

Policy Title	Extreme Weather Policy
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Officer Responsible for Review	Susie Thompson

EXTREME WEATHER POLICY

1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Both Erimus Housing and Tees Valley Housing (EH & TVH) wish to be a responsible landlord in meeting the expectations of tenants, balanced against meeting its statutory duties and managing resources of the organisation in an effective manner.
- 1.2 The extreme weather experienced in December 2009, caused a review of how, as a housing organisation, resources can be most effectively used to ensure tenants are provided with the most appropriate services.
- 1.3 The policy is intended to set out the organisation's response to extreme weather situations, to ensure a consistent approach is applied and to empower all staff to respond to enquiries in the most appropriate manner.
- 1.4 The policy identifies that the organisation will focus on the provision of established housing services such as supported housing rather than attempt to extend services beyond the capacity of existing resources and its statutory duty.

2 REFERENCES

- 2.1 In producing this report the websites of government agencies, health organisations and specialist agencies, such as Age Concern, were used as a reference point.
- 2.2 In addition, Middlesbrough Council's winter maintenance programme was considered.

3 DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Severe weather is used to describe weather that impacts on lifestyle and the ability to access amenities, and which has a duration exceeding two days.

4 POLICY CONTENT

4.1 In the event of extreme weather, EH & TVH will review what additional support it can practicably support and sustain within its normal housing activity.

4.2 Additional support will focus around the vulnerable and extend to:

- Additional contact with all tenants in sheltered accommodation to enquire as to their health, access to supplies and any requirements for additional support;
- Ensuring tenants are signposted to appropriate agencies and care organisations including Tandem, where appropriate;
- Ensuring access and information is available regarding crisis loans and winter fuel payments via Tandem;
- Ensuring that communal entrances to buildings are kept safe from slips and trips so far as is reasonably practicable.

4.3 Whilst requests from all tenants for support in extreme weather will be considered on their merit, it should be noted that such requests must be met from existing resources, be sustainable and in the best interests of the organisation. Tenants seeking extra support should make their request via the dedicated scheme manager or warden or via the contact centre who will direct the call to the appropriate area housing office. The Head of Housing and Head of Supported Housing will have overall responsibility for deciding what extra support is available.

4.4 Clearing and Gritting Requests

4.4.1 Severe weather frequently brings requests for assistance in clearing and gritting paths.

4.4.2 EH and TVH will ensure as far as is practicable, that communal entrances are kept clear of slips and trips (Occupiers Liability Act). Additionally, both organisations will consider gritting areas which will mitigate any risks to employee's health and safety, where failure to grit would lead to an increased risk e.g. when moving large wheelie bins at high rise schemes (Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations).

4.5 Priorities

4.5.1 EH and TVH will ensure that any additional support is offered to vulnerable tenants where appropriate.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 5.1 The targeting of additional support to those in greatest need, using the sheltered schemes and financial inclusion as a framework ensures we positively support those in greatest need.

6 CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with representatives of TVH and EH board members. Additional consultation was undertaken with Resident Regulators and members of the Housing Advisory Panel, Residents' Panel and the BME focus group.

7 MONITORING AND REVIEW

7.1 Monitoring

- 7.1.1 Requests relating to additional support and the outcome of those requests will be monitored within existing monitoring frameworks (complaints, Tandem referrals and operational management monitoring arrangements).

7.2 Review

- 7.2.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or in light of changed business priorities.

8 RESPONSIBILITY

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the Group Director of Operations and senior officers to ensure that:
- All staff are aware of both EH and TVH's policies;
 - All staff are trained on the policies;
 - Monitoring records are maintained in accordance with both EH and TVH's arrangements;
 - Customers are adequately informed of the policies;
 - Appropriate action is taken against employees whose actions are inconsistent with this policy.