

## Running a Business from Home Policy

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*Our mission is to enhance the Life Chances of residents and service users through providing great homes, first class services and working in partnership to build sustainable communities.*

### 1 Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to the general needs tenants of: Circle 33 Housing Trust, Mercian Housing Association, Merton Priory Homes, Mole Valley Housing Association, Old Ford Housing Association, Roddons Housing Association, Russet Homes, South Anglia Housing, Wherry Housing Association.

### 2 Policy

- 2.1 We welcome the potential benefits for tenants running a business from home. We are committed to helping unlock tenants' entrepreneurial talents and empowering tenants through ensuring the same important opportunities as everyone else to set up a successful business.
- 2.2 Sustainable communities are at the heart of our business. We are committed to creating balanced communities and helping fulfil tenants' aspirations by supporting self employment.
- 2.3 Circle recognises there are many types of business that a tenant can run from home without causing any difficulties. We encourage enterprising tenants to run a business from home. We know that home working can offer flexibility to people in all sorts of situations. This can include parents with young children and other people with caring responsibilities.
- 2.4 You will need our permission to run a business from home. Our focus is allowing tenants to run a business from home wherever possible.
- 2.5 It is important a tenant informs us when they want to run a business from home so that we can support them in doing so by signposting to useful information and resources. As well as making sure we continue to provide safe and pleasant homes and neighbourhoods for all tenants.
- 2.6 We will consider each request on a case by case basis, carefully considering the full circumstances and merits of each individual request. Throughout the



decision making process the officer's aim will be to grant permission wherever possible.

2.7 We are committed to ensuring all tenants live in safe and secure homes and communities. Therefore, there may be circumstances where we need to grant permission subject to certain requirements. Or, where it would not be reasonable or responsible to grant a tenant permission to run a business from home. Such circumstances may include where:

- It is likely to cause a nuisance to neighbours or damage to the home
- It would require major adaption to the home
- The relevant requirements of other agencies need to be met. For example by obtaining planning permission, a check by the Criminal Records Bureau or complying with the relevant Health & Safety Regulations.

### **3 Ensuring Neighbourhoods are Safe and Pleasant Places**

3.1 There are limited circumstances where it may not be reasonable or responsible to grant permission for a tenant to run a specific business from home. This is often because of the effect it will have on neighbours. For example, we will not grant permission for running an animal breeding or boarding kennels business from home.

3.2 If a tenant rents a garage from us we will not grant permission for tenants to run a business from the garage.

3.3 If we become aware of an unsuitable or unauthorised business being run by a tenant from home, we will first contact the tenant to discuss the situation.

3.4 Where possible retrospective permission will be granted.

3.5 If we cannot grant retrospective permission then we may deal with this as a breach of tenancy.

### **4 Supporting Tenants**

4.1 Circle will support tenants in running a successful and appropriate business from home by signposting tenants to useful information and resources.

4.2 Useful national organisations tenants can be directed to include:

- Business Link – [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk).
- The Federation of Small Business – [www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk).
- Small Business – [www.smallbusiness.co.uk](http://www.smallbusiness.co.uk).
- Forum of Private Businesses - [www.fpb.org](http://www.fpb.org)
- Is4profit - [www.is4profit.com](http://www.is4profit.com).

- 4.3 We advise tenants to contact their local Housing Benefit department to seek advice on how running a business from home may affect their housing benefit entitlement.
- 4.4 We encourage tenants successfully running a business from home to contact our Group Communications team. We are interested in promoting tenants' entrepreneurial talents.

## **5 Equality and Diversity**

- 5.1 Circle will treat all customers and staff with fairness and respect. We value diversity and work to promote equality and tackle unlawful discrimination.
- 5.2 We are committed to helping customers to access information about their homes and services in a way that suits individual needs. Please get in touch with your local provider to discuss this.