



Allocations Policy

Revised August 2018

Review Date August 2021

Approved by:

Board: 20th August 2018

Responsibility:

Housing Services Manager

1. Introduction

This document outlines the processes that will be followed when reletting properties.

Policy Objectives

- To maximise the opportunities for applicants to access our housing.
- To facilitate a straightforward application process.
- To enable applicants to make informed choices through the provision of clear information and advice.
- To ensure that the Equality & Diversity Policy is implemented in allocations, transfers and exchanges

2. Legislation

Legislation	Relevance to Allocations & Lettings
Housing Act 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details the circumstances on security of tenure and succession
Housing Act 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details eligibility for allocations and homelessness
Localism Act 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gives local authorities greater freedom to set their own policies ensuring those in most need are allocated housing.• Allows social landlords flexibility on length of tenure
Immigration Act 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislation ensuring landlords check an applicants 'right to rent' in the UK
Data Protection Act 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Storage of data and disclosure of information
Equalities Act 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fairness

We will ensure that the allocations policy meets all relevant legislation in regard to allocating accommodation.

3. Regulatory Framework

This policy operates within The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2010. The main relevant standard is outlined below:

Tenancy Standard

Allocations & mutual exchanges

- We work in partnership with Birmingham Home Choice.
- We let properties that addresses housing need & makes best use of housing stock taking into consideration under-occupation and overcrowding.
- We will publish our Allocations Policy including accessing the service, criteria for exclusions and assessment of applications
- We will record all lettings via CORE.

Tenure

- We offer tenants an Assured Shorthold (Starter) Tenancy for the first 12 months. If the starter tenancy has been conducted satisfactorily, at the end of the twelve months we will convert the tenancy to an assured tenancy. (see Starter Tenancies Policy for further information).

4. Fairness

We will ensure that this policy does not discriminate against any applicant on the grounds of gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, religion or sexual orientation by monitoring our waiting list and allocations every year.

Applicants will be invited to disclose information to support this monitoring. This information will be stored confidentially and we will not disclose personal data.

To ensure openness and transparency the Allocations Policy will be published on our website.

5. Eligibility

To be offered social housing, an applicant must be eligible to apply. Applications will be considered from applicants who are:

- Over 18 years old
- Over 50 years old for the 50+ scheme
- Provide all necessary documents and satisfy the right to rent and affordability checks

We may consider an applicant ineligible for housing in the following circumstances:

- Home owners with capital to allow them to meet their housing need.
- Anyone who owes a debt to us or other Housing Associations or other landlords where there is no agreement in place to pay the debt, or where the agreement has not been kept to for a period of six months.
- Anyone who has been evicted from their home by a Housing Association, Local Authority or other landlords, or who has a history of serious Anti Social Behaviour, (ASB) which would have been likely to have warranted legal proceedings, where the ASB has taken place during the last 2 years including former tenants who have been evicted, and who are deemed to have made themselves intentionally homeless.
- The applicant or any member of the household who has an unspent conviction.
- Fails to provide the necessary documents required to verify their identification and/or other circumstances

6. Applications and waiting list

The waiting list will be publicised as widely and as fairly as possible.

Applicants can request an application form by either phone, in person at the office, or by downloading from our website. A copy of the Allocations Policy will be included with each application form.

The waiting list will be open when the 1 bed properties list falls to a minimum of ten applicants and the 2 and 3 bed waiting list falls to a minimum of five applicants. It will close when a sufficient number of applications are returned and at the discretion of the Housing Services Manager.

The waiting list for the over 50 Scheme remains open throughout the year.

The waiting list will be reviewed once every 6 months. Those applicants who do not reply within 21 days indicating their wish to remain on the list will have their application removed. Where there is a change of circumstances, housing priority will be re-assessed

Help and advice on completing the application form will be provided as requested.

We work in partnership with Birmingham City Council to allocate 50% of our vacant properties via their Choice Based Lettings Scheme. (Home Choice). Further information can be found at www.birminghamhomechoice.org.uk.

Birmingham Home Choice is a system of allocation that allows applicants to bid for properties they are interested in. To use Birmingham Home Choice, applicants need to be registered with Birmingham City Council, Midland Heart, or Family Housing Association. Housing need will be assessed via an application form and points awarded to reflect need. Applicants are given Pin Numbers and are able to bid on properties they choose.

7. Assessment

We will look at “best use” when allocating properties. This will take account of factors such as support needs, requirements for an adapted property and the size of accommodation needed.

Whilst recognising the principle of ‘choice’ for applicants, the following criteria may be used in determining “best use” of a particular size property.

The following require a bedroom:

- A single adult (aged 16 or over)
- A couple
- A carer if you or your partner need overnight care.
- Two children of the same sex under the age of 16 and two children under the age of 10 regardless of their sex will be expected to share a bedroom

7.1 Assessment criteria

We will assess applicants in line with a banding system and placed on the relevant banding as follows:

Band 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment, violence, abuse (domestic & non domestic) • Under occupancy / downsizing (efficient use of stock) • Extensive work to property that requires a move • Severe medical/mobility need • Homeless / No fixed abode
Band 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding • Lacking facilities & sharing facilities with non-family members • To give or receive care • Victim of ASB • Urgent medical or mobility issues • People living in a flat with children who request a house • Condition of property poor
Band 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing tenant – no need assessed in band 1 or 2 • No housing need • Council nominations via Choice Based lettings, the Disabled Persons Housing Register, direct nominations

Applicants will be placed in the relevant Band in point and date order. Throughout the year 50% of lettings will be made to band 1, 30% to band 2 and 20% to band 3

Applicants must notify us of any change in circumstances that may affect their housing need so that their application can be re-assessed.

An applicant who obtains a flat by giving false information, may be at risk of losing their home.

7.2 Interview / Selection process

All applications will be acknowledged in writing within one week of receipt.

All applicants will be interviewed to assess and verify their housing need and have the opportunity to visit the site within eight weeks of receipt of the completed application form.

If further clarification of the applicants housing need is required, a home visit to the applicants address may be carried out.

If an applicant does not attend an interview without notifying the office, they will be removed from the process and will need to reapply when the list re-opens.

All applicants accepted onto the waiting list will be notified in writing within two weeks of interview. The acceptance letter will confirm which size of property they are eligible for and which band they are placed in.

If an applicant is not accepted onto the waiting list they will be notified in writing of this, the reasons why and signposted to other services.

8. Invitations to view and offer of properties

Upon a property becoming vacant, an applicant will be selected from the relevant waiting list and an invitation to view will be made subject to agency and background checks. This will include checking:

- Whether the applicant or household is in arrears or owes any monies to the landlord
- Whether the applicant or household has been involved in any anti-social behaviour, or
- Whether the applicant or household has complied with the terms of their current or former tenancy.

Applicants will be asked to provide proof of a clear rent account. If there are arrears from a previous tenancy, we may not make an offer of re-housing.

Invitations to view and a viewing date will be made via the telephone and followed up in writing giving details of the property, rent payable, viewing arrangements and proposed tenancy start date. Applicants will be required to respond to the offer letter within three working days otherwise the offer will be withdrawn and offered to the next applicant.

An offer will only be made once the property has been viewed and may be subject to a satisfactory landlord reference. Offers may be withdrawn if an unsatisfactory reference is received or other information comes to light that affects eligibility.

All new tenants will be asked to pay one weeks rent at the tenancy sign up stage.

Applicants will only be offered two properties. If both offers are refused without a reasonable explanation, the applicant will be removed from the waiting list.

9. Appeals

All tenants and applicants have the right to appeal against any decision made. Appeals should be made in accordance with our Appeals Policy which will be made available on request.

10. Confidentiality & Information Sharing

We will store data in accordance with our data security and document retention policies.

We may share applicant information to verify eligibility.

11. Monitoring and Reporting

We will keep records of all application and allocation decisions made and will monitor these annually.