



<b><i>Furnished Let Service Policy</i></b>	
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Mags Lightbody</b>
<b>Approved by LHO Development Committee</b>	<b><i>Date: 21 January 2005</i></b>
<b>Date of Next Formal Review</b>	<b><i>Date: January 2008</i></b>

**GHA will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in other non-written format, and in a variety of languages.**

**Application of this Policy to LHOs**

<b>Mandatory</b>	✓
<b>Variation Possible</b>	
<b>Framework Only</b>	
<b>Local Policy Required</b>	

***Indicate which applies***

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Introduction and Implementation - Background, Division of Responsibility, Delegated Authority	3
2. Scope for Local Variation	4
3. Principles, Aims and Objectives	5
4. Sustainability	6
5. Equal Opportunities Statement	6
6. Legal and Regulatory Framework	7
7. The Furnished Let Service Policy	8
8. Performance Monitoring	17
9. Policy Reviews/ Consultation	18
10. Service Standards - Confidentiality, Tenant/ Other Service User Satisfaction, Complaints	19
11. Links with other policies	19

Appendix 1 - GHA/LHO Functional Split.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background**

- 1.1.1 Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) is a registered social landlord, established with the aid of New Housing Partnership funding to take over the housing stock of the Council through a Large Scale Voluntary Transfer.
- 1.1.2 At the point of stock transfer, GHA inherited in the region of 2,900 permanent furnished let packages provided as property related services to predominantly GHA tenants, but also other housing providers and voluntary organisations.
- 1.1.3 In addition to continuing to service existing furnished let packages, GHA will welcome requests to set up new furnished let services from GHA housing applicants through the local housing organisations and also from other housing providers/ voluntary organisations.
- 1.1.4 This Furnished Let Service Policy sets out the policy position of the GHA. It is stressed that this Policy relates to furnished let services provided by this Association. These should not be confused with temporary furnished flats (TFFs) that GHA lease to the City Council for homeless persons awaiting permanent rehousing or those let through the NASS (National Asylum Support Service) contract to asylum applicants whilst they await an asylum application decision. Furnishing provision and management of these properties is the responsibility of the City Council under their own policy arrangements.

### **1.2 Division of Responsibilities**

- 1.2.1 GHA will ensure that staff and Board/Committee responsibilities in relation to the management of this Policy are clear.
- 1.2.2 The role of GHA's LHO Development Committee includes the approval and monitoring of the Association's Policy relating to service delivery as defined within GHA Ltd Standing Orders paragraph 18.
- 1.2.3 Focusing on local accountability, GHA is devolving all management services to a network of local housing organisations (LHOs) spread throughout the City who will act as the first point of contact for GHA customers. However, provision and management of the vast majority of furnished let service business will initially be supported directly by GHA through a central Furnished Let Service.
- 1.2.4 GHA and LHO will be jointly responsible for implementing this furnished let service policy in accordance with the GHA/LHO functional

breakdown of activities attached (see Appendix 1) as specified in the Interim Management Agreement.

- 1.2.5 However, it is noted that as the GHA Furnished Let Service has developed, many of the responsibilities shown on the LHO side of Appendix 1 have since switched over to GHA. Accurate division of responsibilities are set out on the Furnished Let Service procedural guidelines.
- 1.2.6 Where responsibilities remain with the LHO, GHA will ensure that the performance of LHOs meets the performance levels and targets required by GHA's Business Plan, policies and Interim Management Agreements and will monitor LHO compliance to agreed targets.
- 1.2.7 Management responsibility of individual properties/ tenancies where furnished let service have been provided by GHA will remain the responsibility of the LHO where an interim management agreement with the GHA has been concluded. In the case of the provision of a furnished let service to other housing providers or voluntary organisation, property/ tenancy issues will again be the responsibility of the housing provider.

## **2. SCOPE FOR LOCAL VARIATION**

- 2.1 GHA Furnished Let Service will initially deliver the majority of service provision centrally. With this, this policy will be deemed to have mandatory application for all LHOs.
- 2.2 However, in addition to the GHA policy position, LHOs may seek to further develop this policy to meet the needs of the LHO community and still maintain the overall business objectives of GHA. GHA will be happy to consider such local policy enhancements.
- 2.3 It is also noted that furnished let service provision within this policy is intended to be flexible to allow services to develop in line with tenant and service users needs without the need for local policy variations. This is in line with GHA's commitment to continuous improvement in the type and the way we offer services.
- 2.4 Where local policy enhancements are sought, these should take into account the following: -
  - Statutory and regulatory requirements including Communities Scotland Performance Standards, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations Best Practice Guide "Raising Standards" and periodic Guidance that may be received. Attention is also drawn to the tenant information and participation provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

- The provisions of GHA's Business Plan
- The requirement for GHA to operate and deliver a performance management framework that will ensure its commitments to tenants and agreements with key stakeholders are being delivered
- The feasibility of introducing policy changes that may require, for example, Information and Communications Technology changes
- LHOs should consult with tenants, registered tenant's groups and other service-users before implementation of their own policies

### **3. PRINCIPLES, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 GHA aims to offer a quality furnished let service at affordable service charges to any tenant in need of this important additional service or as part of other marketing initiatives.
- 3.2 The report of the Homelessness Task Force<sup>1</sup> noted that for many homeless people, the offer of an unfurnished tenancy is not enough because they lack the means to provide basic furniture. GHA supports this view and also acknowledges the impact of this on the sustainability and viability of individual tenancies in such circumstances. The provision of a Furnished Let Service will help GHA address this need in a proactive, integrated manner alongside housing allocations and homeless policies. This service is also in keeping with the national policy directives aimed at driving up the availability of furnished accommodation as will be discussed in Section 6.3 and 6.4 of this Policy.
- 3.3 The furnished let service can also be accessed directly by other housing providers and voluntary organisations facing the same challenges in terms of responding to the need for furnished accommodation.
- 3.4 Whilst the provision of this service will be an imperative for many prospective tenants coming through the homeless route to rehousing, it is highlighted that the Furnished Let Service is open to all tenants provided the service relates to the provision of adequate accommodation (i.e. furnishing services are required to sustain the tenancy).

---

1. Homelessness Task Force (2002) *Homelessness: An Action Plan for Prevention and Effective Response – Report from the Homelessness Task Force to Scottish Ministers* Edinburgh: Scottish Executive

- 3.5 We will provide tenants and other users of the furnished let service with information about how the service operates, the respective responsibilities of all involved parties and new service developments as they arise.
- 3.6 The policy sets out the way in which GHA will offer and manage the furnished let service. The objectives of the policy are to:
- Ensure the highest standards of service are provided to tenants and service users.
  - Inform tenants and service users of the services they can expect and to ensure these are provided efficiently.
  - Ensure that prudent business, financial planning and management of risk are applied in developing the service. This is to make certain it remains viable, without adversely impacting on GHA's Business Plan, but whilst considering issues of affordability for service users.

#### **4. SUSTAINABILITY**

- 4.1 This Furnished Let Service Policy complies with GHA's commitment to sustainability and takes account of wider economic and social impacts of the policy in terms of individuals, households, local communities and the environment.
- 4.2 In developing this policy and for future policy reviews, consideration continues to be given to issues of recycling of used furnishings taking cognisance of the work of the national furniture recycling initiative.

#### **5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

- 5.1 This Furnished Let Service Policy complies with GHA's Equal Opportunities Policy. GHA recognises its pro-active role in valuing and promoting diversity, fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity by adopting and promoting fair policies and procedures.
- 5.2 GHA will check this policy and associated procedures regularly for their equal opportunity implications, taking appropriate action where possible to address inequalities likely to result from the implementation of the policy and procedures.
- 5.3 GHA is committed to providing fair and equal treatment for all its stakeholders including tenants and will not discriminate against any on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family circumstances, employment status or physical ability.

## 6. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 In formulating and implementing this policy, statutory requirements, Performance Standards<sup>2</sup> and good practice outlined in documents such as Raising Standards in Housing<sup>3</sup> have been incorporated.
- 6.2 Legislation and other key documents relevant to this Policy includes:
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
  - Relevant health and safety legislation relating to the component parts of the furnished let package
  - Statements of Best Practice – Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Housing Association – November 2003
  - Homelessness: An Action Plan for Prevention and Effective Response – Report from the Homelessness Task Force to Scottish Ministers (Scottish Executive, 2002)
- 6.3 The report of the Homelessness Task Force recommended that a national framework for furnished tenancies should be drawn up with appropriate funding from Communities Scotland. Further, it recommended that a national furniture grant scheme and re-cycling network should also be established. The Task Force set a goal from this work of providing 1000 additional furnished tenancies per annum in Scotland.
- 6.4 Communities Scotland have since prepared the national framework and launched the Furnished Tenancy Grant that is open to housing providers to apply for funding to provide essential goods where a property is to be let to a homeless person. Funds are administered through local authorities, including Glasgow City Council. In 2004/5 GHA have been approved grant funding and with this have been able to offer new grant aided models of furnished let service for homeless applicants that are housed, with subsidised service charges. These options are seen as an important first move in addressing affordability issues, particularly for tenants in, or returning to paid employment etc.
- 6.5 Finally, the Task Force also recommended that a national furniture re-cycling network be established. As a provider of a furnished let service, GHA will continue to explore furniture re-cycling/ re-use in line with our commitment to sustainability and protecting the environment.

---

2. Communities Scotland/COSLA/SFHA (2001) *Performance Standards for Social landlords and homelessness functions*. Edinburgh: Communities Scotland

3. *Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (1999) Raising Standards in Housing: A Good Practice Guidance Manual*. Glasgow: SFHA

6.6 The following Performance Standards are relevant to this Policy:

**Performance Standard GS3.1 Responsive to service users**

*We place the people who want to use our services at the heart of our work. We treat people with respect and are responsive to their views and priorities.*

**Performance Standard AS1.7 Service Charges**

*We price the services to our tenants and recover costs in a fair and accountable manner.*

**Performance Standard AS4.2 Partnership Working**

*We co-operate with other organisations, and within our own organisation, to ensure that the needs of homeless people are met quickly and appropriately.*

**Performance Standard AS4.4 Prevention**

*We help to prevent homelessness arising in the first place, and its recurrence when it has occurred.*

**Performance Standard AS4.8 Quality of Accommodation**

*When we arrange temporary and permanent accommodation, we treat homeless people fairly and appropriately in terms of tenancy provisions, quality of housing and location.*

**7. THE FURNISHED LET POLICY**

**7.1 Applying for a GHA Furnished Let**

7.1.1 Current GHA Allocations procedures allow existing and prospective tenants seeking housing to express a preference of whether this is on an unfurnished or furnished basis. When a furnished let is secured, the furnishing service provision will attract a service charge on top of property rental costs. Charges will be discussed in Section 7.6.

7.1.2 Tenants requiring a furnished let with GHA should complete a Housing Application Form as normal at their nearest LHO office. This will establish the furnished let service need.

7.1.3 The applicant will normally have to qualify for a particular property in terms of the Allocations Policy, after which consideration will be given to their requirement for the specific property to be furnished if it is not an existing furnished let that is being relet. The exception to this will be special initiatives, e.g.

supported projects, other letting initiatives to address housing demand issues.

- 7.1.4 Furnished let requirements may also emerge as part of acceptance of a referral of a homeless case under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 from the City Council under their statutory homelessness responsibilities.
- 7.1.5 The provision of furnished let services and service charges will be recorded on the tenancy agreement.
- 7.1.6 A furnished let agreement will also be concluded which sets out the rights and obligations of both GHA and the tenant specifically in relation to the furnished let service provision. This will include an inventory of all goods provided.
- 7.1.7 Accepting a property on a furnished basis, or ending a furnished let agreement whilst still a tenant of a GHA property will not affect the legal rights of the GHA tenant embodied in their tenancy agreement and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 7.1.8 Existing GHA tenants in unfurnished tenancies may also apply for furnished let services. This will only be considered where there the LHO considers that without the provision of a furnished let package, the future sustainability of the tenancy may be at risk. Requests to convert an unfurnished let to a furnished let should be made to the LHO who will assess the need and may then make a referral to the GHA Furnished Let Service for furnishing provision.
- 7.1.9 In terms of mutual exchanges of property involving a GHA furnished let, the Allocations Policy of the GHA will apply in determining eligibility to exchange. However, if a tenant is seeking to exchange into a furnished let from an unfurnished tenancy, Sections 7.1.8 and 7.7 of this Policy will also apply. Further, it is stressed that the incoming tenant to the furnished let will inherit the existing furnished let package and rights and obligations under the furnishings agreement of the tenant they are exchanging with.
- 7.1.10 The Furnished Let Service will form close links with Glasgow City Council and other agencies to continue to develop the service with a view to providing a range of affordable options for housing applicants.

## 7.2 The Service

- 7.2.1 The provision of furnished let services will be primarily a demand led service, subject to budget limitations, but GHA will retain the right to refuse to provide the service as detailed in Section 7.7 of this policy.
- 7.2.2 GHA will develop a range of furnishing service options for those in need to more appropriately respond to the needs of tenants and other service users. The GHA Furnished Let Service will detail options in procedural guidelines.
- 7.2.3 The GHA Furnished Let Service, in conjunction with LHOs, will be responsible for ensuring the range of furnished let service options that are available to tenants and service users are widely publicised.
- 7.2.4 The options currently available for tenants and other service users generally involve accepting furnishing services for an initial 6-year period. Options may also be developed to vary this period to help overcome the “poverty trap” that this length of term can create e.g. for those who have accepted a furnished let service whilst unemployed and then want to return to paid employment. Any options to vary the length of agreement will require to be considered against the following:-
- Appropriate financial return to the GHA
  - Required levels of service charges set against issues of affordability and housing benefit qualification
  - Maintaining reasonable furniture depreciation periods.
- 7.2.5 At the end of the term of the agreement, the tenant/ service user will have the option to either end the agreement and have the furnishings removed or to renew the agreement with the appropriate upgrade of furnishings and decoration.
- 7.2.6 In providing a furnished let, it is expected that the tenant will remain in the furnished property for the term of the furnishings agreement. With this, tenants will not normally have the option to convert their tenancy to unfurnished before the agreement has run its full term. This is vital to ensuring the financial viability of the Furnished Let Service.
- 7.2.7 If for any reason, a tenant leaves a furnished let during the term of the furnishings agreement, the property will normally be re-let to another tenant as an existing furnished let. In these cases, GHA will ensure that the furnished let is of the appropriate quality for the incoming tenant. Bed mattresses, bedding, kitchen crockery and utensils will be renewed. Other items will be cleaned and reset or may be renewed or re-covered as deemed appropriate to ensure the same high standards for incoming tenants to existing furnished lets. This approach offers GHA Furnished Let Service some scope to vary the length of such agreements in such cases to reflect the extent of re-use of goods.

7.2.8 Due to the nature of much of the furnished let product, it is not currently a feasible option to remove used goods to store for re-use at a future date. GHA will keep such issues under review as part of our commitment to continually review service provision in line with the needs of tenants and service users.

### **7.3 Tenant Responsibilities**

7.3.1 An inventory will be carried out on the day that the new tenant takes up occupancy. This visit will allow a joint quality check with the tenant on the furnished let package provided. This opportunity will also be utilised to remind the tenant of respective responsibilities and contact points for future support.

7.3.2 As part of GHA's ongoing commitment to a quality service provision, the Furnished Let Service will carry out routine visits to tenants/ service users. The minimum period for tenant contact will be annual.

7.3.3 Tenants will be liable for any loss or damage to any part of the furnished let package through neglect, deliberate misuse, vandalism and theft. GHA Furnished Let Service will pursue the tenant (or former tenant where they have left the property for any reason) for the cost of the same and may report such matter to the police where criminal activity is suspected.

7.3.4 If any part of the furnished let package is damaged or no longer useable, the tenant is required to report this to the Furnished Let Service at the earliest opportunity.

7.3.5 Tenants must give 28 days notice to both their LHO and the Furnished Let Service so that the appropriate end of tenancy checks can be carried out and to establish any future needs.

### **7.4 Replacements**

7.4.1 Some items of furnishing provision are provided strictly on a one-off basis such as bedding, curtains, small essential kitchen items and electrical appliances, i.e. vacuum cleaner / kettle / iron. These will not be considered for future replacement by GHA.

7.4.2 In considering the quality specifications for GHA furnished let products, all other items are expected to last the full term of the furnished let agreement. However, where a tenant considers that any major item requires upgrade due to either defect and/ or normal wear and tear, the GHA Furnished Let Service will consider such requests following an inspection of the property. Where it is felt that the request is a result of wilful damage, misuse or neglect, GHA may refuse to replace the affected items and may recover the costs of such items from the tenant.

7.4.3 Where a tenant is in arrears with rent/ service charges, GHA may refuse to provide any replacements until arrears have been cleared.

## **7.5 The Product**

7.5.1 GHA will develop a range of furnished let packages to suit the varying needs of tenants and service users.

7.5.2 Where possible, GHA will offer prospective tenants moving into a new PFL a colour choice for carpeting, bedding and suite.

7.5.3 The product range will be regularly reviewed to take cognisance of tenant/ service user feedback and product developments to ensure it meets user needs, whilst ensuring adherence to best value principles.

## **7.6 Service Charges**

7.6.1 In providing a furnished let package, an additional property related service charge will be added to the property rental charge for the initial period of the agreement.

7.6.2 This service charge does not constitute a purchase agreement of any kind and all items provided will remain the property of the GHA.

7.6.3 The amount of the service charge will be determined by the model of furnished let package provided, the apartment size and the duration of the furnished let service agreement.

7.6.4 Service charge levels will be reviewed on an annual basis in accordance with the GHA Rents and Service Charges Policy.

7.6.5 For GHA tenants, service charge collection and arrears recovery will be carried out in accordance with the Rent Arrears Policy.

7.6.6 GHA will continue to explore all avenues to help keep service charges at affordable levels, including accessing Furnished Tenancy Grant from Glasgow City Council for qualifying homeless cases that we house.

## **7.7 Refusal To Furnish**

7.7.1 GHA Furnished Let Service, in conjunction with the relevant LHO, reserves the right to refuse to provide or renew furnished let packages in certain circumstances.

7.7.2 We will refuse to furnish individual properties where this is not considered prudent in terms of the viability or sustainability of the furnished let.

- 7.7.3 We may refuse to provide an individual applicant with a furnished let package where the tenant or any member of their household have previously occupied a furnished let and all or part of the furniture package has been damaged/lost/missing/stolen. In such instances, where GHA is not satisfied about the applicant's ability to sustain a furnished let and to protect the furniture, GHA will refuse to provide a furnished let package.
- 7.7.4 We may also refuse to provide any replacement furnishings or a new furnished let package where arrears of rent and/or service charges have accrued until these are cleared.
- 7.7.5 We may refuse to provide any replacement furnishings or a new furnished let package where proceedings for recovery of possession have commenced against the tenant.
- 7.7.6 We reserve the right to refuse to provide a furnished let to existing tenants wishing to convert from an unfurnished tenancy to a furnished let where we are not satisfied as to the legitimacy of the request in terms of Section 7.1.8 of this policy.
- 7.7.7 We also reserve the right to refuse to accept the conversion of a temporary furnished flat package in GHA property leased to the City Council for either homeless purposes or under the NASS contract, to a furnished let, where the package is not considered to be in a reasonable condition having regard to its age.
- 7.7.8 Where we have refused to provide a furnished let package to a GHA tenant and the applicant feels that that refusal is unjustified, they can complain about the decision by following the GHA's Complaints Policy and Procedure.

## **7.8 End of Agreement Term**

- 7.8.1 GHA Furnished Let Service will plan for renewed furnished let arrangements in advance and will consider the financial impact of the investment in a new agreement or potential loss of income should the tenant decide not to continue to receive the service.
- 7.8.2 The GHA Furnished Let Service will contact tenants nearing the end of their agreement period to discuss and agree options. A request by a tenant to renew their agreement may be refused. Circumstances in which this may apply are set out in Section 7.7 of this policy.
- 7.8.3 If there has been a significant "top-up" of the initial furnished let package during the period of the initial agreement, GHA can offer an extension to the agreement and service charges for a further agreed term after which the situation will again be reviewed.

- 7.8.4 Where little or no top-up of the initial package has occurred in the agreement period and the tenant still has a need for a furnished let package and wishes to enter into a new deal for a replacement package, provided there are no reasons to refuse, the tenant will be offered a new deal based on the furnished let package choices available at the time of offer.
- 7.8.5 If the tenant does not want to continue with any aspect of the furnished let package, they will be asked to request a variation to their tenancy agreement by removing the service provision and related service charges. This should be sent in writing to GHA Furnished Let Service.
- 7.8.6 Once the request is received, GHA Furnished Let Service will respond in writing. If agreement is confirmed to ending the arrangement, service charges will cease on the next letting date after the receipt of the request from the tenant. The tenant should retain this letter with their original Tenancy Agreement.
- 7.8.7 Arrangements will then be made for the removal of the furnished let package as recorded in the initial inventory, less goods initially supplied on a one off basis.

## **7.9 House Sales**

- 7.9.1 Where the tenant of a furnished let applies to buy their GHA tenancy, they will be given the option of retaining the furnishings or having these removed.
- 7.9.2 Where the tenant wishes to retain the furnished let package, the cost of the furnished let package will be included in their purchase price.
- 7.9.3 Income arising from the sale of furnishings will be reimbursed to GHA's Furnished Let Service.
- 7.9.4 Should the tenant decide not to include the furnished let package, they will be asked to sign a termination instruction which will be issued by the GHA Furnished Let Service. The furnished let goods will be removed from the property at an agreed date in advance of the final sale of the property after which the related service charge will be ended from the next available letting day.

## **7.10 Clearances**

- 7.10.1 If a GHA tenant in a furnished let is being re-housed as part of a clearance, arrangements will be made to relocate their furnishings to their new tenancy for the remainder of the term of the furnished let agreement.
- 7.10.2 Sections 7.1.5 and 7.1.6 will apply to the new tenancy.

7.10.3 Steps will be taken by GHA Furnished Let Service in conjunction with the LHO to bring the new tenancy up to furnished let standard including any required attention to:

- Decoration
- Carpeting
- Removal of the furnished let package including disconnection / reconnection of GHA appliances

7.10.4 Where a GHA tenant is being rehoused through a reprovisioning strategy with another housing provider and wishes to take their furnished let package to their new tenancy, GHA will endeavour to negotiate agreement to move and service the package through direct provision to the new housing provider. Arrangements for this type of provision are discussed in Section 7.14 of this Policy.

7.10.5 Where it is not possible to have the new tenancy set up as a furnished let, the tenant will be asked to complete a termination instruction to the GHA Furnished Let Service to end their current furnished let agreement.

7.10.6 Arrangements will also be made for an inventory to be taken by the Furnished Let Service to ensure the furnished let package initially provided is intact at the time of their removal from the property. GHA will take appropriate steps in terms of any damaged or missing items in accordance with this policy.

7.10.7 Service charges will cease at the same time as rental charges for the property they are leaving.

7.10.8 Any entitlement to disturbance payment for GHA tenants moving from a furnished let will be determined by the qualification criteria contained in the relevant statute and the GHA Home Loss and Disturbance policy and procedures.

## **7.11 Conversion of NASS (National Asylum Support Service) Lets**

7.11.1 In circumstances where a person seeking asylum in the United Kingdom is granted leave to remain in the country and wishes to pursue the permanent furnished tenancy of the GHA property temporarily provided to them through the City Council NASS contract, GHA Furnished Let Service in conjunction with the relevant LHO will consider such requests.

7.11.2 If GHA agrees to such a conversion, GHA Furnished Let Service will negotiate the purchase of the furnished let package from the City Council based on an agreed formula in the stock transfer agreement between GHA and the City Council.

7.11.3 In many instances, the standard of Asylum Seeker furnished let will be inferior to the GHA furnished let standard. In such cases, GHA will take active steps to assess the condition of furnishings with a view to topping up the package to bring it up to the required standard.

7.11.4 A furnished let agreement will be concluded with the tenant on the terms set out in this policy.

## **7.12 Conversion of Temporary Furnished Lets**

7.12.1 Where the City Council seeks to discharge its homeless duties by asking GHA to allow a tenant occupying property as temporary furnished accommodation to secure this as permanent accommodation on a furnished let basis, GHA Furnished Let Service in conjunction with the relevant LHO, will consider such requests.

7.12.2 If GHA agree to such a conversion, Sections 7.11.2 through to 7.11.4 of this policy will equally apply to this type of case.

## **7.13 Maintained Furnished Let Services**

7.13.1 GHA will continue to provide a Furnished Let Service directly to a number of supported housing projects and will continue the commitment previously made by Glasgow City Council to maintain the furnishings to a high standard with items of furnishings being replaced as and when required.

7.13.2 This higher level of maintenance and renewal has financial implications for GHA's Furnished Let Service. However, there are clear reasons to justify the increased level of maintenance/replacement in these supported situations, which would not be the case in mainstream tenancies.

7.13.3 These arrangements will be considered Maintained Furnished Let Services.

7.13.4 This service option is intended to benefit the organisations and their customers and reinforces GHA's commitment to working with other agencies to respond to wider support needs.

7.13.5 As this approach will generate recurring costs, the monthly furniture charge applied will continue indefinitely as a maintained furnished let service charge, but will be expected to run for a minimum period which will be set out in the individual minute of agreement between GHA Furnished Let Service and support agency/ housing provider.

7.13.6 GHA reserves the right to review the continuation of maintained furnished let agreements where these are considered not to be in our best interest.

## **7.14 Furnished Let Packages for other Housing Providers/ Voluntary Organisations**

7.14.1 GHA will continue to offer a Furnished Let Service to other housing providers, voluntary organisations etc based on the same principles as apply to GHA furnished let services.

7.14.2 Should a housing provider or voluntary organisation request that one of their properties is furnished, GHA's Furnished Let Service will consider entering into a minute of agreement for the provision of the furnished let package directly to the organisation and in accordance with this policy.

7.14.3 Charges will be payable by the housing provider to GHA Furnished Let Service, the level, frequency and duration of which will be set out in each minute of agreement.

7.14.4 These charges will be based on GHA's furnished let service charges for the level of package/ service provided.

7.14.5 The housing providers will be entitled to make an agreed deduction from these charges to offset their administrative costs, the level of which will also be recorded in the minute of agreement. This is currently set at 5%, but this level may be reviewed and adjusted if this is felt appropriate whilst still protecting GHA in terms of the required financial return.

## **8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

8.1 In order to judge the success of this policy, GHA will put in place a system which monitors and measures GHA and LHO performance. Each LHO should also have in place a system which monitors and measures LHO performance against its own policy.

8.2 GHA will meet the reporting requirements detailed in this Policy, while each LHO should meet the reporting requirements detailed in its own policy. This will involve regular reports being made available to Committee on issues raised and performance against targets, including an analysis of reasons for targets not being met and any recommendations for policy/procedural change.

8.3 Performance targets have been set in relation to this Policy. Key targets and performance against targets will be published by GHA in newsletters and displayed in GHA's reception area. Each LHO should similarly publish key targets and performance achieved in relation to its own policy.

### **8.4 Monitoring Information**

GHA will measure and report on the following areas: -

8.4.1 Existing furnished let Stock Base – The Furnished Let Service will hold current information by LHO/ housing provider of all properties where a live furnished let package exists detailing:

- Address of property
- Name of tenant/ Service User
- Property Reference number
- Date charge was applied to the rent account

This file will allow the Furnished Let Service to monitor:

- Potential income from service charges
- Projected cases nearing the end of the agreement period and allow planning for revenue/ expenditure implications
- Identify concentrations and demand trends in particular areas and across the City
- That correct service charges have been added to rent accounts

8.4.2 Financial Monitoring – GHA Furnished Let Service will monitor and manage all financial aspects of the service and report monthly on all income and expenditure relating to the furnished let product, service provision and related support costs.

8.4.3 Performance Report – GHA Furnished Let Service will report monthly on performance detailing:

- Caseload activity for new lets, re-lets, top-up activity and new deals for existing furnished let customers
- Processing times for setting for new and re-let requests from LHOs against target timescales
- Tenant/Service User complaints including type, response times and outcome

## **9. POLICY REVIEWS/ CONSULTATION**

9.1 This policy will be subject to planned review every 3 years. More regular reviews will be considered where, for example, there is need to respond to new legislation/policy guidance. Reviews will consider legislative, performance standard and good practice changes.

9.2 GHA will review this policy and furnished let options in consultation with tenants, registered tenants groups and other service-users and account will be taken/has been taken of representations made. Outwith formal policy reviews, furnished let options will continue to be developed to provide a flexible, responsive service in line with the needs of tenants and service users.

- 9.3 A summary of this policy will be published by GHA and will be displayed in GHA's reception area. LHOs are responsible for making available a summary of their own policies.

## **10. SERVICE STANDARDS**

### **10.1 Confidentiality**

- 10.1.1 All information given by tenants and other service users in relation to this Policy will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be discussed with third parties without their permission. GHA will comply with the requirements of the Access to Personal Files Act 1987 and the Data Protection Act 1998 in this regard. LHOs should comply similarly with relation to their own policies.

### **10.2 Tenant/ Service User Satisfaction**

- 10.2.1 GHA is committed to a high level of tenant and other service user satisfaction and continuous improvement in the delivery of this Policy.
- 10.2.2 Satisfaction with the full range of services provided by GHA will be measured regularly, including the effectiveness of the objectives of this policy, and results will be disseminated to tenants and other service users.
- 10.2.3 LHOs are expected to show a similar commitment to a high level of tenant satisfaction, with similar action, in the delivery of their own policies.

### **10.3 Complaints**

- 10.3.1 Our aim is to get it right first time, however, GHA has published its own Complaints Policy and procedures. These can be used where there is dissatisfaction with this policy or its operation. The Complaints Policy and Complaints Procedures are available from GHA and LHO offices and, as with all our policies, can be made available on tape, in Braille, in large print or in translation.

## **11. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

- 11.1 LHOs should consider and implement this Policy in association with the following other related policies:
- Allocations Policy
  - Homelessness Policies
  - Rents and Service Charge Policy
  - Rent Arrears Policy
  - Home Loss and Disturbance Payment Policy

**Appendix 1****Functional Area 15 :****Permanent Furnished Accommodation**

1. As part of the transfer, **GHA** will have around 2,900 permanent furnished flats.
2. **GHA** will continue to provide a furniture service to those tenants that occupy a permanent furnished let at the point of transfer and will provide the service to new tenants.
3. As part of the transfer, **GHA** will commit to transferring temporary furnished lets (Homeless and Asylum Seekers) to permanent furnished tenancies so long as agreed criteria are met.
4. The table below outlines the roles and responsibilities of **GHA** and the **LHO** in relation to the provision of this service.

<b>GHA Support</b>	<b>LHO Functions</b>
<p><b>New Flats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide LHO with Furnished Flat allocation/budget.</li> <li>• Check previous furnished tenancy history for any new applicants seeking a furnished let.</li> <li>• Handle any disputes or issues arising from the delivery of furniture on date of entry.</li> </ul> <p><b>Enquiry and Tenancy Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle any enquiries relating to damage to furnishings including any renewals and charges due to tenant.</li> <li>• Handle any cases of wilful damage identified by <b>LHOs</b>.</li> <li>• Handle all matters relating to stolen furniture including reporting the theft to the Police and any court appearance required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Request for Furnished Let to be Unfurnished</b></p>	<p><b>New Flats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify accommodation to be furnished.</li> <li>• Arrange and carry out <b>accompanied viewing</b> with applicant.</li> <li>• Provide advice / gather information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Issue tenant's responsibilities handout</li> <li>o Advise of rental charge including furniture element</li> <li>o Issue furniture inventory</li> <li>o Issue damage and renewals policy handout</li> <li>o Establish colour choice</li> <li>o Has applicant had a furnished let before</li> <li>o Agree preliminary date of entry</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Check applicant's details including previous tenancy history.</li> <li>• Advise GHA's Furnished Let Team of any previous furnished tenancies.</li> <li>• Arrange all necessary repairs in line with the furnished accommodation specification.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider any applications from tenants occupying permanent furnished lets who would prefer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Order standardised furniture package via computerised repairs system and liaise with <b>GHA's</b></li> </ul>

<b>GHA Support</b>	<b>LHO Functions</b>
<p>unfurnished accommodation. As furniture can only be removed in exceptional cases, liaise with <b>LHO</b> regarding any transfer application that might be necessary.</p> <p><b>Request for Temporary Furnished Let to become Permanent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle any initial enquiries from GCC's Casework Service regarding requests for temporary furnished lets to become permanent, ie, homeless applicants and asylum seekers.</li> <li>• Advise GCC's Casework Team of outcome of application for permanent let.</li> <li>• Take final decision on purchase of furnishings taking account of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ length of time furniture has been in place</li> <li>○ condition of furnishings – good, fair, poor</li> <li>○ purchase price</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Handle all negotiations with GCC</li> <li>• Decide on duration of furniture charge for new permanent furnished accommodation tenant.</li> <li>• Notify <b>LHO</b> of outcome for the purposes of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing Officer records</li> <li>○ Rent account amendment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Re-lets</b></p> <p>Liaise with <b>LHO</b> regarding any permanent furnished lets given up and in relation to re-let process.</p>	<p>Operation Support Team. Issue keys to new tenant on entry date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange for rent account amendment as appropriate.</li> <li>• Carry out customer care visit on date of entry and ensure that furniture has been delivered to tenant's satisfaction and in line with the inventory.</li> </ul> <p><b>Enquiries and Tenancy Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle any tenancy matters including <b>anti-social behaviour</b>.</li> <li>• Handle any initial enquiries relating to damage to furnishings and refer any cases of wilful damage to <b>GHA's</b> Furnished Let Team.</li> <li>• Notify <b>GHA's</b> Furniture Team of any reports of stolen furnishings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Request for Furnished Let to be Unfurnished</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deal with initial enquiries from tenants in permanent furnished lets who would prefer unfurnished accommodation and refer matter to <b>GHA's</b> Furnished Let Team.</li> </ul> <p><b>Request for Temporary Furnished Let to become Permanent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider requests from GCC (via <b>GHA's</b> Furnished Let Team) for temporary furnished lets to become permanent, ie, Homeless applicants and Asylum Seekers. In particular, assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ how temporary tenancy has been conducted</li> <li>○ is accommodation appropriate in terms of size, type, location</li> <li>○ would property normally be available to applicant as a homelessness referral from GCC</li> <li>○ has temporary tenant taken reasonable care of furnishings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Advise <b>GHA's</b> Furnished Let Team of outcome of application and, where</li> </ul>

<b>GHA Support</b>	<b>LHO Functions</b>
	<p>necessary, indicative date of entry when temporary tenancy becomes a permanent furnished let.</p> <p><b>Re-lets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deal with any termination of tenancies involving permanent furnished lets.</li> <li>• Liaise with <b>GHA's</b> Furnished Let Team regarding suitability for re-let.</li> <li>• Identify new tenant and carry out letting process in the normal manner whilst providing relevant information and advice and ensuring that appropriate check on previous tenancy history are made.</li> </ul>