

Customer Panel

Supporting Vulnerable Tenants

Monday 24 June 2024



We welcomed 22 tenants to the Customer Panel on Monday 24 June, where we looked at how we support customers with vulnerabilities. We also wanted to share with customers how to spot the signs and the referral routes to go down if concerns are raised.

We're committed to supporting tenants living in the properties that we manage. We recognise that support is particularly important to our most vulnerable households, to enable them to be both financially and socially included.

Our aim is to support health creation to empower tenants to;

- Have control over their lives
- Meaningful contact with others
- The confidence to live they way they want

We take a proactive approach, recognising the strengths in early intervention. We endeavour to assertively engage with tenants who we may feel will benefit from support.

What is vulnerability?

Considering the wide range of potential types of vulnerability, its impossible to give a single definitive list. Its essential that we treat every person as an individual, listening and engaging, assessing individual circumstances.



Supporting vulnerable tenants

We support tenants in many ways and recognise that tenants may have barriers or issues that are out of their control, which may affect their ability to manage their tenancy. As a responsible social landlord, we expect all members of staff to do the right thing and report any issues in line with the Vulnerability Strategy.

All our staff are aware of their responsibilities in line with the policy and if something doesn't look right, they report it.

When a referral is highlighted, there are two courses of action;

- Intervention delivered by Berneslai Homes
- Referral to specialist providers

We have dedicated officers who are notified when a potential vulnerability is raised. Each case is then assessed by priority and depending on the severity it is progressed within 5 days or if there is a risk of significant harm, it will be actioned immediately.

We asked;

What are your thoughts on our procedure?

You replied;

- It's positive that tenants are supported
- Good to know that all staff are aware of the policy
- The multi-agency approach is good
- Communication is key
- Need to know what tenants' vulnerabilities are - capture and update information
- Partnership working needs to be stronger
- Look for signs of vulnerability when an officer attends a tenant's home
- The policy needs refreshing as and when
- More work should be done with tenants during their trial tenancy
- More needs to be done when vetting tenants letting properties.

**You can view our
Vulnerability Protocol by
clicking the [link here](#)**

Spotting the signs

We shared a scenario with attendees and asked for their thoughts on what has happened.



Clue 1:

You're visiting a Berneslai Homes property and no one is answering the door. The garden looks overgrown and ivy is covering the windows. What are your initial thoughts?

You replied;

- Are they ill
- Have they been burgled
- Have they abandoned the property
- The tenant could have passed away
- Could they be on holiday

Clue 2:

You peer through the letterbox and there's a build up of post and a newspaper dated five days ago. What could you do to find out more information?

Your replied;

- Ask the neighbours
- Call the Police
- Call Berneslai Homes
- Check with family, if you know them



Clue 3:

You decide to take a look in the back garden. You notice some bin bags containing empty bottles. You look towards the house and spot a broken window. What might have happened?

Your replied;

- There could have been a break in
- Does the tenant have issues with alcohol
- Has there been a fight
- Are squatters there
- Has the property been vandalised

Clue 4:

You spot the neighbours passing. You ask if they have seen the tenants recently. They report that last week they heard shouting and screaming, which is out of character, but they haven't seen the neighbours for at least five days. Does this change your theory?

You replied;

- Someone could have passed away in the property
- Berneslai Homes need to investigate further
- Are they fleeing domestic violence or ASB
- Could the tenant have left the property to stay with friends

Let's look what happened...

Turns out they had won the lottery, had a party and a champagne cork had broken the window.

They decide to go on holiday and completely forgot to cancel the papers and repair the window!

How can tenants help?

We asked;

As tenants how do you think you can help identify vulnerabilities?

You replied;

- Report anything that causes alarm
- Speak to the Neighbourhood Officer if concerns are raised
- Call 01226 787878
- Berneslai Homes could add something to the back of rent letters explaining the process
- Be a good neighbour
- Put an article in the newsletter about spotting the signs
- Advertise referral routes
- Open up community centres as hubs for tenants to go



Thank you for all your input, which we will share with the Tenants First team.

To find out more about how the Tenants First team can help please click on the link to visit our [webpage](#).

We hope to see you at the next Customer Panel on Wednesday 6 November 2024.

If you would like further information on how to get involved, or wish to attend a Customer Panel in the future, please email: communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk