Vulnerability Policy

1.0 Introduction and scope

1.1 This document covers our policy on vulnerability and highlights the ways in which we will identify customers that we might describe as being vulnerable. It also describes how we will work with these customers to ensure they are provided with the support they need to enjoy their homes and sustain their tenancy.

1.2 The toolkit will define vulnerability and show how vulnerability triggers can be identified; it will provide staff with the guidance they need for dealing with vulnerable customers in terms of both supporting them and dealing with breaches.

1.3 The toolkit will also highlight the importance of helping those who are vulnerable achieve independence whilst living in our neighbourhoods. This policy should be used in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Management toolkit and the Tenancy Management toolkit.

1.4 The scope of this policy covers:

Gentoo Group	X
Gentoo Homes	
Gentoo Developments Ltd	
Gentoo Genie	

It applies to:

General needs rented properties	X
Supported housing	X
Sheltered housing	X
Leasehold/shared ownership	X

Rent to buy properties	
Market rented properties (domestic)	
Temporary accommodation	X
Stock owned but not managed by the Group	
Communal areas, including those relating to leasehold/shared ownership properties	
Commercial property (offices, depots etc)	
Stock managed by Gentoo on behalf of a third party	X
Garages and outbuildings	
Remote plant (district heating, electrical pumps etc)	
Curtilage	

2.0 Regulation and legislation

2.1   The Executive Director (Operations) will ensure this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice. The Policy takes into account the following legislation:

Tenancy Breaches
- Housing Act 1988
- Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

Data Protection
- Data Protection Act 1998

Care and Protection
- Care Act
- The Children's Act 2004
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Human Rights Act 1998

3.0 Links to organisational goals

3.1   Our vision and values set the direction and culture of the Group. They ensure that the business is aligned around the desire to create sustainable homes

and communities and to improve the lives of our customers. The vision and values ensure that all of our people understand Gentoo's ethos and are clear about what is expected of them and the contribution they can make.

Vision:

Great Homes – Strong Communities – Inspired People

Values:

Do the right thing
Make a difference
Work together
Keep learning
Give all you've got

The Group's Strategic aims are:

Deliver outstanding service to customers so that people and communities thrive
Actively manage our assets and develop new homes to meet local needs
Support our people to deliver our vision and live our values
Work with others to build effective partnerships
Be well governed and financially strong

4.0 Monitoring and review

4.1   This Policy will be fundamentally reviewed every 3 years, or in line with business need.

4.2   The Business Assurance team will monitor this Policy within a maximum of 3 years, or in line with business need, as part of the Prevention, Support and Crisis audit, and will report to Risk and Audit Committee and Gentoo Group Board.

4.3   The Local Service Offers can be found in Appendix 1.

5.0 Roles and responsibilities

5.1   The Executive Director (Operations) is accountable for ensuring this policy has regard to all legislation, regulation and best practice.

5.2   Overall accountability for this Policy lies with the Executive Director (Operations).

5.3   All staff in Gentoo are responsible for the delivery of this policy.

5.4   Any proposed changes or recommended amendments to this policy will be reported to the Executive Director (Operations) for approval prior to implementation.

6.0 Our policy statement

6.1   As part of the Group's vision to build strong communities, we will strive to ensure that every one of our customers have the opportunity to access our services and sustain their tenancy.

6.2   We define vulnerability as "**an individual or household experiencing difficulties with everyday living.'** We realise that some vulnerable members of our community may therefore require additional support and interventions.

6.3   This does not mean that everyone who meets the definition is vulnerable, but we will use it as a guideline when assessing the needs of our customers.

6.4   To enable our customers to remain in their homes and live as independently as possible, we are committed to ensuring that every opportunity has been provided to support them in their tenancies.

6.5   We will seek to proactively identify people who may require assistance at the earliest opportunity and aim to ensure that we secure the most appropriate, tailored solution for that customer and their household.

6.6   Every customer is treated as an individual when assessing vulnerability and determining the level of support required.

6.7   We will draw upon the expertise of our staff and partner agencies to formulate the most appropriate solution in every scenario.

6.8   Gentoo will remain committed to the principles of equality and diversity throughout the organisation. An equality assessment has been completed for this policy and aims to:
- Meet the needs and choice of people from all backgrounds
- Ensure that our services are relevant, responsive and sensitive to the needs of our existing and future customers
- Ensure that all sections of the community in which we work have equal access to our services.

6.9   Our vulnerability policy will ensure that customers are treated as individuals and with fairness and respect.

6.10   We want to empower customers to feel in control of their everyday life and will achieve this by effective customer profiling, early intervention and appropriate support provision.

7.0 Policy outcomes

7.1   This vulnerability Policy seeks to:
- Treat customers with support needs as individuals
- Provide bespoke responses to individuals who require additional support in obtaining and maintaining a tenancy with Gentoo Group
- Ensure responses and support offers are joined up and flexible
- Take a holistic approach

- Encourage customers to make their own choices and decisions about what services they want
- Tailor responses to life events or personal circumstances

8.0 Training

8.1 Gentoo will ensure that all staff receive the appropriate training to enable them to carry their responsibilities as stated in this policy.

9.0 Records

9.1 All record regarding vulnerable customers including all contacts and attempted contacts, offers of support, any agencies involved etc should be stored on Orchard and/or Streetwise.

Appendix 1- Local Service Offers

Description	We will
Safety, Support and Crisis - working in partnerships we will enable vulnerable customers to sustain their tenancy and live well in their neighbourhood.	• Provide supported accommodation where necessary • Offer advice, support and guidance bespoke to your circumstances