

Risk Assessment: Decant Policy

Introduction

The decant policy is critical towards managing the temporary relocation of residents, often required during refurbishment, redevelopment, or emergency situations. This risk assessment examines the key risks associated with implementing a decant policy, evaluates their potential impact, and proposes mitigation strategies relevant for the Council.

1. Identification of Key Risks

- **Resident Wellbeing and Vulnerability:** Temporary relocation can cause distress, anxiety, and disruption to residents, especially vulnerable groups such as older people, people with disabilities and those tenants with young children.
- **Communication Failures:** Poor communication can lead to confusion, mistrust, or resistance among residents affected by the decant.
- **Legal and Regulatory Compliance:** Failure to comply with statutory obligations, including equalities legislation, can result in legal action and reputational damage.
- **Project Delays:** Delays in refurbishments or redevelopment can lead to extended stays in temporary accommodation, increasing costs to the Council and contributing towards resident dissatisfaction.
- **Inadequate Temporary Accommodation:** Lack of suitable, accessible, or affordable temporary housing can lead to hardship for decanted residents.
- **Financial Risks:** Cost overruns, unbudgeted expenses, or compensation claims can affect the association's financial stability.
- **Data Protection and Confidentiality:** Handling residents' personal data during the decant process raises risks of data breaches or non-compliance with GDPR.
- **Community Cohesion and Social Impact:** Relocation can disrupt community networks, leading to isolation and loss of social support for residents.
- **Health and Safety:** The decant process may expose residents and staff to health and safety hazards, particularly if properties are in poor repair.

Risk Evaluation

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating
Resident Wellbeing and Vulnerability	High	High	Severe
Communication Failures	Medium	High	Major
Legal and Regulatory Compliance	Low	High	Major
Project Delays	Medium	Medium	Moderate
Inadequate Temporary Accommodation	Medium	High	Major
Financial Risks	Medium	Medium	Moderate
Data Protection and Confidentiality	Low	High	Major
Community Cohesion and Social Impact	Medium	Medium	Moderate
Health and Safety	Low	High	Major

3. Risk Mitigation Strategies

- **Resident Support and Engagement:** Engage residents early in the process, provide tailored support (including mental health services), and ensure vulnerable groups receive additional assistance.
- **Clear Communication Plans:** Develop comprehensive communication strategies, including regular updates, accessible information, and dedicated contact points for residents.
- **Legal Compliance Checks:** Work closely with legal advisers to ensure all statutory and regulatory requirements are met, including equality impact assessments.
- **Robust Project Management:** Establish clear timelines, monitor progress, and prepare contingency plans to address delays.
- **Securing Suitable Accommodation:** Identify and secure a range of temporary accommodation options in advance, prioritising proximity to residents' original communities and accessibility needs.
- **Budgeting and Financial Planning:** Allocate sufficient funds for decant costs, monitor expenses, and establish reserves for unexpected liabilities.

- Data Protection Protocols: Adhere strictly to data protection legislation, provide staff training, and implement secure data handling processes.
- Community Building Initiatives: Facilitate opportunities for social interaction among relocated residents to maintain community ties.
- Health and Safety Procedures: Conduct risk assessments for temporary accommodation and relocation processes, ensuring compliance with health and safety standards.

Monitoring and Review

The Council will regularly review the effectiveness of mitigation measures, gather feedback from residents and staff, and update the decant policy as necessary to reflect lessons learned and changing circumstances.

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