

GARAGE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

I - General Instructions

- I.1. Trafford Housing Trust owns and rents garages in various locations throughout the Borough. Each Area Office shall be responsible for the management of all garage sites within their defined area.
- I.2. Anyone who is 18 years of age or over, who is a resident within the Borough of Trafford is eligible to apply and rent a Trafford Housing Trust garage but allocation shall be made in the following order according to the date of application within each category:-

Category 1

Trafford Housing Trust tenants or members of their household who are registered disabled and require or have a motor vehicle to aid their mobility. This shall include tenants who may not own a motor vehicle but have another nominated driver/vehicle owner who is the registered person who provides the facility.

Category 2

Other Trafford Housing Trust tenants not included in category 1.

CATEGORY 3

Ex Trafford Housing Trust tenants have exercised the Right to Buy.

CATEGORY 4

Other residents in the area.

- I.3. A register shall be kept in each Area office holding details of garage sites within their area which shall be made available to any of the above persons waiting to apply to rent a garage.
- I.4. All applications for a garage must be made using the standard Garage Application Form.

**Garage
Application
Form**

2 Allocations policy

- 2.1 A separate waiting list shall be kept for each block/site of garages (APPENDIX 1). This shall be updated and reviewed on a monthly basis.
- 2.2 Applicants may apply for more than one location.
- 2.3 If an applicant is offered and accepts a tenancy of a garage in their second area of choice, they can request to remain on the list for their first area of choice and will be offered a transfer in accordance with their position on the first area waiting list. The date of their original application shall remain for this purpose.
- 2.4 Where a person currently holds a tenancy of a garage but wishes to rent an alternative garage in another area due to them moving home, they should make a new application to rent a garage which will be assessed and they will be informed of their new position on the waiting list. Priority shall only be given in accordance to 1.2.
- 2.5 Where an applicant on the waiting list has failed to respond to two offers of the garage sites of their choice, then their application shall be deleted from the waiting list and the applicant advised in writing accordingly.
- 2.6 All garages shall be let for the sole purpose of storing a motor vehicle in line with the Trafford Housing Trust's Garage Tenancy Conditions (Appendix 13).
- 2.7 Garages will not be let to Trafford Housing Trust tenants who have arrears on their property rent account. If the applicant to be offered the garage is a Trafford Housing Trust tenant, a check must be made of their property rent account to ensure the account is not in arrears. The tenant will be offered the opportunity to clear the arrears to enable an offer to be made.

3 Day-to-day management policy

- 3.1 A garage shall be inspected when terminated using the Garage Inspection Form (APPENDIX 3) and its condition assessed as to whether it requires repairs and then re-let within the target performance set by Trafford Housing Trust.

**Garage
Waiting List**

**GWL3
Letter**

**Garage
Inspection
Form**

- 3.2 All day-to-day repairs to garages shall be carried out on a Priority R basis. If as a result of vandalism or repairs the garage is unusable until repairs are completed then no rent charge should be made for the period whilst the tenant does not have use of the garage. Where possible an alternative garage on the same site should be offered.
- 3.3 The rent payments shall be monitored on a weekly basis and where a tenant fails to make regular payments or the account is continually in arrears of more than eight weeks rent, the tenancy may be terminated. Authority for approving the termination of garages in these circumstances is delegated to the Rents Team.
- 3.4 All non Trafford Housing Trust tenants have to pay VAT on their garage. Information on RTB sales shall be provided by the Finance Section, and where tenants purchase their property but continue to rent a garage. A GARVAT letter shall be sent advising them of the VAT change (APPENDIX 4) and the account should be amended accordingly from the date of the purchase.
- 3.5 All complaints of misuse or breach of tenancy conditions shall be investigated and appropriate action taken to remedy the matter.
- 3.6 The cleaning and clearance of each site should be included on the departments cleaning service rota. Each garage site shall be inspected on a fortnightly basis to ensure they are being kept clean and free from debris. The cleaning rota should be set according to the requirements of each site to ensure it meets an acceptable standard. One off clearance maybe undertaken with the approval of the Neighbourhood Housing Manager.

**GARVAT
letter**

Procedures

I General Instructions

Each Area Office shall be required to keep a register all garages in the area which shall be made available to persons wishing to apply to rent a garage in accordance with the Garage Tenancy Application (APPENDIX 5).

- 1.2 A garage waiting list in accordance with (APPENDIX I) shall be maintained for each garage site within the area and reviewed on a weekly basis by the CSO from which applicants shall be selected for the allocation of vacant garages.

**Garage
Tenancy
Application
Form**

**Garage
Waiting List**

- 1.3 CSO shall be responsible for letting and monitoring the allocation of garages.
- 1.4 A Garage Tenancy Card shall be completed and kept up to date for each garage by the CSO (APPENDIX 6)
- 2 Dealing with applications to rent a garage**
 - 2.1 Anyone in accordance with the **Policy 1.2** who wishes to apply to rent a Trafford Housing Trust garage must complete a Garage Application Form (APPENDIX 5).
 - 2.2. Applicants may chose more than one location and should be encouraged to do so using the garage register (APPENDIX 1) to identify exactly for which garages sites they wish to be considered.
 - 2.2 On receiving an application for a garage the CSO will assess the priority category the applicant will qualify for in accordance with the **Policy 1.2** and update the waiting lists for the garage sites chosen.
 - 2.4 The applicant will be informed in writing of the priority category into which their application has been placed using letter GWLI (APPENDIX 7) **Note: Where the applicant for whom the garage is required is disabled, then copies of documents confirming they are disabled should be provided.**
 - 2.5 Applicants whose circumstances change should provide details of their new circumstances in writing and their application shall be reassessed by the CSO and their position on the waiting list amended accordingly (for example, change of address or becoming registered disabled).
- 3 Making an allocation**
 - 3.1 All details regarding the offer of garage shall be recorded on the Void Garage Form (APPENDIX 8).
 - 3.2 Once a garage is available for letting, the CSO shall offer it to the next applicant on the waiting list for that particular garage site. The garage should be officered to the applicant who is in the highest priority category in accordance with the **Policy 1.2** and then by the date of application in that category.

Garage Tenancy Card

Garage Tenancy Application Form
Garage Waiting List

GWLI Letter

Void Garage Form

- 3.3 If the applicant to be offered the garage is a Trafford Housing Trust tenant and their property rent account is in arrears, they should be sent letter GWL2A (APPENDIX 9) giving them five working days from the date of the letter to clear the account in full. This will also apply to any arrears which may be owed on any other garage tenants. The account shall be checked by the CSO and if the tenant has failed to clear the account, no offer shall be made and the garage offered to the next applicant in line with priority on the waiting list.
- 3.4 Once a suitable applicant has been selected, the CSO shall formally offer the garage by sending letter GWL2 (APPENDIX 10) to the applicant giving them seven days from the date of the letter to accept. If no reply is received within the timescale then the offer of the garage shall be withdrawn and an offer made to the next applicant in line from the waiting list.
- 3.5 Applicants who are made offers of a garage in line with the sites they have selected who fail to reply to two offers shall be sent letter GWL3 (APPENDIX 11) by the CSO and their applicant removed from the list in accordance with the **Policy 2.5**.
- 3.6 When an applicant accepts the tenancy of a garage, the CSO should arrange for them to attend the Area Office to sign a Garage Tenancy Agreement (APPENDIX 12) stapled together with Garage Tenancy Conditions (APPENDIX 13).
- 3.7 The CSO shall complete two copies of the Garage Tenancy Agreement. The tenant shall be required to sign both copies of the Garage Tenancy Agreement which shall be witnessed by the CSO; a copy of the Garage Tenancy Agreement should be retained by the tenant.
- 3.8 The CSO will create a tenancy and rent account on First Housing.
- 3.9 Copies of the following documents shall be filed by the CSO on the appropriate garage file:-

Tenants original garage waiting list application, signed Garage Tenancy agreement, void garage form.

GWL2A letter

GWL2 letter

GWL3 letter

Garage Tenancy Conditions/Agreement

- 3.10 The Garage Tenancy Card shall be updated with the new tenant's details (APPENDIX 6)
- 3.11 The new tenant's details should be removed from the waiting list for each area of their choice.

Note: If the new tenant has accepted a garage on their second choice of garage site and wish to remain on the waiting list to transfer to a site of their first choice, when one becomes available, their application details shall be retained on the waiting list for their first choice and updated with details of the garage the applicant is currently renting. (Refer to Policy 2.3).

4 Dealing with a termination

- 4.1 Tenants who wish to end the tenancy of a garage must do so by giving Trafford Housing Trust seven days written notice using a Termination of Garage Tenancy Form (APPENDIX 14).
- 4.2 On receiving the notice of termination the CSO will check the rent account and send GARTERM letter to the tenant (APPENDIX 15).
- 4.3 Where a tenant sends in a letter giving notice to terminate, the CSO should acknowledge the letter and complete a formal termination form, attaching copies of the letters to the termination form.
- 4.4 On the date that the tenancy of the garage ends and the keys are received, the CSO should complete Section 1 of the Void Garage Form (APPENDIX 8). The CSO/NHO shall inspect the garage for repairs within three working days. On return to the office after the inspection a list of the required repairs shall be passed to the Repairs Hotline to order via First Housing. Section 2 of the Void Garage Form should be completed.
- 4.5 Where the tenant fails to return keys on the Monday following the termination of the tenancy then a weeks rent shall be payable and charged to the rent account. If by the end of the week in which the keys were due to be returned they have still not been received, the CSO shall request the Repairs Hotline to order a lock change. A letter shall be sent to the tenant advising that a lock change has been ordered and the cost will be recharged to them. (Refer to Policy on Rechargeable Items).

Garage Tenancy Card

Garage Termination Form

GARTERM Letter

Void Garage Form

- 4.6 Should the tenant have left belongings in the garage the CSO should visit or write to the tenant requesting they clear the garage within seven days or provide a written statement giving Trafford Housing Trust authorisation to dispose of the goods for which Trafford Housing Trust will make a charge. **The tenancy of the garage should not be terminated until vacant possession is obtained** and for which period rent shall continue to be charged.
- 4.7 The CSO shall put the tenancy into void.

5 Ordering repairs

- 5.1. All garage repairs should be reported to the Repairs Hotline.

6 Day-to-day management

- 6.1 If a complaint is made regarding the misuse of a garage or of the tenant causing a nuisance, the CSO shall visit the complainant(s) and obtain a statement of events.
- 6.2 Where there is evidence to substantiate the complaint, the CSO shall write to the tenant of the garage advising of the complaint and requesting that no further misuse or nuisance occurs. The complainant(s) should be advised to monitor the situation for the next 2/3 weeks.
- 6.3. If a further complaint is reported that the misuse or nuisance is continuing and there is evidence to substantiate the complaints the CSO shall submit a report to the Neighbourhood Housing Manager recommending the tenant be terminated.
- 6.4 The NHM shall consider the report and where it is approved that the tenancy be terminated the CSO shall write to the tenant giving them seven days notice to quite and quit and surrender the keys. A Garage Termination Form (Appendix 14) should be completed with a copy of the report attached and passed to the CSO.

Garage Termination Form