agree the method of contact that the individual wishes us to use to stay in contact with them.

Reporting

ZHA will work collaboratively and sensitively with external partners where necessary when managing cases of domestic abuse.

Any discussions and actions carried out should be recorded accurately and promptly and stored securely.

We recognise the importance of supporting tenants whilst also ensuring that any action we take is done with their consent.

Actions against perpetrators

We will take appropriate enforcement action (where evidence is available) against anyone responsible for domestic abuse. This will only be done in cases where we can do so without compromising the safety of the victim. We will work closely with partner agencies and keep them informed of any action taken. We will refer victims to the local authorities' homeless person's service in cases where emergency temporary accommodation is required. This can also include referrals to refuges via the National Domestic Violence Helpline. Where possible, a tenant at risk can be offered alternative accommodation in another Zebra property. The spouse of a tenant who is experiencing domestic abuse can only be considered for rehousing if they meet Zebra's general housing eligibility criteria – i.e. be a student from overseas or the UK, registered on a full-time degree or postgraduate course at a London University.

We will signpost the individual experiencing domestic abuse to relevant organisations such as refuges, student services, or other domestic abuse agencies within their borough or at their university to provide support as appropriate.

We will advise people experiencing domestic abuse of external agencies that can offer further advice and support dependent upon their needs. We will work with our partners to ensure co-ordinated services to prioritise the safety of the person who is

experiencing domestic abuse and the safety of their children, if present.

All safeguarding cases will be logged on the housing management IT system to ensure effective recording, progress monitoring, and reporting.

Legislation

The following legislation has been considered:

- Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance (issued under the Care Act 2014)
- Children Act 2004 and "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (Department for Education Guidance 2015)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 - Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Mental Health Act 2007
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government, March 2015)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- The Modern Slavery Act 2015
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Helplines

- Women's Aid: for women who experience domestic abuse. Website: www.womensaid.org.uk
- Refuge: The national charity for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Website: <https://www.refuge.org.uk/>
- CAADA: Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) is a national charity supporting a strong multi-agency response to domestic abuse. Website: www.caada.org.uk
- Rights of women: Legal advice for women experiencing domestic abuse: Website: www.rightsofwomen.org.uk
- National Domestic Violence Helpline: This helpline is run in partnership by Refuge and Women's Aid and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Freephone telephone 0808 2000 247
- Childline: For information and advice for children and young people, please visit the Childline website www.childline.org.uk or telephone Childline free on 0800 11 11.
- Victim Support: Provides follow-up support and advice people experiencing domestic abuse. Please visit the website – www.victimsupport.org.uk or telephone 08 08 16 89 111. For typetalk 18001 08 08 16 89 111.
- Ascent Project (London Violence against women and girls): Delivers a range of services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Website: <https://www.wrc.org.uk/ascent> Telephone: 020 7697 3461

- GaLop: For the LGBT+ community, Galop can be contacted via email: help@galop.org.uk
- National LGBT+ domestic violence helpline: 0800 999 5428
- Broken Rainbow National Helpline: Provides services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people who are experiencing domestic abuse. Website: www.broken-rainbow.org.uk Telephone: 0300 999 5428
- London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard: provides a range of services for the LGBT community. Website: <https://switchboard.lgbt/about-us/> Phone: 0300 330 0630 (10am to 10pm every day of the year). Email: chris@switchboard.lgbt
- Forced Marriage Unit: Provides help and advice for people who are worried they may be forced into marriage and for people who are worried about friends or relatives. Website: www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage . Telephone 020 7008 0151 (9am to 5pm Monday to Friday). Out of hours 020 7008 11500 (ask for the Global Response Centre)
- Respect Men's Advice Line: For support for men experiencing domestic abuse, Website: www.mensadviceline.org.uk. Telephone 0808 801 0327
- Respect: For people who are worried about their own abusive behaviour or for professionals or others looking for help for an abuser. Website: <https://respectphoneline.org.uk/> Telephone 0808 802 4040
- National Centre for Domestic Violence: Provides a free, fast emergency injunction service to survivors of domestic abuse regardless of their financial circumstances. Website: www.ncdv.org.uk Freephone telephone: 0800 970 2070, Text: NCDV to 6077, Email: office@ncdv.org.uk.
- AVA: AVA provides a range of services to organisations and agencies working in the voluntary and statutory sector as well as to individual practitioners. There is information on the website for friends and family worried about someone who is experiencing domestic abuse. Website: www.avaproject.org.uk

Anti-Social behaviour policy and procedure

1. Aims and Objectives

1.1 Zebra Housing Association believes that all residents are entitled to the quiet enjoyment of their home and their local environment. The Association will work to try to ensure that as far as possible this is achieved. We wish to ensure that our homes are sustainable long-term and recognise the importance of involving its residents and the wider community in plans to address anti-social behaviour.

1.2 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2014) requires all Registered Providers to prepare and publish their policy and procedures in respect of anti-social behaviour. Part two of the Act deals with social housing.

1.3 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2014) extended the powers available to Registered Providers and Local Authorities to tackle incidents of anti-social behaviour.

1.4 Zebra seeks to ensure equal service, fair treatment and freedom from harassment for all its residents, staff, contractors and consultants. This means that Zebra expects that all its Board members, employees and those providing services on our behalf will adhere to and positively promote the Association's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.

1.5 Zebra invites comments from anyone affected by our policies or services who feel that we have discriminated against them.

2. What is Anti Social Behaviour?

2.1 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) can cause a lot of unhappiness, misery and upset to individuals or groups within a community. ASB is described in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2014) as:

- a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
- (b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or
- (c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

2.2 The Act also defines anti-social behaviour as:
"Using or threatening to use housing accommodation owned or managed by a relevant landlord for an unlawful purpose"

2.3 Zebra Housing Association is a "relevant landlord".

2.4 Our Wardens' role in implementing the procedure and policy is crucial. Wardens are the 'eyes and ears' of the Association in our residences, and as such are more likely to be the initial reporters of any incident. It is important that Wardens and their Deputies are clear on the policy and procedure, take notes and witness statements, including dates and times, and report clearly to the Head of Residence Services.

2.5 Of course, it is important that the Wardens and Deputies do not put themselves in any jeopardy dealing with an incident, and if in doubt, the police should always be called.

2.6 It is the duty of Wardens and Deputies to monitor low level nuisance. Our buildings are for quiet study and family life. Noise, poor disposal of rubbish and poor common bathroom hygiene are examples of low level nuisance that should be resolved.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Zebra Housing Association must take a balanced approach when dealing with anti-social behaviour. It must ensure that any action is proportionate to the issue being dealt with.

3.2 The Association will work to ensure that, where possible, prevention of anti-social behaviour is achieved e.g. 'designing out' noise pollution.

3.3 Enforcement action will be taken where necessary and Zebra Housing Association will deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour as quickly and as thoroughly as possible.

3.4 Where possible, and in line with legislation, Zebra Housing Association will work with the perpetrator of anti-social behaviour to "rehabilitate" them.

3.5 Some situations involving anti-social behaviour are difficult to solve in isolation and therefore require the involvement of multi-agencies working together to determine an effective remedy.

3.6 The Association will deal with all reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. All incidents are investigated, statements taken where required, and the various remedies available to deal with the issue will be thoroughly explored.

3.7 We will look at all complaints from the viewpoint of the victim, but intend to be even-handed in our approach.

3.8 This policy statement will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

4 Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Objectives

4.1 To ensure that the tenancy conditions are observed and that tenants and affected local residents have the right to quiet enjoyment of their property, free from the effects of anti-social behaviour.

4.2 To prevent incidents arising where possible and minimise the number of instances of anti-social behaviour.

4.3 To take prompt and effective action where incidents of anti-social behaviour occur.

4.4 To inform tenants of Zebra Housing Association of how the Housing Association deals with incidents of anti-social behaviour, including situations whereby residents are acting as witnesses in particular cases.

4.5 To ensure that staff dealing with anti-social behaviour matters are not threatened, harmed or abused in the course of their duties. All staff must report any threat, violence, or abuse they are subject to, and must report any incidents, no matter how "minor" they may consider them to be. Depending on the incident, Zebra Housing Association will take action to protect staff.

5. Examples of Anti-Social Behaviour

5.1 Zebra Housing Association believes that the examples listed below would be classed as anti-social behaviour:

- domestic abuse
- child abuse
- criminal activity within the location of the property
- damage to property, including vandalism and graffiti
- threatening behaviour
- racism
- harassment
- abusive behaviour
- intimidation
- offensive language
- non-compliance with Environmental Health statutory standards
- lifestyle issues that create infestations and/or health problems
- deliberate littering and/or fouling of common parts
- bullying
- homophobia
- refusing/obstructing access for Officers or Contractors to carry out works, to rectify, investigate or inspect works
- Running a business from home
- DIY
- Noise

5.2 If there are issues arising from any of the matters listed above, the Resident Wardens will address the problems and, if they persist, the Operations Manager will deal with these matters as ASB.

6. Anti-Social Behaviour Procedure

6.1 All complaints of anti-social behaviour will be responded to within 24 hours, or the next working day if during a weekend or public holiday.

6.2 Complainants will be asked to complete a statement, detailing the date, location, nature of the incident and alleged perpetrator(s).

6.3 The perpetrator, where identified, will be asked to make a statement in response to the complaint.

6.4 The Head of Residence Services will consider the nature of the complaint and the statements received by both parties (and any other relevant witness statements).

6.5 The Head of Residence Services will consider a course of action, where, if the complaint is upheld, and it is considered an isolated and minor infringement, may consist of a letter of warning concerning future behaviour.

6.6 If the Head of Residence Services considers the incident to be of a serious nature, or if the complainant is unsatisfied with the position that the Head of Residence Services has taken regarding the incident, a meeting with the Head of Residence Services and either a Board Member or/and the CEO of the Association may be required to resolve the situation.

6.7 Incidents of a serious nature may result in the Association proceeding to end the tenancy of the perpetrator. Equally, a number of incidents perpetrated by the same resident may result in the Association taking the necessary action to end the tenancy.

6.8 All records of anti-social behaviour proceedings will be kept on file.

6.9 The Board of the Association will be kept informed of any anti-social behaviour action taken.

Maintenance policy and procedure

Aims and Objectives

Zebra Housing Association's housing stock is its major asset representing millions of pounds of investment. Keeping it in good repair is therefore vital to the future of the organisation. We recognise that maintenance is one of our most important services and the service through which our residents are likely to judge ZHA.

We aim to provide a customer focussed, cost effective, efficient, and friendly responsive maintenance service delighting our residents, and a cost effective and well managed planned maintenance service which minimises disruption to residents whilst enhancing our building assets.

ZHA's Responsibilities

ZHA has legal obligations to maintain its properties in good repair and to ensure its properties are fit to live in and are safe for occupiers. Additionally, it has contractual obligations with its residents under the terms of the tenancy agreement.

Externally

Drains, gutters, roofs, external pipes, chimneystacks, walls, windows, doors and locks, paths, steps, stores, gardens, fences, decoration.

Internally

Walls and doors, ceilings, floors, joinery, door furniture, kitchen and bathroom fixtures, fittings and furniture supplied by the association, decoration.

Maintenance services

Water, gas, and electricity services.

Sanitary services, including baths, showers, sinks, W.C.s and basins.

Heating, lighting, and appliances (supplied and installed by ZHA).

Fire protection equipment and door entry systems.

Pest control.

Furniture and furnishings

All furniture, furnishings, appliances, and floor coverings supplied by ZHA.

The Resident's Responsibilities

Residents have an obligation to use the property in a reasonable manner and not to damage it. This generally means to take reasonable care of the property, its fixing & furniture. Where residents neglect to do this, they may become liable for any damage caused. Their responsibilities include:

- Unblocking drains, sink wastes, W.C.s etc. where the blockage is caused by resident;
- Replacing lost or damaged keys;
- Repairing damage caused by themselves, their families, or their guests;
- Repairing damage caused by fixtures or appliances such as washing machines installed by residents – this includes making good where a resident removes the fixture or appliance when their tenancy ends;
- Resetting trip switches and heating controls;
- Repairing, installing, and/or disposing of their own personal belongings, fixtures, small appliances, or items of furniture;
- Placing rubbish and recycling in the designated areas only, on the designated days having regard for other residents who may live close to these areas.

When a repair is reported and it could be the tenant's responsibility, we will explain this to the resident and inform them that they might be charged for the repair. We will ask the contractor to provide us with a report and if there is a dispute, staff will liaise and negotiate with the resident.

Service Hours

The ZHA Maintenance & Repairs service operates Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm. It consists of the Maintenance Manager, the Deputy Maintenance Manager, the Maintenance Officer, and the Properties & Facilities Administration Manager.

Contacting the Team

The Repairs office can be reached by choosing the Repairs option when calling the head office phone number (020 7584 2769), or via email on repairs@zebrahousing.com. Repair requests can be placed via email at any time. During office hours, tenants will receive an email to confirm receipt of their request and, as soon as reasonably possible, confirmation of the date(s) on which they will receive a visit from the Repairs team.

Out of Hours

Issues may occur outside office hours which require immediate attention. These should be reported to the resident warden. The resident warden may find useful contact details and information in their Warden's Handbook, or may contact the Head of Resident Services if further support is needed. The Head of Residential Services will attend in person if required or assist

the warden in finding a solution.

If non-emergency repairs are reported to a warden, they should ask the resident to contact the office via email instead.

Primary Survey

Upon receipt of a repair request, the PFAM carries out a primary survey of the reported issue to gain an understanding of what the cause may be and how it can best be rectified. This may involve asking the tenant to provide information such as video or photos. Some issues can be rectified by the PFAM already at this stage (i.e., tripped consumer unit switches, user fault, minor boiler errors, queries regarding utilities, requests for fixtures, fittings, or furniture). If not, once as much information as possible has been gathered, the issue will be logged as a job for either a member of the in-house team or a contractor, and, when possible, scheduled in for completion within the timeframes outlined below, depending on urgency.

Secondary Survey

If a primary survey does not yield the needed results, and a member of the in-house team is available within a reasonable timeframe, a secondary survey can be scheduled in to investigate the issue and its cause. The in-house team will report back to the PFAM their findings and the next steps to take, such as part or materials to order before a second visit.

While every effort is made to ensure that primary and secondary surveys have been carried out before a contractor is called out, there may be times during holiday periods or sickness where this is not possible.

Priorities

ZHA carries out three types of repairs/maintenance which it describes as:

- Reactive maintenance – Repairing items that have broken or stopped operating; stopping a leak, replacing a window fastener, bleeding a radiator, replacing taps etc.
- Planned maintenance, major repairs & improvements – Servicing plant and equipment, expensive repairs (most repairs over £500) and improvements; replacing a kitchen, redecorating, replacing doors or windows etc.
- Health & safety planned preventative & remedial works, such as rectifying issues brought to our attention after annual H&S inspections, facilitating or carrying out regular statutory checks & repairs of fire doors, areas or items containing asbestos, fall safe systems, fire prevention equipment etc.

The ZHA Board approves separate annual budgets for responsive maintenance and planned maintenance, major repairs & improvements, and H&S works. Staff must take reasonable measures to ensure that maintenance and planned/major repair expenditure, in any year, remains within the budget.

There may be times when responsive maintenance expenditure is excessive. In these instances, some items of non-urgent repairs may be delayed.

Reactive Maintenance Priorities

Category 1 - Emergency (response within 24 hours)

This category should be used under the following circumstances:

- The defect may constitute a health and safety hazard or may cause severe hardship, e.g., loose or falling brickwork, a gas leak, an electrical fault likely to cause shock or fire, total loss of power, water, or heating, water coming through a ceiling etc.
- If the defect is not brought under control/made safe within 24hrs, further damage could be caused to property or people.
- The nature of the defect constitutes a high security risk.

During working hours, reports of issues constituting an emergency should be handed over by phone to the Maintenance Manager or, in their absence, the Deputy Maintenance Manager. They must either attend or, if it is unlikely that they can rectify the issue, for example if it is clear that a gas engineer or plumber is required, they should advise the PFAM which contractor to contact. If a contractor is called out, this should be via phone and works order.

With all repairs, the aim is to complete the repair and get it right first time. However, in the case of an emergency repair, if quite a lot of work is required, we may attend ASAP to make safe and return at a later stage to carry out the permanent fix. In the case of a burst pipe, the emergency response may be to turn off the water, with the repairs to the defective pipe being undertaken on the following working day.

Emergency repairs should not represent more than 10% of all repairs.

Category 2 - Urgent (response within 5 days)

For repairs not covered by the above, but requiring priority attention, for example:

- Minor structural faults likely to create further damage in the short term, e.g. missing or slipped slates, dripping taps, partly blocked drains;
- Low security risk or defective means of escape, e.g. front entrance or fire door needing easing and adjusting;
- Relative inconvenience to resident e.g. WC not working properly, glazing broken.

Urgent repairs should not represent more than 20% of all repairs.

Category 3 - Routine (response within 15 days)

All other essential routine repairs not in priority 1 or 2.

- E.g. replacement of door or window furniture, rendering and works to gates and paths, replacement of sanitary fittings etc

Routine repairs should represent about 70% of all repairs

Contractor Jobs

When a job is logged for a contractor, if it does not fall under priority 1 or 2, reasonable effort should be made to obtain an estimate from the approved supplier before they are instructed to carry out works. A works order outlining the task, the timeframe for completion, specific appointment dates, tenant contact details (where relevant), access details, approx. cost etc. will be emailed to the approved supplier by the PFAM once approval has been obtained from the Maintenance Manager.

Contractor jobs falling under priority 1 or 2 may require the tenant to stay home to provide access, in which case both the tenant and contractor will be notified by the PFAM. Planned/major works, or works which carry H&S implications, may require the presence of the Maintenance Manager or, in their absence, the Deputy Maintenance Manager, in which case the PFAM will liaise with them regarding scheduling, and the tenant will be notified that they are not required to stay home to provide access. The PFAM will notify the tenant if they, for safety reasons, are required to vacate the property while works are ongoing.

Health & Safety Planned Preventative & Remedial Works

Every year, we carry out works in flats as part of our H&S programme. This includes, but is not limited to, gas safety testing, PAT testing, testing of fire prevention systems, fire blankets & extinguishers, Legionella testing (microbiological & temperature), fire door testing, and electrical testing. The PFAM programmes in members of the in-house team or approved suppliers to carry out all planned works to ensure deadlines are not missed. Tenants are given no less than 48 hours' notice and are not required to stay home to provide access.

Planned Works, Major Repairs & Improvements

From time to time, planned or major works may need to be carried out whilst tenants are in occupancy. This could be window or door replacements, upgrading of kitchens or bathrooms, fire safety systems etc.

Such works will be produced in the most effective way possible. The most likely method will be through competitive tender for contracts over a period of 1-3 years. Once the tenders have been received and opened, the Maintenance Manager and Head of Health & Safety and Properties will seek Board approval.

Every resident affected by the programme will receive details of it and the likely timescales. Where works are to be completed

in individual flats, we will discuss this with the resident, working with them and the contractor to find the best way to achieve a swift and satisfactory conclusion.

During major works, tenants won't be required to stay home to provide access for contractors.

Void Repairs

ZHA will undertake an appropriate level of repairs to void properties to ensure a minimum void period and easy letability. Standard void works will include checking all services are safe and in good working order, cleaning, replacing furniture and/or appliances if necessary, and replacing or repairing minor fittings and fixtures.

Where possible, major works such as replacing kitchens or bathrooms will be scheduled within the planned maintenance programme rather than when a property is void, unless there is a change of tenancy aligning with the programme. Redecorating will normally be undertaken during void periods.

When a tenant gives notice to leave, the Housing team notifies all relevant staff and updates the void spreadsheet to reflect the change. The PFAM will schedule for the Maintenance Manager and Head of Health & Safety and Properties to carry out a void check, following the deadlines outlined in the Voids Policy. The PFAM will, on receipt of the void report, schedule in works together with the Maintenance Manager and Head of Health & Safety and Properties to ensure that a reasonable amount of time is allocated for all tasks. The PFAM will provide a re-let date to the Housing team to enable them to let the flat as soon as possible.

Materials, appliances, furniture, and fittings required to enable void works will be ordered for delivery by the PFAM and/or the Maintenance Manager in advance.

Decorations After Repairs

ZHA is responsible for the internal and external decoration of its flats. We generally decorate on a cyclical basis or just before letting a flat.

When internal decorations are damaged by building defects or are damaged during repair works, they should be returned to an acceptable standard as soon as possible after repairs are completed.

When decorations are affected by water penetration, re-plastering, or damp-proofing works, it should be borne in mind that re-decorations cannot be undertaken until the structure of the building has completely dried out. In these circumstances it should be explained to the resident why there will be a delay in redecorating.

Residents' Alterations And Improvements

Residents can carry out minor improvements or alterations but only with ZHA's written consent. We will always try to agree all

reasonable requests. However, we may also require residents to reinstate alterations before they move.

Where a resident requests permission to carry out an improvement, it should always be in writing to the PFAM. The PFAM will discuss with the maintenance manager whether it is a reasonable request, and if so, grant it subject to the usual conditions regarding carrying out the work in a professional way, at no cost to ZHA and making good of any damage, etc.

Definition Of An Improvement

This is any alteration or addition to the landlord's fixtures and fittings or in connection with the provision of services to the property.

Withholding Consent

When deciding on whether to grant consent or not, the following should be considered:

- Will it make the property less safe?
- Will it involve ZHA in additional expenditure?
- Will it reduce the amenity or the amount of living accommodation?
- Will it contravene planning or conservation regulations?

Improvements Carried Out Without Consent

Where a resident has carried out an improvement without ZHA's consent, we may well insist that is removed and may charge the tenant for any cost incurred.

Cost

The Head of Health & Safety and Properties and Student Services Director can approve orders for goods and services up to a limit of £5,000 on any single item.

Expenditure between £5,000 and £20,000 should be subject to managers obtaining quotes and making an appropriate selection, which is recorded and subject to approval by the CEO.

Expenditure more than £20,000 must be subject to two competitive quotes. The exception to this is for painting contracts. However, all such contracts must be reported to the Board prior to the commencement of work.

Recharging

Occasionally, we may need to re-charge a resident for a repair either during or after the end of their tenancy. This is likely to be because:

- They, their family, or a visitor to their home caused the damage;
- They have carried out an unauthorised improvement or repair;

- They have failed to carry out a repair that is their responsibility.

When a repair that could be the resident's responsibility is reported, the PFAM will explain this to the resident and inform them that they might be charged for the repair. The PFAM will discuss with the Maintenance Manager the best way to rectify the issue, which contractors to use, a timeline for the repair etc. As soon as possible, the tenant should be made aware of the exact cost of the repair. The Finance team will be informed by the PFAM if it is necessary to withhold the tenant's deposit.

There may be situations where a tenant is charged less than the full cost of such repairs. It will ultimately be the responsibility of the Head of Health & Safety and Properties and Student Services Director on the extent to which we pursue the debt.

Right To Repair

In some circumstances, if ZHA fails to carry out repairs within a reasonable timeframe, a resident may be entitled to carry them out and claim a payment back from ZHA. However, the scheme is very complicated, limited in terms of which repairs the tenant can carry out, and what payment they can claim back.

If a resident wishes to go through the right to repair process, the Head of Health & Safety and Properties and Student Services Director will meet with and advise the resident of the appropriate procedure.

Aids And Adaptations

Where residents have difficulty in managing their home because of a disability, we will carry out reasonable adjustments. This could be temporary access ramps or handrails, moving installations or fixings to a reachable location, installing vibrating and/or flashing fire alarm devices etc.

Where major adaptation is required, we will liaise with our approved suppliers, local social services, their university, medical authorities, and any organisation acting in an advocacy capacity. Scope for improvement may be limited given the nature of our stock, which does not enable the installation of stair lifts, adapted beds, larger equipment in bathrooms etc.

Any requests for adaptations should be dealt with by the PFAM and Head of Health & Safety and Properties.

Customer Care

We will always try to give the best possible service to residents. We want residents to delight in our responsiveness and the quality of our service. If there are delays in carrying out a repair, we will keep residents informed and explain why there has been a delay. We will always try to meet and exceed customer expectations. If we think the repair request is unreasonable or not our responsibility, we will try to find other ways of resolving this through negotiation and advice.

To ensure the best standards of customer care, ZHA will:

- Ensure our staff and contractors turn up and do what was agreed at the agreed time;
- Carry out the job in as few visits as possible, leaving site clean & tidy;
- Have polite, competent and friendly staff;
- Give choice to residents wherever possible;
- Monitor the quality of our service;
- Involve residents in setting standards.

Customer Feedback On Responsive Repairs

At the end of each month, the PFAM will share a survey with tenants who have reported a repair in their flat.

- Was the work completed within the expected timeframe?
- Was the repair satisfactory?
- Was the response polite and helpful?
- How did they rate the overall experience?

The PFAM will report monthly to the rest of the ZHA team, and the information will be reported to the Board each quarter.

Feedback To Residents

On an annual basis we will report to residents on how we performed on maintenance, specifically quoting the results of surveys and job completion analysis.

This information will be incorporated into ZHA's annual report.

Complaints

If something goes wrong, we will do all we can to put it right immediately. If a resident wishes to make a formal complaint, they should be informed of our formal procedure. However, we will make all reasonable effort to resolve the problem before it is escalated to this level.

Monitoring Responsive Repairs

The PFAM enters all incoming jobs on SDM, allocating each job to a maintenance officer or contractor. Each record will include a description of works, access details where relevant, appointment date(s), expected completion date, and an estimated cost where applicable. The PFAM will, upon receiving confirmation from contractors and members of the maintenance team when jobs are completed, close down jobs and report monthly to the rest of the team whether completion targets are being met.

The information will be incorporated into the balanced scorecard and reported to the Board quarterly.