

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Tenant Services Management Board – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012

### New Tenants Welcome Pack

#### Report of the Housing Manager - Lettings – Paul Hadley

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Adkins)

#### 1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides the members of the Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) with a proposal detailing the introduction of a new Tenants Welcome Pack to assist tenants when moving into their new home.

The TSMB is requested to consider the report and indicate if they support the proposal to introduce a new pack, and to also indicate which pack is preferred.

#### 2.0 Background

The provision of a Tenants Welcome Pack for tenants just starting their tenancy has been suggested by officers, the provision of this type of pack is considered good practice across social housing with many housing providers already supplying a variety of packs for their new tenants.

Welcome packs are designed to provide a selection of low value items for tenants when they first move into their new home, the contents are provided to help assist in making the 'void into a home'. By presenting new tenants with a pack the service can help make moving into a new home a more positive experience. A welcome pack is a simple way to help establish a good relationship between the tenant and the landlord at the earliest opportunity.

Research into how other providers source their packs has indicated that there are primarily two ways that they are provided. One method is by the housing provider sourcing items locally and making the packs up prior to being provided to tenants. This approach can take a lot of officer time and means that the pack contents will vary dependant on the availability of stock items. The second method of supply is to purchase 'ready made', 'pre- packed' stock. This method involves much less officer time and the packs are simply ordered direct from a supplier. The contents can be guaranteed and a regular supply is easily maintained.

Research on the internet including Housemark and the Chartered Institute of Housing has shown that HMDC Limited is the No1 supplier of the 'ready made pre-packed packs nationally. The company has supplied welcome packs for over ten years, and in that time have supplied tens of thousands of packs to housing

associations and more recently void maintenance contractors. They have built up a reputation based on a quality service with affordable packs.

HMD Limited products in the packs are sourced from many outlets. They deal with manufacturers for toilet paper, black bags, house boxes, rubber gloves, multi surface wipes, etc. The remainder of the smaller items come from import companies that only sell to trade companies. Where they can and it is economically viable to do so they purchase recycled, green or ethically green based products.

### **3.0 The Benefits of a Tenants Welcome Pack – ‘Help to make a void into a home’**

The supply of the welcome pack is not to respond to problems faced by new tenants when they are offered a tenancy by the lack of sufficient funds to purchase many of the household items such as quality second hand or new furniture and ‘white goods’. It is simply a pack that will ‘help to make a void into a home’.

The introduction of a tenants welcome pack is a simple way to help establish a good relationship between the tenant and the landlord at an early stage of the tenancy. The supply of a pack that contains a selection of low value household items that will be helpful to the tenant during the disruption of moving home and will help make this stressful period a more positive experience.

The contents of packs can vary, but a typical pack contains some of the following:

Bin bags, cleaning cloths, washing up liquid, multi surface wipes, toilet roll, rubber gloves, scourer, plastic bowl, air freshener, dust pan and a drinks pack.

The packs would be provided to all new tenants and would be left in the home prior to the start of the tenancy by the DLO Voids Team.

### **4.0 Tenants Welcome Pack Options**

Options available are:

1. Do not introduce a new Tenants Welcome Pack;
2. Housing Services officers source, pack and deliver the new tenants welcome packs; or
3. Welcome packs are purchased from a specialised supplier.  
A selection of such welcome packs can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

Note: The recommendation of the Housing Manager – Lettings would be to procure one of the two pre-packed items. The benefits of this option are simply that they can be ordered and supplied direct from the contractor. Either of these options would remove the need to take officers away from their normal duties to source, pack and supply the contents of the pack.

Further work would be needed to assess the financial impact on the housing service should Tenant Services Management Board members support option 2 above before a firm decision to proceed be approved.

## **5.0 Feedback/comments from the Tenants' Forum**

Tenants' Forum members at their meeting in September 2012 were consulted on the introduction of a new tenants welcome pack and their comments can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

Tenant Service Management Board members need to note that a significant majority of Tenants' Forum members were not supportive of the introduction of a new tenants welcome pack.

## **6.0 Finance Comments**

During 2011/2012 the housing service completed 412 re-lets to new tenants, based on these figures the cost of introducing a new tenants welcome pack will be as follows:

Pack	100 units	Delivery	Total cost of 100 units	Total cost of 412 units including delivery and 20% VAT
2	£1,138.80	£75	£1,213.80	£5,000.86
3	£1,044.00	£125	£1,169.00	£4,816.28
4	£1,362.00	£125	£1,487.00	£6,126.44
5	£1,111.20	£58	£1,169.20	£4,817.10

The funding of this pack will require an allocation of additional budget resources.

Note: Further work would be needed to assess the financial impact on the housing service should Tenant Services Management Board members support option 2 above before a firm decision to proceed be approved.

## **7.0 Legal Comments**

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

## **8.0 Links to Corporate Aims**

There are no direct links to corporate aims arising from this report.

## **9.0 Environmental and Community Safety Implications**

There are no environmental or community safety implications.

## 10.0 Equalities Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed following the consultation with the Tenants' Forum and is attached as Appendix 3 of this report.

## 11.0 Partnership Implications

There are no specific implications for partners in relation to this report.

## 12.0 Recommendations

The Tenant Services Management Board is:

- Requested to consider this report; and
- Recommend to Councillor Jean Adkins – Housing Portfolio Holder their preferred option in relation to tenants welcome packs i.e.
  1. Do not introduce a new tenants welcome pack;
  2. Housing Services officers source, pack and deliver new tenants welcome packs to all new tenants;
  3. Tenant welcome packs to be introduced with ready made – pre packed packs purchased from a specialised supplier for all new tenants;

**Contact:**

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[mdc.c](http://mdc.c)

[www.h](http://www.h)

# ECO HOME BAG OPTION

**PACK  
5**



Please note the image above shows typical products supplied, brands names and sizes can change, but we will confirm before you receive your order please contact us.

## Contents

500ml Washing up liquid - multi surface wipes - rubber gloves  
cotton tea towel - degradable refuse sacks  
Sarah Smith duster twin pack - recycled pen - A6 note pad

Complete Brando Pack with ECO HOME Contents:

**£9.75** per pack

Discounts available on orders over 100

You can also buy empty bags with card £2.95 each

## Key Features

- Branded Welcome Card
- Made from 100% natural material
- Packaged short handles
- Large capacity bag
- Expandable sides

**We can make up your own combination of products from any of the other packs or source alternative products for example, buckets, bowls, toilet brushes etc....**

# HOME STARTER BOX OPTION

**PACK  
2**



Please note that these items are not included in the price of the box. Some items may be subject to change without notice. Please see our website for more information.

## Contents

Twin pack toilet roll - 4 rolled bin bags - dish brush, tea towel  
rubber gloves - multi surface wipes - 500ml washing up liquid (500ml)  
air freshener gel - Sarah Smith clusters twin pack  
drinks pack includes: (4x tea bags, 4x coffee sachets, 4x sugar  
sachets, 1 hot chocolate, 4x powdered milk and 4x Stirrers).

Complete Branded Pack with HOME STARTER Contents

**£9.99** per pack

Discounts available on orders over 100

You can also buy empty branded boxes £1.95 each

**We can also supply branded items to compliment your packs for example, pens, tape measures, mugs, key rings, trolley keyrings etc...**

## Key Features

- Branded top roof
- Simple interlocking assembly
- No gluing required
- Supplied flat pack to save on space
- Strong construction
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accredited board
- Easy grab handle
- Perforated doors and windows for children to make into a play house
- Fully recyclable after use

# CLEAN START BOWL OPTION

**PACK  
3**

We now offer fully packed void packs, that come ready to hand over.



Please note the Kings  
sundry packs include  
supplies. Brand names  
and items can change  
and we do not  
include your plastic  
order the usual contents

## Key Features

- Branded label on the outer box
- Contents fully packed
- Strong construction
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accredited board

## Contents

Plastic washing bowl - 500ml washing up liquid - multi surface wipes - rubber gloves - cotton tea towel - 4 black bags - toilet roll duster - scourer - dish cloth - air freshener gel - dish brush - dust pan and brush

Complete Branded Pack with **CLEAN START BOWL** Contents

**£9.15** per pack

Discounts available on orders over 100  
VAT and delivery extra to prices shown

**FULLY  
PRE  
PACKED**



# CLEAN START TIDY TRAY OPTION

**PACK  
4**

We now offer fully packed void packs, that come ready to hand over.



## Key Features

- Branded label on the cardboard lid
- Contents fully packed
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) accredited board

Please note the image above shows partial contents included. Items shown and their quantities are shown for illustrative purposes only. All items are subject to availability.

## Contents

Plastic tray tidy - 500ml washing up liquid - multi surface wipes - rubber gloves - cotton tea towel - 4 black bags - toilet roll - cluster scourer - dish cloth - air freshener gel - dish brush

Complete Branded Pack with **CLEAN START BOWL** Contents

**£11.95** per pack

Discounts available on orders over 750  
VAT and delivery extra to prices shown

**FULLY  
PRE  
PACKED**



**HMDC LTD**

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## TENANTS' FORUM CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

A total of 11 consultation responses were received from the Tenants' Forum at their meeting in September 2012.

- Significantly 8 responses received from the Tenants' Forum did not support the introduction of a new Tenants Welcome Pack.
- Only 3 responses received from the Tenants' Forum supported the introduction of a new Tenants Welcome Pack. Such responses made a preference for the following 'ready made – pre-packed' packs:

Pack Number	Number who preferred this option
Pack 2	one
Pack 3	one
Pack 4	nil
Pack 5	one

- Tenants' Forum members did not comment in relation having a preference or not having a preference with regard to Housing Services officers undertaking all the work involved to source, pack and deliver tenants welcome packs.
- Only 3 responses were received from Tenants' Forum members with regard to the timing of the introduction of the tenants welcome packs. 1 responses supported an immediate introduction and 2 responses supported an introduction of the packs at the start of the next financial year i.e. April 2013

Listed below is the list of verbal responses given by members of the Tenants' Forum:

*"I hope it would be useful during the moving in process, with a bag being part of the package it could remind tenants that they are part of the 'tenant family' which I hope we can encourage. In addition the 'green' credentials of this pack are in keeping with TDBC's policies"*

*"A very varied pack containing some items the tenant would most likely have – but not readily available for use. Will enable the tenant to have clean fresh*

*surfaces to start unpacking and hopefully setting the standard for a clean happy start in their new home and making them feel welcome in a new and perhaps strange area”*

*“If presented with either of the home starter boxes I would be quite offended. The inference being that I had to be persuaded about cleanliness and hygiene. I thought new lets were clean before tenants moved in. No one would move into accommodation without toilet rolls, washing up liquid, tea towels etc.. Last but by no means least the cost involved seems to me to be prohibitive and unnecessary expenditure, could be used for something more beneficial”*

*“Tenants should be able to get these from their own resources. This is totally a waste of money. The council should allocate the funds instead to ensure more essential services are maintained”*

*“Waste of money. The money could be well spent on other commitment and shortages”*

*“The majority of people (99.9%) will already have “necessary” cleaning products and therefore I believe these are a waste of money as most products will be duplicated, but if I had to choose it would be option 3. I would personally object to ‘my money’ being spent on this”*

*“I do not agree with these welcome packs, it is a waste of money. Cleaning materials are easy enough to buy”*

*“I think this is a sheer waste of public money, when we do the voids we ensure that the house is in habitable order. Nobody is so hard up that they can’t afford a container of all purpose cleaning stuff as standard”*

*“I feel that with voids inspections being carried out in order that properties are in a lettable condition before the tenants move in, this would be a dreadful waste of money, which I’m sure could be better spent elsewhere. If anything should be left I’m sure a jar of coffee, teabags and a bag of sugar would be sufficient and more welcoming and wouldn’t cost so much”*

*“What is contractors charge? Teabags, coffee, 2 mugs, sugar ? Tenants’ Forum name on mugs if forum is paying?”*

*“I have doubts about the whole system of welcome packs being cost effective, however if I had to give an option I would suggest pack No 2”*

## Equality Impact Assessment

<b>Responsible person</b>	<i>Paul Hadley</i>	<b>Job Title: Housing Manager - Lettings</b>
<b>Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)</b>	Proposed new policy/service	√
	Change to Policy/service	
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	
	Part of timetable	
<b>What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)</b>	<b>Health and Housing Theme Introduction of a new Tenants Welcome Pack</b>	
<b>Section One – Scope of the assessment</b>		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	Tenants welcome packs are designed to provide a selection of low value items for tenants when they first move into their new home, the contents are provided to help assist in making the 'void into a home'. By presenting new tenants with a pack the service can help make moving into a new home a more positive experience.	
Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?	The proposed new tenants welcome pack will targeted at all the protected groups including: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation; Marriage and civil partnerships.	
What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used  The information can be found on....	<p><b>Engagement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tenants' Forum members at their meeting in September 2012 have been consulted on the introduction of a new tenants welcome pack.</li> </ol>	
<b>Section two – Conclusion drawn</b> about the impact of service/policy/function/change on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality		

*Feedback received from Tenants' Forum concludes that there is no belief that any specific equalities impacts will arise.*

**I have concluded that there is/should be:**

No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	No major change to policy proposal.
Adjust the policy/decision/service	
Continue with the policy/decision/service	
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service	

Reasons and documentation to support conclusions

**Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation**

The proposed new tenants welcome pack will be presented to members of the Tenant Service Management Board (TSMB) in October 2012.  
Recommendations from the TSMB will be passed to go before Cllr Jean Adkins – Housing Portfolio Holder.

**Section Five – Sign off**

Responsible officer Paul Hadley	Management Team: Housing Services Lettings
Date	Date

**Section six – Publication and monitoring**

Published on

Next review date	Date logged on Covalent
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**Action Planning**

The table should be completed with all actions identified to mitigate the effects concluded.

<b>Actions table</b>					
<b>Service area</b>				<b>Date</b>	
<b>Identified issue drawn from your conclusions</b>	<b>Actions needed</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>By when?</b>	<b>How will this be monitored?</b>	<b>Expected outcomes from carrying out actions</b>