



## THE FAIRHAZEL CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

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# Key Policy

**Effective Date: November 2017**

## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. POLICY STATEMENT
3. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS
4. RESPONSIBILITY
5. CONSULTATION, MONITORING & REVIEW



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The tenancies granted by the Fairhazel Co-operative Limited are contractual tenancies, and may be terminated at any time by the Tenant or the Co-operative serving one month's Notice to Quit, providing the Co-operative vacant possession by immediately returning the keys when the notice expires.

The Fairhazel Co-operative Limited needs to ensure that all keys are returned at the end of a tenancy, in order for the tenant to officially surrender the property so that the property can be re-let.

The keys need to be stored in a secure cupboard based at the office, where access to the keys can be monitored.

## 2. POLICY STATEMENT – RETURNING KEYS WHEN A TENANCY ENDS

### 2.1 Time Limit

Tenants are required to return their keys **no later than** noon on the following day after their one month Notice period, to end their tenancy, expires.

The Fairhazel Co-operative Limited has the discretion to agree to accept the keys to surrender the tenancy **earlier** than the initial Notice period, if it is beneficial to both parties e.g. transferring to a smaller accommodation.

### 2.2 Keys Returned Late

If keys are not returned within the agreed time limit, it could be deemed that the tenant has not given up the tenancy and therefore can cause issues for the landlord, even if the tenant has actually moved out. It can be deemed that the tenant was still intending to re-enter and use the property or there was a delay in transferring personal belongings during a transfer to their new property. The Fairhazel Co-operative Limited has the right to charge additional rent for each day that the keys are delayed in being returned, as any delay will be a financial loss to the Co-operative.

### 2.3 Number of Keys Returned

During the initial sign up of a tenancy, the Fairhazel Co-operative Limited records the number of keys provided to the tenant.

When a tenant returns the keys at the end of their tenancy, the house file needs to be checked, to note if there is a key receipt (usually attached to the Tenancy Agreement) of the number of keys initially provided. If there is such proof, the Fairhazel Co-operative Limited needs to ensure that all keys have been returned.

If the tenant does not return all the keys, the Fairhazel Co-operative Limited is within its rights to replace the keys and recharge the outgoing tenant for the expense.

### 2.4 Termination of Tenancy – Lock Change



When a property becomes vacant and there is concern about its security, arrangements may be made to carry out a lock change.

## **2.5 Rent Deposit – Key or Lock Recharge**

A landlord may deduct money from a tenant's rent deposit, where applicable, for having to replace the keys or carry out a lock change, due to the tenant failing to return keys at the end of a tenancy, or to gain access to the premises as the tenant failed to provide a key when they changed the lock to their property.

## **3. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

The Fairhazel Co-operative will strive to make early contact with tenants when a key issue arises, and where possible will talk it through with them to promote a firm but fair approach.

Where there are specific needs, such as mental health, then the Fairhazel Co-operative will seek to work with support agencies and/or family members to resolve any issues.

## **4. RESPONSIBILITY**

The Management Committee, having now formerly adopted the Key Policy for the Fairhazel Co-operative, accepts the overall responsibility for its implementation and for monitoring its effectiveness.

The Chair of the Management Committee will be responsible for the effective implementation of this policy, and for delegating responsibilities to both the Maintenance Officer and the Housing Manager to ensure appropriate measures are taken and any necessary actions are completed.

## **5. CONSULTATION, MONITORING & REVIEW**

The Chair of the Management Committee will ensure that this policy continues to be developed and improved through discussions and consultation with members in the Management Committee and Rules Working Party.

All tenants of the Fairhazel Co-operative will be notified of any significant changes to the policy that may affect them.

### **5.1 Consultation**

The Fairhazel Co-operative's approach is to ensure that tenants understand the Key Policy before terminating their tenancies. Tenants will be provided with access to the literature on the Key Policy via the Fairhazel Co-operative's website, office.

### **5.2 Policy Enforcement**



The Fairhazel Co-operative recognises that unfortunately there may be some residents who will choose to disregard this policy. In such circumstances every effort will be made to discuss the policy with the tenant so compliance is achieved before action is taken.

### **5.3 Monitoring of Keys**

The Fairhazel Co-operative Limited should have an 'office copy' of each property's set of keys unless the Tenant(s) have officially requested for the office not to have a copy of their keys. These are inspected on a regular basis, i.e. monthly as a minimum. Any issues identified will be actioned within reasonable timescales, recorded and monitored. The keys need to be stored in a secure cupboard based at the office, where access to the keys can be monitored.

### **5.4 Request / Access of Keys to Properties**

Wherever possible, the Fairhazel Co-operative will aim to assist residents when they have 'locked themselves out' of their property / arranging a viewing. Staff, authorised officers and Management Committee members will release the office copy of the key to the resident, once they are satisfied that the resident has the authority to gain access to the flat by the tenant. Contractors will be provided with the spare key, if permission has been given by the tenant to use such a key for access.

It is the staff's, authorised officers' or Management Committee members' responsibility to ensure keys are signed in / out by the member or contractor taking or returning the keys in the 'Key Log' book.

### **5.5 Office Keys**

Staff, authorised officers and Management Committee members, as well as Chairs of working parties and sub-committees, may have access to a set of office keys. It is the authorised officers' responsibility to ensure keys are signed in / out by the member taking / returning the keys in the 'Office Key Log' book.

Members must return their allocated set of office keys upon vacating their position from the Management Committee or Working Party or Sub-Committee.

All staff and authorised officers must return their set of office keys upon resignation from their post.

### **5.6 Review**

This policy will be reviewed as and when necessary an amendment to the policy is required.

